A *Transport Revolution* for the Eastern Region

A Report authored by Rupert Read, national Transport spokesman for the Green Party, and lead Green Party candidate for the East of England.

A Transport Revolution for the Eastern Region of England

The Green Party in the Eastern Region of England has a vision and a plan for an efficient, reliable, clean, and green transport system across the region. Instead of investing in vanity projects such as the HS2 high speed rail link between London and the north west (and similar schemes funded by EU TEN/T money), which will only serve the needs of big business travellers at the expense of the rest of us, and will do nothing whatsoever for our Region, the Greens have a plan for investment in an integrated public transport system across the region that would be more effective in supporting local businesses, commuters, families and all travellers.

Greens across the region are already campaigning and supporting local people and groups to improve public transport. For example, to save subsidised bus services under threat in various parts of the region. But more than just saving existing services and campaigning for incremental improvements, with a Green MEP we can do more to work for a bold, integrated, co-ordinated transport system. (This is because a Green Parliamentarian can achieve change directly through the EU - via the budget, and via the rules governing transport systems in Europe - and also because he can seek where necessary to help 'knock heads together' and lobby for change within the Eastern Region).

With this we will improve quality of life, and deal with the mobility needs of everyone in a way that spends money more wisely to bring lasting economic prosperity to the Eastern Region. [i] We oppose the outdated plans for wastefully spending money on HS2[ii] and new road building schemes (such as the NDR, the A14 expansion plans, etc). [*Note*: HS2 and road-building are addressed in the *Appendix* to this report, below.]

Our* Vision for Transport in the East *consists of the following 5 point game-changing transport solutions:

1. **Return railways to public ownership.**
2. **New Eastern Region EASTERN card, modelled on the OYSTER card that has proven so successful in London.[iii]**

3. **Electrification of railways, improvements to networks, and re-opening lines in the East.**
4. **Re-regulation of local bus services - again, copying the superbly-successful London model.**[iv]
5. **Across the Eastern Region, investing in integrated local cycling and walking, and car share measures in local communities.**

1.Taking the railways back into public ownership. In the House of Commons, the Green MP Caroline Lucas has a Private Members' Bill aimed at achieving 'renationalisation' which is listed for its second reading on February 28th. This Bill would enable easy transfer of our railways back into public ownership as passenger rail franchises come up for renewal. The Bill has support from transport experts, public transport unions and passenger groups across the county. It would see the beginning of a revival in good quality yet cost effective public transport for the common good. The details can be seen here:
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2013-2014/0081/14081.pdf

2. An East of England 'EASTERN' Card. This will function much like the **Oyster** Card in London: the user purchases a card, then loads it with cash (i.e. it is a stored value card), and swipes the card whenever public transport is used. In London, the Oyster Card covers bus, tube and the newly branded "Overground", which is upgraded local rail. Oyster gives encouraging travel discounts compared to what the user pays just buying a ticket. Oyster is easy to use, and benefits the transport system itself, e.g. boarding times on buses are much reduced.
 It increases public transport patronage which helps to reduce congestion, air pollution and greenhouse gases as people switch from the car to public transport alternatives. It also gives the public transport system useful data for planning purposes.
 Rupert Read, national Green Party Transport Spokesperson and prospective Green MEP for the East, would seek to secure funding for a feasibility study for the EASTERN card, working with local authorities in the Region, soon after being elected. The EASTERN card would either cover all buses, local trains (and any trams) throughout the region, or throughout a sub-region if the latter were considered more effective/workable. For example, an EASTERN Card might suit 'East Anglia' more than all of the six counties of the Eastern Region. The feasibility study could consider this.
 An EASTERN card should be a big bonus for the region's tourist visitors to, for instance, the Broads and the coast. As all the technology and software has already been developed for London's Oyster Card, all we need is the political will - on which we will lead. The card could be extended for journeys into London itself, just as the Oyster card has gradually been extended for journeys outside the Underground tube network.

