

# Transport for the common good: a better deal for the North West



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**Green Party**  
for the common good

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## 1 Summary

Our region needs and deserves a transport system that is efficient, reliable, clean and green – one that works for the common good by reducing congestion and emissions while creating opportunities for the many.

Rather than wasting money on vanity projects such as high speed rail and new roads to nowhere, the North West Green Party has a plan for investment in an integrated public transport system that would effectively support local businesses, commuters, families and visitors to the region.

Greens in the North West are campaigning to make this vision a reality. We're working with local people to improve public transport for the common good. We're calling for better train services, strategic bus lanes and safer cycle routes, and we're urging local councils to save subsidised bus services which are under threat.

This year voters will have the opportunity to elect the region's first Green member of the European Parliament, Peter Cranie (right). He would be a voice for a bold, integrated, co-ordinated transport system in the North West.



With wise investment, we could create a better public transport network across the region which serves everyone's needs and improves our quality of life. It would improve regional links, bringing lasting economic prosperity to the North West.

### The Green Party's vision for transport in the North West

1. Public ownership of the railways.
2. Investment in the region's railways: electrification of all lines; re-opening disused lines to improve connectivity; and improvements to networks and stations.
3. A new, North West regional 'Otter card', like London's popular 'Oyster card'.
4. Improved, re-regulated local bus services.
5. Investment in local sustainable transport initiatives: integrated cycling and walking routes; community car clubs.

With the right investment we can deliver what people want from their transport system: a reliable, comfortable service with cheaper fares; a service which serves the common good and is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 2 The Green Party's vision for transport in the North West

### i. Public ownership of the railways

In the House of Commons, the Green MP Caroline Lucas has been working on proposals to bring our railways back into public ownership. Her Private Members' Bill<sup>i</sup> aimed at achieving renationalisation of the railway, has been re-tabled for its second reading on 6th June 2014.

This bill would enable easy transfer of our railways back into public ownership as passenger rail franchises come up for renewal. Far from a returning us to the old days of British Rail, this bill would spark the beginning of a revival in high quality, cost effective public transport. A re-nationalised railway would be run for the common good, not for private profit.



The Green Party's proposal to renationalise the railways has support from transport experts, public transport unions and passenger groups across the country. Action for Rail and Bring Back British Rail have together launched a campaign to support this Green Party bill, and several MPs have given it their backing<sup>ii</sup>. North West voters are encouraged to contact their MP to ask them to support the Railways Bill campaign.

### ii. Investment and improvements in the railway infrastructure

Over recent decades London has seen investment in a new Crossrail line, the Docklands railway and extensions of the Jubilee Line and Stratford Link. The Greens will work for similar, much needed, investment in the North West to raise the standard of the regional rail infrastructure to deal with increasing demand. We believe there is an urgent need to renew outdated rolling stock and re-open lines, creating new transport links for businesses, commuters, tourists and communities. In addition we need to argue the case for switching from road haulage to rail freight. Rail freight reduces CO<sup>2</sup> output by 76% over road haulage<sup>iii</sup>



We want the money earmarked for the HS2 rail project to be spent on improving the vast majority of rail journeys in the region. We have created a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, list of all the investments that are needed by local communities and businesses in the North West (see 'Rail Investment in North West England').

We recognise that many disused railway lines are currently well-used by cyclists and pedestrians as traffic-free routes, and that it would be necessary to provide alternative safe walking and cycling routes if these lines were reopened for rail or trams.

### iii. A North West regional 'Otter Card'

The North West deserves a public transport system which makes the best use of new technology. That's why we're proposing a North West 'Otter card', a new travel card that will enable easy, quick

and cheaper use of buses, trains and trams. The card would work in a similar way to London's 'Oyster card' and the NoW Travel card which is currently used for concessionary bus travel in Lancashire and Cumbria<sup>iv</sup>.

The 'Otter card' would be a big bonus for tourist visitors to the Lake District, Cheshire, Liverpool and Manchester. The technology and software has already been developed and applied in London. If the political will is there, the North West could also make use of this technology.

