



BRITAIN'S LEADING PRO-RAIL CAMPAIGNING GROUP FOR PASSENGERS AND FREIGHT

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PRESS RELEASE

14 Jun 2012

DON'T CONCRETE OVER RAILWAY LINES SAY CAMPAIGNERS

At today's (14th June) public inquiry into the controversial Bristol bus rapid transit "BRT2" scheme, Nigel Bray from campaign group *Railfuture* urged the inspector to reject plans to concrete over the Bristol harbour railway and convert it into a busway. He told the inquiry that it would be a mistake to allow such a valuable transport asset to be wasted when light rail had so much potential. "I explained that Sheffield 20 years ago was in the same position that Bristol is in now. Today, Sheffield has an extensive tram network which has proved to be huge success. Guided buses, on the other hand, are a bit of a dead-end."

Under cross examination he explained how guided bus systems, both actual and proposed, are being abandoned in this country and abroad. "Bath is a really good example, they made the right decision, let's hope the inspector does too" he added. "The concrete beams on the controversial Cambridgeshire busway are starting to crack, and buses use more energy than rail."

The Department for Transport recently authorised a trial of tram-trains in Rotherham. These will be able to run both on light and heavy rail lines, including those used for freight and heavy passenger services. "Such a scheme would be ideal for the greater Bristol area, now that government policy seems to be changing."

Nigel explained to the inquiry that government policies were no longer biased against rail. Under previous rules, reducing car use was treated as a disbenefit because the government received less fuel tax, and that therefore rail schemes were not taken forward. "Fortunately that has now changed. With electrification of the main line to Bristol we have a huge opportunity to invest in local rail. That's the way forward for transport for the greater Bristol area."

Railfuture has produced several publications on new stations and lines. The most recent book, *Britain's Growing Railway – An A-Z of Reopenings*, published in 2010 and is still available at £9.95 from www.railfuture.org.uk/books.

NOTE FOR EDITORS

***Railfuture* is the campaigning name of the Railway Development Society Ltd (a not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 5011634. Reg. Office: 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND**

Railfuture is Britain's only completely independent voice on railway development. We are not affiliated to or sponsored by any political party, trade union, or private industry. We are funded almost entirely by our members.

Railfuture's President is Christian Wolmar, the well-known writer on rail issues. Its Vice Presidents include several retired train company chief executives, transport experts, MPs and MEPs from all main political parties and the former Secretary of State for Transport Lord Adonis. A full list of the *Railfuture* presidents can be found on our web-site at

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=vice%20presidents>.

Railfuture campaigns for Britain's railways to play a larger role for passengers and freight, calling for an enhanced and expanded network, including high-speed rail, along with light rail.

Rail is a vital part of an integrated efficient transport system serving a modern, vibrant, environmentally sustainable economy. We are pro-rail but not anti-road. *Railfuture* maintains that investment in rail travel and rail freight is vital to the future of the UK economy and environment.

Anyone supporting our aims can join online: www.railfuture.org.uk/join

For more information please contact:

Bruce Williamson (Media Spokesman)

Tel: 0117 927 2954 Mobile: 07759 557389

E-mail: media@railfuture.org.uk

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