In practical policy terms initially we would be looking at a *cost effective feasibility study* with suggested options for funding the card. This would cover the detailed work such as: what is the cost-benefit of the Oyster card cost for the public body/bodies providing and running the system; and an agreement on how receipts are allocated. All of this is possible and practical, and already happens in London and in every German city.

An EASTERN card has intrinsic value to the economy and quality of life for residents and visitors to the East; boosting public transport use and revenue, and helping the 6 million residents to move around by public transport more easily, rather than being so car-dependent.

3. Investment and Improvement in the Railway infrastructure: *putting Beeching into reverse.* We in the Greens propose as an alternative to HS2 a veritable transport revolution in facilities for rail, bus, cycling and walking: a quantum leap, paid for in part by using wisely the vast amount that the Government at present plans to squander on this one white elephant scheme. Part of this 'transport revolution' would involve putting Beeching into reverse[v]: that is, re-opening old shut-down train lines. Doing this would relieve the pressure on some existing railway lines, and would build up resilience against flooding, which is unfortunately more likely in a climate-chaotic world (consider for instance the mistake of not having an alternative line to that via Dawlish, in Devon). For example, we believe that the old Great Central Railway,[vi] could be re-opened at a fraction of the cost of HS2.

As London has a new west-east Crossrail line under construction, Docklands Light Railway, and extensions to the underground such as the Jubilee Line and Stratford Link, the Greens will work for similar, much needed investment in the Eastern Region (which has historically had far lower levels of investment than has the capital): to raise the standard of the regional rail infrastructure to cope with increased demand, to renew outdated rolling stock and equipment, and to re-open lines that will create new transport links for businesses, commuters, tourists and communities. We want the money earmarked for the HS2 and money from some EU TEN/T schemes to be spent *instead* improving the majority of rail journeys that are much more local. In particular we want to prioritise:

a**. Electrifying the region's diesel tracks**, with the exception of 'part-time' lines (such as that via the Berney Arms in Norfolk).

b. **Rail improvements across the region:** Opening closed sections of rail track, providing new rolling stock and improving capacity; particularly to ensure east-west transport routes; and ensuring all urban communities are served by rail.

For example: Completing the Oxford-Cambridge rail link. And looking at lines to and via Haverhill and Wisbech.

c. **New stations or re-opening old stations**, where viable and possible. Let us consider some examples:

- There ought to be a 'Dussindale Halt' station serving Broadland Business Park area on the edge of Norwich. This would form part of an alternative transport strategy to that embodied in the ill-conceived and increasingly-unpopular 'Northern Distributor Road' that the old parties want to build arcing Norwich.
- Similarly: The Green Party advocated reinstatement of the former stations at Finningham and Mellis in Suffolk as long ago as 1981. The idea was revived a few years ago when Network Rail proposed to develop its car park at Stowmarket station by building a multi-storey addition. Rail experts advised us that the problem of insufficient car parking spaces should be tackled by reducing the distance between stations to no more than ten miles. The argument against this was that journey times between London and Norwich would be increased by extra stops or delayed by the introduction of local services. It subsequently emerged that when the line was electrified many of the crossover points between the up and down lines were eliminated to reduce the overall cost. If these crossovers were reinstated it would be possible to allow the fast trains to overtake services stopping at the re-opened intermediate stations.
- In Essex the line to Maldon was lost during the Beeching cuts. Since then the town has expanded, which means that residents commuting into London have to go by car to Witham or Hatfield Peverel stations. Re-opening the line to Maldon would reduce reliance on cars and improve life for Maldon residents. We think that such a re-opening should be actively considered.

d. **Improving *reliability* of services**. Research shows that *speed* of rail services is not the main consideration, for most passengers. *Reliability* is. Greens are lukewarm on the campaign for 'Norwich in 90'. What we would like to see is improvements to the regional rail network that considerably reduce the present delays and unpredictability. *That matters much more than shaving a few minutes off timetables.* Points 2, 3a and 3b, above, will all help with this objective. So will this point e, that follows:

e. By 2020 at the latest, the entire public transport network should have a 'clean-sheet timetabling exercise' based on a wide analysis of travel flows by all modes,[vii] starting from the main rail lines, and covering all railways and other public transport services (including buses following the reintroduction of deregulation).