The user purchases a card, loads it with money and swipes the card to pay their fare on buses, trains and trams across the North West region. The card would give substantial discounts on travel compared to standard fares. The card makes travel simpler for the passenger and speeds up services by reducing boarding times. By increasing the use of public transport and decreasing car use it helps to reduce congestion, air pollution and greenhouse gases. It also gives the public transport system useful data for improve journey planning.

The Green Party is calling for a costed study on the introduction of an 'Otter card', with suggested options for funding. This would cover how the costings would be allocated between providers and reimbursed. There is an urgent need for local transport bodies to work together to push for this type of forward thinking investment.

A North West 'Otter card' would improve the economy and quality of life for residents. It would help visitors to the North West, boost public transport use and revenue, and allow the region's six million residents to move around by public transport more easily.

The Green Party would push for discounted travel to young people; building on current schemes in the North West such as the A2B NoW card in Cumbria which gives discounted travel to young people<sup>v</sup>. We would extend cheaper fares to job-seekers<sup>vi</sup>.

#### **iv. Improved, re-regulated bus services**

Buses are an important part of a planned integrated public transport network. The Green Party believes we need buses which meet people's travel needs, rather than large bus companies' profits. Many local bus services are currently under threat as hard pressed local authorities try to make their budgets stack up in the face of huge funding cuts from government. In the 1980s bus services were de-regulated with profitable services creamed off to private companies, leaving local authorities to subsidise the private sector to run unprofitable routes.

The law currently prevents local authorities running buses needed by residents if they might reduce the profits on commercial services. It means operators have often dropped evening, Sunday and rural services, previously cross-subsidised by their profits from peak-time and day-time services on the same route.

Re-regulation of bus routes would enable local authorities to have control over bus routes, providing a better service for less. Bus companies are fighting attempts by local authorities to bring services back under council control. We need strong leadership and further legislation, if necessary, to give support to our local councils to provide better services.



## v. Local sustainable transport initiatives



Cycling and walking are healthy, cheap transport options which bring many public health benefits, such as reduced pollution, safer quieter streets and less congestion. The Green Party is already working to support local authorities introduce safe, integrated walking and cycling networks and disability and mobility routes in local communities. They're also supporting local car share and workplace travel schemes. We believe that the planning process needs to give higher priority to cycling and walking infrastructure.

Greens believe that the 20mph speed limit on all residential roads, such as the one successfully introduced in Lancashire, needs to be rolled out across the region. The Green Party backs the '20's Plenty' campaign to expand the 20mph default speed limit for residential areas to improve road safety and encourage walking and cycling in local communities. According to recent findings from the ESRC-supported Centre for Diet and Activity Research (CEDAR)<sup>vii</sup> there is evidence that better infrastructure for walking and cycling encourages people to leave their cars at home.

**Wildways:** The NW Green party would encourage the development of 'Wildways' to promote safe urban use of the two main human-powered transport modes: walking and cycling. The towns of the North West currently have a good number of green spaces, but these are often isolated or poorly advertised, while others are under threat from development. At present, no strategic vision exists to preserve, promote, enhance and link them. We will work to safeguard and develop these resources using a network and hub model, constructed from public footpaths and bridleways, canal, lake and river-sidewalks, parks, fields and woodlands which are currently open to the public. We will undertake to define and map these areas, creating signage and numbered routes to encourage the public's knowledge and use of them. We will work with landowners to open new areas to the public, work to open entrances to public areas where access points are possible but don't currently exist, and look for opportunities, whenever possible, to de-culvert and bring back to life buried natural water courses. We will work to green areas of existing barren streetscape.

## 3 North West Green Party: transport campaigns

Green parties in Lancashire and Cumbria have responded to council proposals to cut their subsidies to bus services. These routes often serve rural areas and ensure that those without access to a car can access vital local services, such as healthcare. They also allow young people to travel around the region to access the best education for their needs.

