

WAY TO GO



Railfuture joined a coalition of other campaigning groups in February to launch the Way to Go campaign.

The aim is to persuade the Government to carry out a sensible review of the 10 Year Transport Plan.

The coalition wants the Government to accept that building more roads is not the answer to traffic congestion.

There is a series of points in the campaign manifesto. On rail, the campaign wants:

- A nationwide railcard open to all giving lower price tickets
- Quality standards that bus and rail services must meet
- Long-term funding for urban and rural local public transport
- Grants for rail freight

Railfuture members are urged to send the postcard enclosed with this *Railwatch* to their MPs.

There is also a website www.waytogo.org.uk giving details of the campaign which is expected to run until July when it will be reviewed with the possibility that it will continue through to the expected General Election in spring 2005.

The road lobby is well organised and will be putting on more pressure as the year unfolds. If you see pro-road items in your papers you are urged to write a letter putting the case for rail. We cannot afford to sit back and let the road lobby have a clear run!

At the launch, the Way to Go campaign asked: Fancy losing another working week a year stuck in traffic? If not, tell the Government the Way to Go.

Drivers will lose the equivalent of another working week a year stuck in traffic by the end of the decade unless the Government changes its transport policy, according to new figures published by a coalition of over 25 major environment and social justice groups.

The coalition believes that investing in road building brings more traffic and congestion and encourages longer journeys and that tried-and-tested measures such as improved public transport and safe routes

to schools should be extended nationwide and given more funding.

These measures would increase transport choice, could help reduce traffic levels nationally by up to a tenth, and by up to a quarter in peak periods, and could reduce the amount of time spent travelling by car.

The coalition is calling for the revised 10 year transport plan to give more funding to measures that will help reduce traffic levels, leading to a cleaner environment, vibrant, enjoyable neighbourhoods, tranquil, beautiful countryside and a more socially inclusive transport system.

The measures are:

- A cycle-friendly road network and cycle training for all
- Streets, lanes and paths in good condition and pleasant for walking
- Services and facilities close to people so they don't need to drive
- Increased funding for local public transport, particularly in rural areas
- Networks of bus lanes
- Safe routes to schools for all children
- Lower speed limits – 20mph default in residential areas
- Greater incentives to buy smaller, cleaner vehicles
- Pay-as-you-go road user charging

Despite the importance of the issue and the widespread level of public concern about transport, there is no formal public consultation process as part of the review.

The Way to Go coalition is working to rectify this. It is asking people to send postcards or emails to their MP asking them to tell Transport Secretary Alistair Darling to commit to more funding for these measures in his revised transport plan.

Friends of the Earth executive director Tony Juniper said: "Everyone apart from the Government accepts that Britain's transport system is in a state of crisis. It's failing people, failing the country and failing

the environment. Road transport is the fastest rising UK source of emissions of gases causing climate change, the biggest environmental threat facing the world.

"The Way to Go campaign gives a clear vision of what we need to do to tackle this crisis and reduce transport's impact on the environment. Hopefully hundreds of thousands of people will tell Alistair Darling the way to go".

Transport 2000 Executive Director Stephen Joseph said: "Local communities around the country are feeling the brunt of our unsustainable transport system.

"Speeding drivers, traffic rat-running down residential streets to avoid congestion, inadequate public transport and poor conditions for pedestrians and cyclists all impact upon the quality of life of millions of people around the country, including children.

"The Way to Go for transport is to make it much easier for people to leave their cars behind, especially for local journeys, by investing far more heavily in walking, cycling and local public transport."

The Campaign to Protect Rural England executive director Kate Parminter said: "The Government is at an important crossroads.

"It can continue to let the countryside bear the brunt of rising traffic levels, damaging road building and noise, or it can choose a new direction and ensure the plan really delivers genuine transport choices for people which don't wreck the countryside. It's vital that we show the Government the way to go".

The Way to Go coalition is made up of Age Concern England, CPRE, Council for National

Parks, CTC – the national cyclists' organisation, Carplus – the car club network, Citizens Advice, DaRT (Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard Users Ltd), Environment Transport Association, Friends of the Earth England, Wales & Northern Ireland, Help the Aged, Joint Committee on Mobility of Blind and Partially Sighted People, JMU Access Partnership, Living Streets, London Cycling Campaign, National Council of Women of Great Britain, National Federation of Bus Users, National Federation of Women's Institutes, Railfuture, Ramblers' Association, Royal National Institute for the Blind, SERA (Socialist Environment and Resources Association), Slower Speeds Initiative, Sustrans, Transform Scotland, Transport 2000, Transport Salaried Staffs' Association, UNISON.

Transport 2010, the Government's 10 year plan for transport, was published in July 2000. It sets out the Government's transport priorities and spending plans for this decade.

A progress report was published in December 2002. The revision of the plan is being carried out alongside the Government's spending review, in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer decides how much each Government department can spend for the next three years.

Emails can be sent to MPs via the coalition's website at <http://www.waytogo.org.uk>

Way to Go contacts:

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