

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

13th April 2010

Dear Prime Minister,

THE TRANSPORT NETWORK AND LIFE CHANCES IN THE MANCHESTER CITY REGION

Greater Manchester has adapted from a declining industrial base to a knowledge based economy. The city centre has been transformed. Much of the 'City Region' has prospered from a long period of growth – though the impacts have been uneven across social and economic groups, and geographically. While some have flourished, others experience severe and long standing deprivation, seeing relatively little benefit, or none.

However, development of the capacity, quality and accessibility of the transport network has not kept pace with the increase in the scale and nature of movement arising from this change and growth. Nor has the most efficient or effective use been made of the different elements (or modes) of the network – by which I mean road (including for car use), mass transit by bus, rail and tram, and cycling and pedestrian routes.

I do believe there are some fundamental problems and shortcomings with the transport network that must be resolved if the city region is to secure lasting growth, and if all of its citizens are to have a genuine chance to share in the benefits of that growth. While significant investment in the network is being made, new challenges will arise as the UK emerges from recession, alongside the reality of major cuts in public spending.

It is suggested that the formula for supporting the most deprived areas includes focusing on education from the early years, growing skills, and proximity to – or access to employment, especially entry level employment. I would question whether proximity to or access to employment is in place for all of our most deprived communities.

One of our ongoing environmental concerns is air quality. While there has been a gradual overall improvement over the past 10 years, there has been little or no improvement close to busy/arterial roads and around the M60. The potential impacts on health, morbidity, mortality, quality of life – and productivity of the workforce are well documented. However, I'm uncertain of the role that management of the road network, and the provision of mass transit, possibly in conjunction with the emergence of cleaner technologies, might have in tackling poor air quality and the move to a low carbon economy.

I am keen to hear your thoughts on how the city region and Government should respond to these challenges, to secure lasting growth and better life chances for all of our citizens.

Yours faithfully,

David Campbell