Green's in Lancaster are working with local communities to look at how bus services can be reconfigured when the contract is up for renewal, and Green parties have called on councils to look

at innovative solutions to address the needs of rural communities such as community buses, voluntary car services and Dial-a-ride.

Stockport, East Cheshire and Manchester Green Parties have been campaigning against a new airport relief road, arguing that the plan goes against the councils' own aims of promoting sustainable transport, reducing climate change and improving air quality.

Cheshire Green Party has led calls for the HS2 rail scheme to be scrapped. Cheshire and Manchester Green parties argue that the economic case for the project is unsound. They call instead for investment in trains and train lines across the region to improve journeys for the many, not just the few.

In Liverpool the Green Party has campaigned for safer roads and better transport. We have consistently called for the speed limit to be 20mph where people live.

In 2010 a 20mph limit was introduced on Fulwood Drive in St Michaels ward as a result of a consultation with residents, carried out by the Green Party. The council has followed this example and now 20mph is being phased in as the default speed limit in residential streets across the city, as is being rolled out in Lancashire after pressure from Green Councillors.

After the shock suspension of bus lanes across Liverpool the Green Party criticised the move and is making a strong case for more sustainable, healthy transport options.

Green Party members have worked with interest groups, such as local cycling campaigns, to co-ordinate a response to the bus lane suspension.



#### 4 Why more roads are not the answer

Road building will not solve congestion. What is needed is significant investment in sustainable public transport to reduce congestion and to reduce polluting emissions which cause climate change. In early February 2014, the government published its draft National Policy Statement for major roads and railways<sup>viii</sup>. George Osborne says the government is planning “the largest programme of investment in our roads for half a century”. Based on the Department for Transport's traffic forecasts this is a plan to build enough new road space for more than 40% extra traffic by 2040.



This approach is based on the discredited belief that building more roads will solve congestion. But national statistics show that forecasts since the 1980s have over-estimated growth and there is now a consensus among academics that building our way out of congestion won't work.

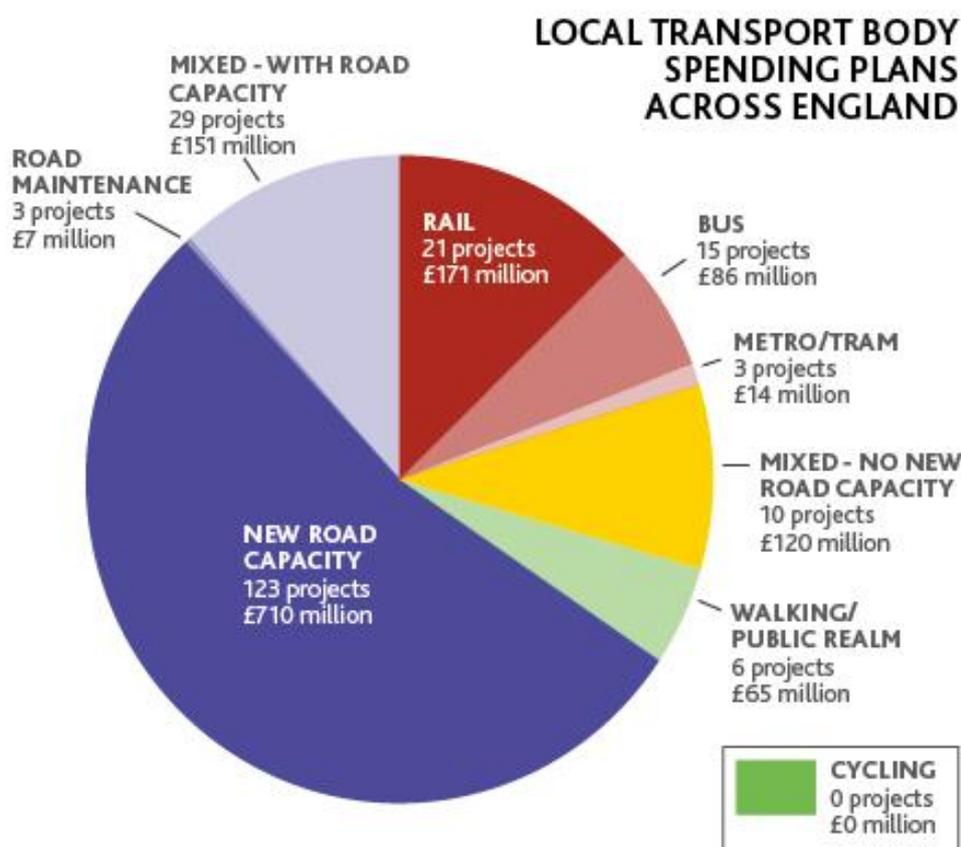
Outside the motorway and trunk road network, run by the Highways Agency, planning for transport infrastructure is handed down to Local Transport Bodies and from 2015 Local Enterprise

