

Press Release for Immediate Use – 26th November 2008

A46 Dualling – the Road to Climate Change

The Government's own figures calculate that widening the A46 from Newark to Widmerpool will add 20,079 extra tonnes of CO2 every year to the atmosphere. But at least we know now, not that there was any doubt before, that New Labour is the party of environmental pollution, the party for Climate Change and therefore not only supports seeing swathes of Lincolnshire disappear under the waters of the North Sea, but actually wants to accelerate that process.

The A46 scheme is going to cost around £365m. What could that buy instead?

- 9,490 new affordable homes, or
- 107,675 existing private sector homes bought up to a decent standard (with millions of £££s extra benefit to NHS as poor housing is a major contributor to poor health), or
- 27,375 new long term jobs (jobs constructing the A46 are short term), or
- 2 new 280-bed specialist hospitals, or
- 14 new average-sized secondary schools.

The Chair of Nottinghamshire Better Transport, David Thornhill, comments:

“At least we now know Government priorities. Saving a 4x4 driver a couple of minutes on their journey time is far more important than the sick, the homeless or the future of our children”.

The ministerial statement from Geoff Hoon on the £1 billion transport package announced on Tuesday astounded environmental campaigners. He announced:

“I want people and business to be able to choose how and when they travel and to do so reliably, comfortably and safely.”

Choice Mr Hoon? What do you say to the rail commuters living east of Nottingham who from December see their train home axed? What about the stations in the

East Midlands that see services cut from between 50% and 75% from December?
And all of these stations are in the hinterland of the A46.

But Mr Hoon is a comedian too:

"Our railways are more important than ever ... promised to deliver 1300 new carriages by March 2014."

Leaving aside the confusion over if the 1300 carriages are new or not, just how many carriages are allocated to the East Midlands?

The answer is THREE.

Notes to Editors:

- 1) The first three bullet points above are extrapolated from data presented by the East Midlands Regional Assembly to stakeholders on funding decisions.
- 2) The hospital example is based on the new Papworth Hospital proposal - http://www.papworthhospital.nhs.uk/content.php?/about/new_papworth_hospital.
- 3) The schools example is based on a written answer to Phil Wilson, MP for Sedgefield, from Sarah McCarthy-Fry, Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the Department for Children, Schools and Families, on 13th October.
- 4) Modern Railways September calculates the number of new coaches to be 599 and the Government figure of 1300 is achieved by some very dubious juggling of figures and extensive spin-doctoring.
- 5) The reduction in train services in the East Midlands from December has been covered by Nottingham Better Transport by press release and briefing documents. These are on our website - http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/nottinghamshire_local_group.

Contact details are above. Additionally, my mobile number is 07792031074.