

A pro-light rail transport policy

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Campaign for Better Transport

- Charitable trust promoting sustainable transport
- Support from wide range of interests
- Co-ordinates environmental and other NGOs concerned with transport
- Commissions and publishes research
- Conducts public campaigns
- Promotes pilot projects and good practice

Beeching 50 years on

- Some closures were inevitable
- Some could have been avoided
- Some lines would have thrived as light rail

Above all, alignments should have been protected

There are still opportunities for converting lines to light rail but there are obstacles

Light rail needs supportive policies

- Transport modelling and forecasting
- Planning
- Funding
- Taxation

Light rail schemes need business cases, but...

- Benefits are understated
- Forecasts and models based on past trends continuing
- Patronage is under-estimated

Light rail can help reduce impacts of car traffic in urban areas

- Noise
- Air quality: still poor
- Landscape and biodiversity
- Road casualties
- Health impacts from less physical activity
- Community severance
- Social exclusion
- Climate change

Many of these result from car dependence – where car use is a necessity not a choice

Car dependence is a problem for...

- Those with cars (who have to drive more)
- Those without cars, who are excluded from society

And it leaves us all vulnerable to high/ volatile oil prices

Car dependency scorecard shows that towns and cities vary enormously

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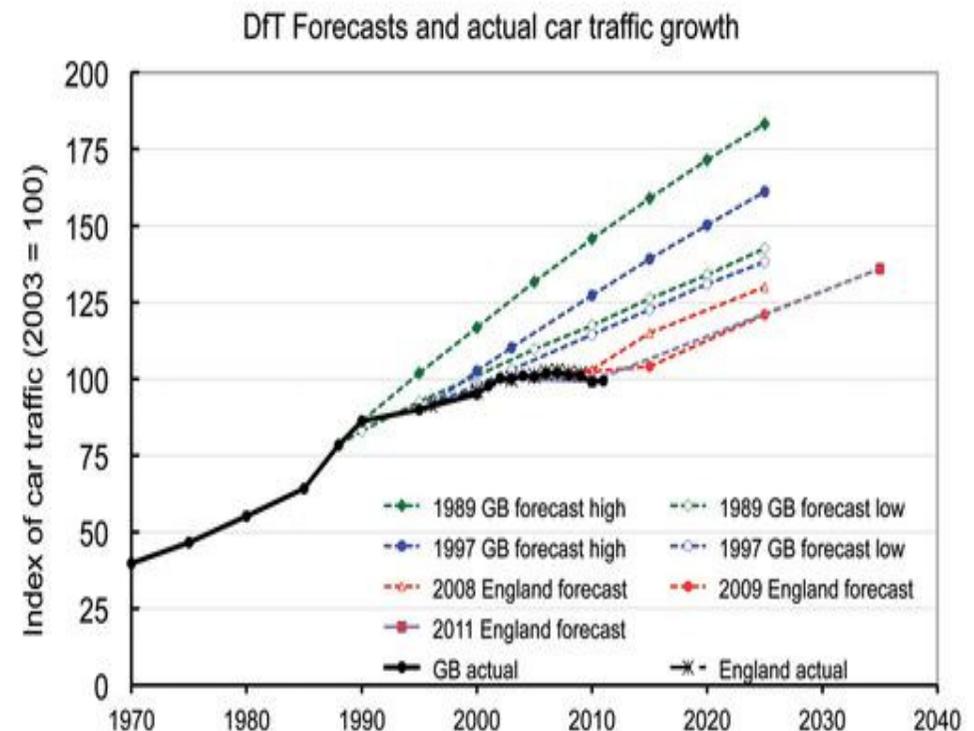


Forecasts versus reality

- Car use has peaked, or at least lessened its increase, and young people are driving less than their parents did
- Rail use is growing, even through the recession

So forecasting models are unsound!

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Public transport oriented development needs to underpin light rail

- Link public transport and new development
- Joint rail/development projects
- Use developments to fund light rail investment
- Develop stations as gateways/hubs
- Create town-wide transport partnerships
- Local and national planning policies should support this



Southern Leighton Buzzard development:

- “Dash Direct” bus
 - Station Travel Plan
 - Cycling and walking
 - Household screens
 - Limited car parking
- Bus users with car: 48%



Link light rail to walking and cycling

This means

- Safe routes to stops
- Signing
- Cycle parking at stops/ stations
- Good street design
- Speed management where people live



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Light rail needs to be part of door to door public transport

- **Information:** needs to be high quality, accurate, real time and easily available
 - Network-wide **ticketing**/ smartcards
 - Guaranteed **connections**
 - Marketing: “metro” maps, branding etc
 - Personal security: CCTV, policing priority
 - Good **interchanges** and access to stops/stations
 - End to end bus priority
- Above all treat public transport as a priority network that decision-makers and car users might want to use

Government’s strategy is a good first step



Other transport spending

Light rail won't thrive if there is:

- Big investment in new roads
- Cuts in bus funding
- Real increases in public transport fares



Opportunities and threats

- More powers for local authorities and LEPs on rail and spending (Heseltine report)
- New funding streams – workplace parking levy, supplementary business rates, developer funding

But further cuts in funding may work against these

Smart growth not dumb growth...

Economic growth doesn't mean more and more roads and cars:

- Vienna: car use has fallen from 40% - 36%, 30% of journeys are now on foot or bike, 34% public transport
- Los Angeles: 90% car, 10% rest
- London: 1993- car 46% public transport 30%; 2010- car 34% public transport 42%



Conclusion

- ▶ Light rail needs to be part of policies to promote “smart growth”, not “no growth” or “dumb growth”
- ▶ It can help tackle car dependence, which is bad for those with cars and those without, and for the wider economy, environment and society
- ▶ Many technical tools and models are out of date and rely on past trends continuing – these bias business cases against light rail
- ▶ Light rail should take comfort: travel behaviour can change and reliance on cars is not inevitable
- ▶ The challenge is to make transport decisions and funding support rather than undermine sustainable travel

For more information

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