Partnerships, working with Local Authorities. In the North West infrastructure planning is also influenced by the well established Integrated Transport Authorities - Transport for Greater Manchester and Merseytravel. The more newly formed Transport for Lancashire, and the Cumbria and Cheshire & Warrington LEPs will also be planning new infrastructure.

Huge amounts of money are being made available to these authorities in the North West. As well as City Deal funding already given to Manchester, Liverpool and Preston, from 2015 the Local Enterprise Partnerships will be given a share of £2billion a year to spend on transport projects, awarded through the Single Local Growth Fund. They will also play a key role in bidding for more than £5billion in European funds.

But the signs are that public transport, cycling and walking will not be given a fair share of this funding. In late 2013, a report by Campaign for Better Transport and the Campaign to Protect Rural England found that nearly 60% of the Local Transport Body planned spending will be spent on new roads<sup>ix</sup>.

No dedicated cycling projects were funded at all, and bus schemes make up just 7% of the projects. What we need is investment in public transport so that it becomes an appealing alternative to the car.



### Road-building in the North West: the road to nowhere

New and wider roads are already being planned across the North West, threatening to divide communities, destroy the green belt and bring pollution and noise to more communities. Hundreds of millions of pounds of local public money is being pledged to these projects, as well as Highways

Agency funds going to widen motorways. This isn't the way to promote economic growth in the region, and there are much better ways to spend our money – on public transport, and better planned developments that reduce the need to travel.

Some of the most expensive and destructive proposals in the North West are:

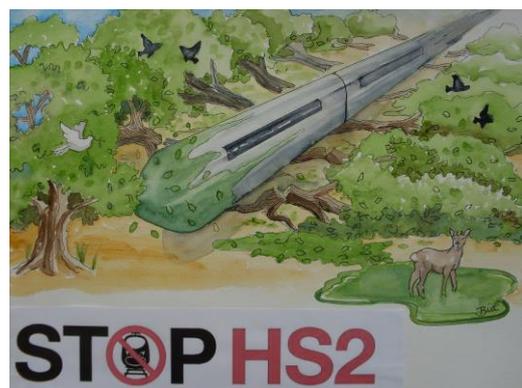
- The A6-Manchester Airport Link Road: This £300million dual carriageway would plough through green belt south of Manchester and introduce huge numbers of cars and lorries into areas already suffering high levels of traffic and air pollution
- A Peak District Motorway: A prospect revived by George Osborne in the 2013 Spending Round and the 'Action for Roads' command paper. The Highways Agency is carrying out a feasibility study on new trans-Pennine routes between Sheffield and Manchester. Any new roads planned would not only cost billions but would also permanently damage the UK's most visited National Park.
- A556 Knutsford to Bowden scheme: This £200million widening and bypass would run entirely through green belt between the M56 and M6, increasing air pollution across a wide area and destroying the tranquillity of the Rosthene Mere SSSI. This is an area that would also be impacted by the HS2 rail route.
- Mersey Gateway Bridge: Another white elephant, this huge new 6-lane bridge across the Mersey estuary wetlands is costing £600million and risking huge amounts of local money in order to attract outside investors to operate tolls. These would also be applied to the nearby Silver Jubilee Bridge.

