

IT IS TIME TO SCRAP HS2

In October 2013, Lord Mandelson, speaking in the House of Lords about the Labour government's decision to instigate the HS2 high-speed rail-link confessed that: "It was a political trophy project justified on flimsy evidence."

HS2 is running out of control. UKIP will stop this flawed vanity scheme in its tracks.

The estimated cost is already £50 billion and HS2 Ltd is planning to spend over £800m in 2015/2016, before the project even gets the final go-ahead. The Government's own estimates show the cost will never be recouped.

HS2 will blight thousands of homes and wreak irreparable environmental damage across large tracts of central England.

The argument that HS2 is needed to provide extra capacity has just weeks ago been questioned by the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee, which concluded that: 'the Government has not made a convincing case for why this particular project should go ahead.'

There is barely any evidence that HS2 will reduce the North-South divide: the north would get much quicker and higher benefit from investment in the infrastructure between northern towns and cities.

HS2 is an unaffordable white elephant and, given other, far more pressing calls on public expenditure, such as the NHS, social care and defence, not to mention the need to reduce the deficit, it must face the axe.

LONDON AIRPORTS AND THE SOUTH EAST

The final report of the Davies Commission into airport capacity and connectivity in the UK will be published later this year. UKIP will consider its recommendations and then take a position on the basis of what we genuinely believe to be in the long-term best interests of the country.

However, we firmly believe that part of the solution to address the lack of airport capacity in the South East is to re-open Manston Airport. Manston is ideally placed to take low-cost airlines and freight-only aircraft; it is close to the railway network; enjoys good connections to Ashford International; will release additional capacity in the region; and take pressure off other airports.

SPEED CAMERAS AND ROAD SAFETY

UKIP will only allow installation of speed cameras when they can be used as a deterrent at accident black spots, near schools and in residential areas where there are specific potential dangers. We will not permit speed cameras to be used as revenue-raisers for local authorities.

ENDING ROAD TOLLS

We will remove road tolls where possible and let existing contracts on running road tolls expire. Motorists are already taxed highly enough through fuel and vehicle taxes.

BIG BROTHER 'PAY-AS-YOU-GO' PLANS

UKIP opposes 'pay-as-you-go' road charging schemes and attempts to introduce them by stealth.

From October 2015, the EU will require all new cars to be fitted with the 'eCall' system. Ostensibly a road safety measure, this system tracks vehicles using GPS and reports back to a central database. This capability would enable introduction of a Europe-wide road pricing system, on a miles travelled basis, which the EU Transport Commissioner is keen to introduce. We will scrap mandatory fitments of eCall and allow owners who already have eCall installed to disable it on their vehicles.

SUPPORTING OUR HAULAGE INDUSTRY

The Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) is an expensive second-tier requirement, which is causing job losses, because of the added administration and expense to hauliers. We will scrap the DCPC for professionally licensed drivers.

THE HGV ROAD USER LEVY

This levy currently applies to HGV vehicles registered both in the UK and other EU countries, to comply with various EU directives.

After leaving the EU the levy would cease to apply to UK vehicles, but the Vehicle Excise Duty on UK vehicles would be adjusted by the equivalent amount to make this aspect of the change revenue neutral for both UK hauliers and the government.

The current levy tariff will then be doubled to a maximum of £2000 per annum and only apply to foreign registered HGVs. This change will help UK hauliers to compete with European hauliers entering the UK, loaded with cheaper fuel bought on the Continent.

It will achieve exactly the same effect as UKIP's original 'Britdisc' proposal.

CARING FOR CLASSIC CARS

To help protect the enduring legacy of the motor industry and our classic and historic vehicles, UKIP will exempt vehicles over 25 years old from Vehicle Excise Duty.