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The Impact Centre
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Dear Stephen

GROWING THE RAILWAYS MANIFESTO

The Institute is happy to give its support to the broad thrust of the Manifesto. We welcomed the general principles embodied in the 1998 White Paper – *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone* – and have been increasingly discouraged as Government policy has moved progressively away from those principles. As we read it, the Manifesto seeks to promote increased capacity on the railway and so restore the position for rail – in an integrated transport system - that was envisaged in the White Paper.

We can also support the quest for a more efficiently run network that ensures that the best value is obtained from public funding. The section of the Manifesto relating to this - under the heading “Costs” on page 3 - could be strengthened by reference to the need for a tighter performance monitoring regime.

While recognising the wish to keep the Manifesto manageably short, we feel there are some important omissions -

- there is no mention the Community Infrastructure Fund that the ODPM have committed to funding transport infrastructure for their sustainable communities plan;
- there is reference to the Olympics, but not to the £18 billion that DfT have committed to improving London's transport services between now and 2012; and
- there is no reference to a really important component - the passenger. In particular, the Manifesto should be one for the users and potential users of the rail network, and should discuss the need for improved standards terms of personal security, overcrowding, punctuality and reliability, cleanliness of trains, fare levels, etc. All these rate highly in the annual rail passenger surveys.

The Institute often finds itself in the position of having to remind Government, and others, that there is quite a large part of England outside London and the South East. In this instance, it might be argued that insufficient emphasis is given to London, given that 70% of all national rail journeys (1.8 million per day) are to, from or within London. There is a case for highlighting the need for investment in London's rail network, to a level commensurate with the 20% (more than £160bn pa) of UK GDP that London's central business area generates. This is especially significant as rail travel to London from all UK regions, except Scotland, has grown strongly in recent years, with an average increase of 33.4% between 1995/96 and 2002/03.

Under the heading *Planning* in the checklist on *page 4*, there appears to be some confusion between financial planning – to achieve cost efficiency in the running of the railway - and the role of spatial planning in securing land for rail infrastructure. This requires clarification.

I confirm that the Institute would be happy to be associated with the Manifesto, but hope that you will be able to take the above comments on board before its publication.

Yours sincerely

David Barraclough
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