## 5 HS2: a government vanity project

HS2, the latest high-speed rail project to connect London to Birmingham (and eventually Manchester) is an enormous white elephant. Government forecasts on the costs of HS2 are now up by 30% to £53billion. The Institute of Economic Affairs predicts that the total cost of HS2 will be around £80billion. Whatever the final figure that's £50-80bn that could be going towards real improvements to regional transport systems<sup>x</sup>. This is the equivalent of at least £1500 per North West household.

### There are serious flaws in the economic case for HS2

- HS2 return on investment figures assume an average passenger income of £70,000pa to justify the benefit of time savings<sup>xi</sup>. This will be a train service for business people. And there is evidence that it would be less productive because work done on trains needs a minimum journey time.
- Talk of benefits to the regional economy is unfounded – there is evidence that it will redistribute economic activity, not create it.<sup>xii</sup>
- Manchester-London train journeys diverted onto HS2 could actually mean fewer direct services from Crewe, Macclesfield and Wilmslow.
- HS2 is intended as purely a passenger service; it would not carry freight.



Given that an independent member of the HS2 analytical challenge panel, Professor Henry Overman stated that HS2 was "not particularly good value for money" we have to seriously ask, what else could this money be spent on?

The experience of comparable countries such as Spain and France shows that, if anything, High-speed rail systems lead to lower investment in the regions; a “flight of capital to the capital”. Switzerland had a referendum on whether to invest in a new high-speed line or to improve the frequency of local services. The people voted for the local services. What those voters realised is that journeys often involve one or two connections to get to the main line and even if those main line service are not faster, local investment to reduce connection times means their overall journey time is quicker. The STOP HS2 website has comprehensive details of the case against HS2 (see <http://stophs2.org>).

## **6 A green vision for sustainable transport and sustainable living**

Economic prosperity comes from communities and people being less dependent on having to travel large distances for work and being less reliant on goods and food produced on the other side of the world. Green Party transport policy emphasises the need for us to travel within the region comfortably, reliably and sustainably while our economic policy is based on a shift towards high quality food, goods and services being produced more locally.

There is an urgent are issues with new housing and road-building and car dependency. Evidence in Leighton Buzzard shows that a well designed new area of housing, with a frequent direct bus service to the town centre being provided alongside the housing can be very effective. The evidence shows that there was a 20% modal shift away from car use to buses.<sup>xiii</sup> Throughout the North West there is much new housing planned, for example around Wigan and Runcorn, that could be built with similar transport plans in place with funding from the Single Local Growth Fund.

The money going into the Single Local Growth Fund includes £100million of annual funding that previously went to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). The LSTF started in 2011 and has supported hundreds of projects to provide better services and better information (‘Smarter Choices’) to help people use more sustainable transport.

In the pilot, ‘Smarter Choices’ projects car journeys went down by 9%, bus trips went up by 10-22%, walking trips rose 10-13% and cycling went up by 26-30%.<sup>xiv</sup> The Committee on Climate Change estimates that a full rollout of these schemes across the UK would cut total traffic by 5% or more. They say: “Plans are needed for a full roll-out of Smarter Choices over the next decade.”<sup>xv</sup> These projects are much easier to implement and better value for money than big road-building schemes and – by helping people access schools, jobs, shops and services without their cars and with less congestion – are good for the local economy too.

With a range of sustainable transport initiatives, better information and integrated ticketing, both car dependency and traffic in the North West could be dramatically reduced.

## **7 Conclusion**

The Green Party believes that there is an urgent need to improve local transport across the North West. To reduce car use we need an attractive alternative - public transport which is attractive, effective and affordable. The North West deserves better. We need re-nationalised railways which are run for the common good, not private profit; improved regional railways; integrated ticketing

with a regional 'Otter card'; cheaper, effective bus services in response to local need; and improved local, sustainable transport.