4. *Re*-regulation of Bus services. 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 public sector cuts by Government. Subsidised bus routes now under threat are the result of chickens coming home to roost from the de-regulation of bus services when all profitable services were privatised, leaving local authorities to subsidise the private sector to run unprofitable routes.

Re-regulation of bus routes would enable local authorities to have control over bus routes, and so provide a better service often at less cost to the public purse.
The regulated buses in London provide a service far superior to the deregulated buses elsewhere in Britain. Greens in Norwich have been pressing for years for a 'Quality Bus Contract', which would achieve this - while Rupert Read was a Norwich City Councillor, he sought to action this, but the majority Labour and (previously) LibDem Councils in Norwich were never willing to deliver it. As a Green MEP, Read would seek to work with local authorities across the Region, and with the government and appropriate quangos to deliver a re-regulation of buses in the East of England that would at last bring our bus services up to a standard similar to those in London.

Here are some further proposals on how to improve bus services in our Region:

> - integrated timetabling and ticketing
> - cross-subsidising services to run 'walk-up' regular frequencies on as many urban routes as possible, and 30 minute frequencies on as many rural routes as possible (duplication of services on profitable routes could stop); bus route networks could be considered from scratch (in cities in our Region, such as Norwich, Cambridge, Luton, and Colchester, potentially inner city routes could run into city centres, outer city routes in the case of larger cities could feed into rail services or inner city routes, circular routes connecting with other services could run at least every 30 minutes)
> - a focus again (see 3d, above) on punctuality and reliability (more bus lanes and priority at traffic lights could be introduced, every stop could be timed and bus ticket machines could show drivers how many minutes and seconds early or late their services are at each stop as already happens in some European countries)
> - 'real time information' for passengers where possible
> - a more modern/attractive and comfortable bus fleet where possible.

5. Support for safe and integrated walking and cycling, disability, and mobility routes in local communities, and car share schemes.
 Support for walking and cycling is too often the 'Cinderella' of public transport, receiving almost nothing. Under the Greens, this Cinderella would finally get to go to the ball: as well as lobbying for savings, - by having ditched HS2 - to be invested in cycle networks and safer streets, Read would seek to divert some of the money currently spent in the EU's 'TEN' programme for transport away from massive road and air schemes, and into a myriad of better value-for-money walking and cycling schemes.
Greens have already had some success in the Region in working toward safer streets: Read, while on the Norwich 'Joint Highways Agency Committee', proposed a resolution, that was accepted, that led to 20mph limits being brought in across a total

now of about a third of residential Norwich. Lower speed limits are a vital tool to reducing accidents – and for allowing kids to play outside again.

Links between transport infrastructure and economic prosperity.
True economic prosperity (which is not the same as discredited GDP-growth) comes from communities and people being: (a) less dependent on having to travel to time-consuming and resource-wasteful distances for work, and (b) less reliant on goods produced far away, such as food travelling thousands of miles to reach us. Green Party transport policy emphasises the need for us to travel (as desirable and necessary) within the region in comfort, reliably and sustainably, while our economic policy shifts towards high quality good and services produced more locally: a strong local economy that works for people, not corporations; an economy that works for the common good, not for the wealth of the wealthiest 1%.

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Summary and Conclusion:
A green transport future

The Green Party is THE Party of and for more resource-efficient and *public* transport. Our MP, Caroline Lucas, has made taking the railways back into public ownership a totemic issue, with her bill on this currently in Parliament.
 But it isn't enough to be simply strongly pro-public-transport, and pro-rail, as Greens are. One needs also to ask: what do we need from transport? Transport policy isn't about just getting people from A to B. We must abandon a 'predict and provide' infrastructure mentality, in this era of essential and unavoidable limits to growth.
 Greens therefore start from the key principle of "access not mobility" – e.g. through sensible planning, and localisation. Now, what this means is that we are not automatically in favour of every single rail scheme that is proposed. In particular, we reject HS2, which would encourage unsustainable patterns of commuting.
EU transport policy goes basically in the right direction - towards reduced emissions, improved public transport etc - but not where the Single Market set of policies interferes with that direction because the neo-liberal Single Market implies (i) a need for the maximum amount of transport interconnection in order to facilitate (maximise) the free movement of goods, and (ii) a market for firms across the EU to compete to provide transport services anywhere in the EU. The EU TEN-T network, though it's mainly rail schemes, mixes in with them some long-distance road schemes as well.
 The EU Transport White Paper emphasises the need to reduce emissions, but also wants to deal with the problem (sic.) of constraints on the capacity of airports. So the sustainability emphasis (which we welcome) and the single market emphasis (where it translates into a 'liberalisation' and 'growthist' agenda) clash with one another.

