

The Conservative Party is committed to reducing the environmental impact of transport in the UK. We recognise that this requires measures to reduce transport's impact on the local environment—in the form of noise and air pollution – as well as policies that reduce carbon emissions to address climate change, a task which David Cameron has acknowledged is one of the defining challenges of our generation.

In order to achieve these vitally important goals, a Conservative Government, if elected, would implement the following key policies:

No third runway at Heathrow

- A Conservative Government will stop a third runway being built at Heathrow. Our goal is to make Heathrow airport better, not bigger. So we will dramatically improve rail links to Heathrow by ensuring that it is integrated into the new high speed network we propose. We will block plans for second runways at Stansted and Gatwick and reform Air Passenger Duty to create a new Airline Pollution Duty to encourage a switch to fuller and cleaner planes.

High Speed Rail

- We will begin work immediately to create a high speed rail line connecting London and Heathrow with Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, with construction beginning in 2015. This is the first step towards achieving our vision of a national high speed rail network to join up major cities across England, Scotland and Wales. Stage two will deliver two new lines bringing the North East, Scotland and Wales into the high speed rail network. Our high speed rail network will provide an attractive low carbon alternative to thousands of short haul flights, freeing up space at Heathrow. Our plans will also relieve overcrowding problems on the existing rail network and free up space for rail freight on the West Coast Main Line, with the potential to take thousands of lorries off our roads.

A switch to lower carbon public transport

- To encourage people to switch to lower carbon public transport, we would make it more attractive by reforming our railways to put passengers at the heart of decision-making. Our goal is to see the rail industry working better together, with a stronger, more unified focus on tackling problems that matter most to passengers, such as value for money and overcrowding. We will grant longer more flexible franchises to incentivise private sector investment in improvements passengers are crying out for, like longer platforms, longer trains and station improvements. We will create a powerful passenger champion by giving the Rail Regulator the powers it needs to get tough on Network Rail if it underperforms, including confiscating bonuses in the most serious cases. We will reform Network Rail to make it more accountable to its customers. And we will introduce a moratorium on building on any

disused rail lines still in public ownership. This will keep open the possibility of re-opening them for rail or cycle use in the future.

Transport Carbon Reduction Fund to support sustainable local travel

- We oppose Labour's attempts to bully local councils into introducing congestion charging in return for vital transport funding. A Conservative government will liberate this money, creating a Transport Carbon Reduction Fund to support sustainable travel. Councils and voluntary groups will be able to apply for available funding to support the green travel initiatives that work best for their communities, whether those are walking schemes, cycle priority, real-time information or smarter ticketing for bus services or other measures that make greener transport options more attractive or make it easier for people to cut down on work-related travel. As part of these plans, we will pilot subsidised shared taxi schemes which operate successfully in many rural areas in Europe.

Reform of transport decision-making process

- We will reform the way decisions are made on which transport projects to prioritise, so that the benefits of low carbon proposals (including light rail schemes) are fully recognised. This includes making changes to NATA to make it easier for low carbon schemes to get off the ground and seek to give local authorities more flexibility between capital and revenue spending. We will review the way our roads are managed to ensure the concerns of cyclists are given a higher priority, with the goal of making cycling a safer and more attractive transport option. To improve bus services, we will encourage partnerships between bus operators and local authorities because these arrangements have proven effectiveness in increasing bus use. We will address the legal technicalities which currently make it more difficult for these partnerships to make the progress they want to in improving services for passengers. We also recognise the effectiveness of appropriately sited bus priority measures, although this is a matter for local rather than national decision-making.

Electric and hybrid vehicles

- It is important to include the car in our low carbon plans, with a new wave of electric cars just around the corner. Britain has the chance to lead the world in replacing traditional cars with much greener vehicles. So we will introduce incentives for electricity network operators to establish a new national recharging network, to enable drivers to move more easily and more quickly to electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

Biofuels

- We can help transport make an even greater contribution to combating climate change by making sure that more of the fuel used comes from sustainable sources. Once we have created legally binding sustainability rules for existing biofuels, we will establish a more ambitious Renewable

transport Fuel Obligation to promote the development of sustainable second-generation fuels, which do not lead to increased food prices or deforestation.

Providing alternatives to journeys

- Not only do we want to make our transport system greener, we also want to make it easier for people to cut down on work related travel. Our plans to improve our transport system will therefore be taken forward in parallel with the roll-out of fast broadband which will help relieve congestion and reduce emissions by providing an alternative to many journeys which are unavoidable today. We will also pilot advanced video conferencing technology in Government departments to reduce the need for public sector travel. And we are prepared to consider personal travel planning initiatives as part of the range of local projects supported by our proposed Transport Carbon Reduction Fund.

The Conservative Party is committed to delivering these crucial proposals that we know would make a real difference in combating dangerous climate change and improving the quality of life of people throughout Britain.