The government's plans to build more roads, which won't reduce congestion, and to waste our money on the hugely expensive vanity project – HS2 - which will only serve a few wealthy people, are not the answer. What we need is sustained investment in an integrated public transport system that effectively supports local businesses, commuters, families and visitors to our region.

Greens across the North West have been campaigning hard for public transport improvements. This year the North West has the chance to elect a Green representative to the European Parliament to work for a better transport system for the region.

## **8 Detailed Rail Investment for North West England**

The major investment in the North West is an urgent need to electrify all rail routes in the region: Those lines which are not electrified run a risk of losing through trains. Opening closed sections of rail track and improving stations and capacity are urgently needed, along with more frequent services.

Many of these are long established desired routes ensuring all urban communities are served by rail, and many would particularly ensure east-west transport routes. These lines also often serve as detours when there are problems on main lines, so increase the resilience of the network

The following is a comprehensive (but not exhaustive) list of investments that are needed and called for by local communities and businesses in the North West which are not currently earmarked for any funding at the current time (except where stated). For example:

### **Manchester-Cheshire:**

- Electrification of Crewe-Chester and extended across north Wales to Holyhead. This would be especially useful to divert heavy freight traffic flows off the A5 and onto rail. This route is a European trunk route, connecting Ireland to the rest of Europe. EU funding might be attracted to an upgraded scheme.
- Stockport-Stalybridge line and the proposed link to Manchester Victoria Stockport-Stalybridge is another nutty service: once a week on Fridays in one direction only. A sensible service, such as a tram-train one, would add Stalybridge, Reddish, Denton and Guide Bridge to the Greater Manchester Metrolink network.
- Opening the Middlewich Link
- The Northwich link between the Mid-Cheshire line and the West Coast Main Line
- Tram-trains from Macclesfield to Manchester
- Reopening Matlock – Buxton would facilitate a direct Manchester to Derby service (although expensive and would involve much compulsory property purchase and the loss of a well-used leisure cycleway).
- The mid-Cheshire line is booming. It should be doubled from Chester to Mouldsworth to allow a frequent alternative route to Manchester, preferably electrified. Stations could be re-opened in Wythenshawe, Northenden and Cheadle.

### **West Lancashire:**

- Re-instate the Burscough Curves;
- South West Burscough Curve (creating a direct link between Ormskirk and Southport)
- North West Burscough Curve (creating a direct link between Southport and Preston)
- South East Burscough Curve (creating a direct link between Ormskirk and Wigan/Manchester)

- A new rail station in Skelmersdale, which would offer more effective access to Wigan and Manchester for residents of Ormskirk and surrounding western rural. As the line to Skelmersdale was closed in 1956 and some of it built over, this would mean some rail reopening & some new-build. It would link the depressed town to the network and probably provide commuting employment opportunities for locals. It makes sense.
- Improve the route from Preston to Liverpool via Ormskirk (passengers are currently obliged to get out of the Northern Rail train and transfer to a MerseyRail train in order to continue their journey to Liverpool, and vice-versa)