Greens believe strongly that the central place of road and air in the Transport White Paper and in TEN-T funding, and to some extent also in the EU's Urban Transport Action Plan, undermines the vital sustainability goals. For this reason, Green MEPs have criticised all of these for being insufficiently ambitious in terms of their CO2 reduction targets.

As an MEP, Rupert Read would do the same, and would seek to undergird and promote a rail network that can be genuinely sustainable.

Greens start from the following key principles:

- "access not mobility" – e.g. by sensible planning, and localisation,
- "keep journeys short", and
- "management before infrastructure" – obviously, we should not add excessively to the infrastructure , when there are so many reasons to think that we are not making the best use of the existing (and 'latent') infrastructure. (Thus we oppose HS2 and the new road-building programme; but support priority for buses and cyclists, support re-opening old train lines especially when these are still half-present on the ground, as many are; etc.) Management-measures form a package; the most important element of which is lower speeds on roads.

So: We should be encouraging people to live near where they work, and also to work at home. Fares policy could be very important, as is the cancellation of HS2, which would bring no benefit to the East. A huge road programme is planned by the Government -- but there should be no major road building designed to increase capacity (as distinct from some bypasses required for environmental purposes, and minor works necessary to implement road safety schemes, bus/cycle lanes etc). We should drop the undesirable and unattainable aim of maintaining/restoring Heathrow's position as the leading international hub, and we should drop any foolish ideas of new runways at Stansted or a new airport in the Thames Estuary.

To sum up: The Green Party believes there is an urgent need to improve local transport across the East. To reduce car use we need an attractive alternative – usually, public transport which is attractive, effective and affordable. The East deserves better. We need: (a) re-nationalised railways which are run for the common good, not private profit; (b) improved regional railways; (c) integrated ticketing with a regional 'Eastern card'; (d) cheaper, effective bus services in response to local need; and (e) improved local, sustainable transport.

The present 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 mainly serve the interests of 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. The EU can help with this: through spending its TEN/T money more wisely.

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

Our vision?: Greens would like to see less motorised travel, and more walking and cycling; living environments where a busy street life and children's unaccompanied mobility become the norm; rationalisation of goods-distribution; and the full exploitation of telecommunications as a substitute for personal travel.

That would be a greener and more pleasant land…

Appendix: the case *against* HS2 and against road-building

We have focussed on the positive in this report. We annex here our case against HS2 and against new roads: the money saved from abandoning those schemes could of course feed into making the vision sketched above a reality.

HS2: a government vanity project

HS2, the high-speed rail project to speed the connection between London and 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. This is the equivalent of at least £1500 per Eastern Region household. And at present, the East is going to see NONE of this money.

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. 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 longer minimum journey time.
• 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? And THAT is what we have outlined in our report, above.

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 dangerous climate change, such as that that was almost certainly involved in the recent floods. In early February 2014, the government published its draft National Policy Statement for major roads and railways. The Chancellor, 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. Greens think this is madness.

For this approach is based on the discredited belief that building more roads will solve congestion. In fact, building more roads simply 'induces' more journeys that would otherwise not have happened.