### East Lancashire

- There are current proposals to upgrade the Calder Valley line from Manchester to Leeds via Todmorden, (the about to be reopened Todmorden Curve which is being funded through the Citizens' Rail Euro project and Lancs CC), most of the benefit will be in Lancashire giving Burnley and Accrington a fast link to Manchester and this will ultimately need electrification. Direct services, via the Todmorden Curve (Manchester - Rochdale - Todmorden -Blackburn), are scheduled to start this May providing Northern Rail can obtain the extra trains, but there is currently real doubt about this, even to the extent of possibly hiring locomotive and carriages from Direct Rail, the state-owned nuclear rail operator. The Rolling Stock Companies (ROSCOs) are a real hindrance to developing services ROSCOs suck money out of the railways (they are owned by banks and multinational companies) and they should be returned to public ownership
- Upgrade the 'Roses' Line (Calder Valley Line) which runs from Blackpool North to York, and links Preston, Blackburn, Accrington and Burnley with Bradford and Leeds via Hebden Bridge. The above electrification from its junction with the Calder Valley line @ Hallroyd Junction  
West Yorkshire ITA is now talking about electrifying the Calder valley line following the very successful Skipton-Bradford-Leeds electrification. This should cross the Pennines and join the WCML at Preston
- Re open the railway line between Colne and Skipton (11 miles) with electrification of the entire line from its Gannow junction with the Roses Line to the already-electrified Airedale Line [to Leeds] @ Skipton. In tandem with the electrification proposals outlined below, this would provide a fully electrified rail service from Leeds to Manchester, Liverpool & Preston. with East Lancashire at its heart. (LCC is to make £10,000 available in order that a further Engineering & Capital Costs study into reopening Skipton-Colne line can be carried out.) The main stumbling block is the DfT with the problem that the DfT and Network Rail is that they apply a "Business Case" criterion to all railway plans in which 'business' use scores 6 times more than all other uses. (This is why Virgin trains run with loads of empty first class carriages: in order to fulfill the WCML franchise business case criterion)
- A commuter rail link between Rawtenstall in Rossendale and Manchester using the railway line currently leased by the East Lancashire Railways
- Investigate route options for Colne to Manchester links
- Clitheroe to Hellifield (Championed by Ribble Valley Rail for the line to be reopened daily to passenger transport (currently it only has a Sunday service, two trains each way). This could link communities on the Settle-Carlisle line through Clitheroe to Manchester Airport. the single track from Darwen to Bolton should be doubled, a small, relatively cheap, improvements that could deliver good results.
- In the longer term reopening Menston – Arthington and Harrogate – Ripon – Northallerton routes would, along with a reopened Colne to Skipton facilitate a Merseyside – North East route avoiding the pinch points of Manchester and Leeds, particularly helpful to accommodating freight growth to take lorries off the roads

### Central Lancashire and Fylde Coast

- Reopened stations at Midge Hall and Coppull
- Blackpool South and Fylde line through Lytham St Annes. This should be doubled, electrified and through trains should run to Manchester.
- A tram-train service could link Blackpool to Kirkham.
- The reinstatement of passenger services from Poulton-le-Fylde to Fleetwood, now one of the largest towns in England without a train service. (Network Rail's electrification contractors have recently inserted poles bang in the middle of the Fleetwood-Poulton junction preventing a reopened link showing the unjoined-up nature of Network Rail's planning)

### Lancaster and Cumbria

- Electrification of the Lancaster- Morecambe - Skipton Line.  
There is a good case for electrifying Lancaster-Morecambe-Heysham. This would enable through trains to Manchester as well as mainline freight connection to the Port of Heysham  
Much of the Carnforth-Skipton of this line still has unwelded track so some basic upgrading, and signalling in the short term is necessary and more frequent services
- Electrification of the Furness Line : Preston/Lancaster/ Barrow-in-Furness to Whitehaven line , Electrification of the Furness line to Barrow-in-Furness was discussed in the latest round of Network Rail electrifications but it was cut, despite the continued use of the line by nuclear waste and fuel trains. **the** Cumbrian coastal line From Whitehaven through Wigton—to Carlisle.To establish a 7 day per week service
- Lakes line:Oxenholme – Windermere  
(The Government said last year its is keen for the 10 miles/16 Km of track which runs between Oxenholme station on the West Coast Main Line and Windermere station in the National Park to be converted to allow electric trains to run on the route, linking Kendal, Burneside, Staveley and Windermere directly to Manchester by 2016. "Cumbria County Council will be supporting Network Rail and TransPennine Express to put forward the strongest and most robust business case which underlines the compelling case for electrification of the line." Not yet funded
- Reopen the line from Penrith to Keswick

### Merseyside, Halton and the Wirral

- Merseyside ITA has agreed to fund a study for the reinstatement of the Halton Curve, now renamed the Merseyside Connect Project, which would allow trains to run direct from North Wales and Chester to Liverpool Lime St.
- Merseyside ITA is considering a medium-term electrification (outside its area) from Ormskirk to Preston, using 3rd rail electrification.
- Magull North Station: Merseyside ITA have proposed adding this new station on the line to Ormskirk.
- St Helens Connect: The St Helens Green Party are promoting rebuilding and electrifying the St Helens Central to St Helens Junction line, along with a new multi-modal station at Carr Mill on the A580. Manchester trains would run from Carr Mill through St Helens to Manchester Victoria or the Airport. A diesel service could run from Southport, via Wigan Wallgate, St Helens and Warrington, to Chester. A mainline stopping service could run from Windermere, via Wigan, St Helens and Warrington to Crewe. Carr Mill would serve all of the above, plus Liverpool to Blackpool North, letting significant road traffic transfer to rail, so relieving congestion on the A580, M6 and M62. St Helens and its a growing population would become hyper-connected to the region's hubs, and through them, to the wider country. Other towns such as Southport, Warrington and Chester would also benefit.

- Parkside rail-road freight interchange and the Newton-le-Willows hub: St Helens Council and their private partners, construction firm Langtree, are working to create a freight interchange on a site uniquely situated between the North West Mainline, the M6 and the Liverpool-Manchester railway line, with its connection to the expanding port of Liverpool. Freight would transfer from road to rail for national and international destinations, and between rail corridors north, south, east and west. Merseyside ITA are considering upgrading the nearby Newton-le-Willows station to cross-modal hub status to facilitate low-carbon travel to Parkside. St Helens Green Party are backing the project, while also working to prevent disturbance to the local population, and to preserve and enhance areas of green belt.
- Bootle freight line stations: Merseyside ITA has floated the idea of adding several stations to the Bootle freight line, which could link Anfield and Everton both to Liverpool Lime St and eastwards towards Manchester.

## 9 Structural problems in rail planning

There are two ITAs (Greater Manchester and Merseytravel) but weak transport planning and support in the bits between the two conurbations. We need an ITA for Lancashire, possibly extended to include Cumbria.

One of the greatest hurdles to railway growth is the appalling DfT, at least in England. It's noticeable that in Scotland, which is beyond the DfT's control, new railways are re-opening and others are being electrified. It's the structure of the privatised railway which isn't "fit for purpose". No other country in Europe has a structure like the UK's. It sucks money out of the railways and into companies like Stagecoach, Virgin, First and the banks.

In the next few years most of the antiquated trains used by Northern Rail, including the awful high-step Pacers, will no longer be legal under EU accessibility legislation. It's time we had a clear out of all the old rolling stock and we used modern accessible carriages. At present, London services receive over 6 times the funding support as do services in the North West. Each one of Boris's new buses (600 on order) costs over £400,000; we pay for them in the North as we run about on elderly high step buses. Since we will have to replace the old illegal trains we could at the same time rebrand local services and create a Lancashire-Metro network ut we would need a local ITA to manage it.

Many of the problems on the railways - which are booming and very successful overall - are caused by structural and political mismanagement. The DfT in England is a real handicap. It sets poor criteria for Network Rail. The Office of Fair Trading is obsessed with competition so it blocks co-ordination and co-operation by companies. The privatised companies strip out funding at all stages especially the ROSCOs. We need a national rail plan based on social ownership and co-ordinated planning. A local ITA for Lancashire and Cumbria would fill in the gaps. For example, Greater Manchester and Merseytravel are both planning Oyster-style cards. This kind of scheme needs expanding to places outside their areas and to address the issues for example of travelling from Southport (Merseytravel) to Wigan (GM) through Lancashire County.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/railways.html>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130626/debtext/130626-0002.htm#13062665000008>

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- iii <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/aspx/12277.aspx>
- iv <http://www.nowcard.org/nowcard.asp>
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