An obvious example is the NDR (Norwich Northern Distributor Road). Concerns about this new road include that the NDR would lead to a third ring of development around north Norwich. Already, a Growth Triangle of 10,000 new dwellings plus several business parks are being promoted either side of the NDR route in NE Norwich. The NDR will serve a vast tranche of new 'development' spilling Norwich out over a soon-to-be-tarmacked Norfolk countryside. It is not a 'bypass' at all; it is a road to nowhere designed to 'develop' the area north of Norwich and to ease the passage of freight to Broadland and north Norfolk (i.e. to rip the heart out of the local economy there). This is why Greens have consistently opposed the NDR; and why the road-scheme is becoming less and less popular with each passing month.

What we need is investment in public transport so that it becomes an appealing alternative to the car. As we have outlined above in the main body of the report.

i See later sections for what we mean by this: we do NOT mean GDP-growth, which is NOT real prosperity, as has been known for a long time: http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2012/may/24/robert-kennedy-gdp

ii See http://www.resilience.org/stories/2013-12-17/high-speed-trains-are-killing-the-european-railway-network for some good indications of what a disaster HS2 would be for Britain. The following is perhaps the best existing document on alternatives to HS2:
http://www.betterthanhs2.org/download/A%20Better%20Railway%20for%20Britain%20v1.1.pdf
www.betterthanhs2.org . See also http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/high-speed-2-the-best-we-can-do .

iii

Students/children and young people/pensioners/those on benefits should be provided discounted versions of this card.

 The 'London model', of the congestion charge, the Oyster, and regulation of the buses, was of course strongly helped by Jenny Jones and Darren Johnson, Green Party Assembly Members. Without these elected Greens, elected in proportional representation elections, it is quite possible that Ken Livingston, the then-Independent Mayor of London, would not have been able to introduce this transport revolution to the capital. Our proposals in the present report are based in some respects on what has been successfully done in London, with Green influence – minus, of course, the congestion charge, which is more specific to London circumstances.

v

Fifty years ago Dr Beeching was contracted by the government to recommend savings on Britain's rail lines. 5,000 miles of railway, and 2,000 stations were recommended for closure.

vi

In this respect, we are apparently in agreement with some in the Labour Party:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/andrew-gilligan/10406562/HS2-now-Labour-look-at-an-alternative-scheme.html

In the long run, an integrated regular interval timetable (often referred to in its original German, integraler Taktfahrplan) should be considered. This means a timetable which is based around trains departing at the same minutes past the hour in each direction and a system of symmetrical hubs. Ideally, main line trains stop at a station at xx.58-xx.02 in both directions, local services stop at xx.56-xx.04 and buses stop at xx.54-xx.06 and cross platform connections make the shortest connections possible, but the reality is obviously somewhat more complex and compromises are found. To create ideal nodes, journey times between two hubs should be around 25 or 55 minutes and in the long term infrastructure investment is targeted to allow this to happen, but less than ideal nodes of course remain. At major stations setting up hubs can be difficult: thus long distance trains may stop around xx.55-xx.05 / xx.25-xx.35 and local services may stop around xx.10-xx.20 / xx.40-xx.50 if there are not enough platforms for all the services. The "mirror image rule" means that the timetable is the same in both directions, which currently is not the case. Half way between nodes trains also pass, making this ideal for bus connections. Such a scheme of course relies on very good punctuality, but British railway punctuality is improving greatly (and would improve further, given the proposals contained in this Report), despite being hampered by unrealistic sectional running times and inconsistent allowances to make up for this. An integrated regular interval timetable makes progress towards eliminating the discrepancies between faster and slower links and is extremely easy for the public to understand. One website should give all times and prices for all public transport services. This method of planning is quickly spreading across Europe, at least for local services (for example, the recent German coalition agreement included an agreement to work towards implementing it nationally, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy, the Czech Republic and Hungary are all implementing it to some degree). Switzerland has employed this method nationally to great success - rail's modal share has climbed to a world record of over 17% (hugely better than any other European country, though still not good enough). Moreover, the integrated timetable means that public confidence in public transport is extremely high which leads to higher modal shares. Currently timetables are planned sequentially (e.g. the last

major East Coast Mainline timetable change assumed that all other service timetables were fixed, now a changing timetable for transpennine services assumes East Coast services are fixed etc. - this does not lead to optimal outcomes).