

South West trains

Network Rail wrote to me with some good news this week. They reminded me that by 2018 they will increase peak capacity into Waterloo by 30%, meaning more seats for rail travellers.

The letter however, was more about the bad news of getting this expansion in place. This August they will close platforms 1-10 at Waterloo to extend and straighten platforms to accommodate longer trains and more passengers.

Commuters and other passengers are warned that this August will see reduced services. The network will be more prone to delays and difficulties if things go wrong. They tell us "there is never an ideal time to undertake such significant work. We have chosen this period to do the work as August is much quieter for the rail network..."

Green Party calls for immediate lifting of public sector pay cap



Green Party

4 July 2017

***Co-leader Jonathan Bartley: "Private companies are having a banquet organised by the Government while public sector workers aren't even getting the crumbs from the table"**

The Green Party has called on the Government to immediately lift the public sector pay cap after a damning report revealed the scale of the impact on workers [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"What will it take for Theresa May and Philip Hammond to listen? The staff on the frontline in our most important jobs – including the emergency services they have been so ready to praise in the last few months – and even their own party colleagues have urged them to see sense.

“Enough is enough and it’s time for the Government to shift its priorities away from cutting taxes for those who don’t need it and start paying public sector workers fairly, many of whom are struggling just to make ends meet.

“The Prime Minister’s attempt to sneak out this report is the latest indication that she knows this unpopular policy is nearing the end of its shelf life. Planned tax cuts for corporations should be scrapped immediately. Private companies are having a banquet organised by the Government while public sector workers aren’t even getting the crumbs from the table. Let’s give our teachers, doctors, firefighters and police the pay rises they deserve.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jul/03/damning-government-report-shows-scale-of-public-sector-pay-cuts>

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[The shocking findings of this report should serve as a wake-up call to this Government- Lewell-Buck](#)

Emma

Lewell-Buck MP, Shadow Minister for Children and Families, commenting on the Children’s Commissioner’s report on measuring the number of vulnerable children, said:

“The shocking findings of this report should serve as a wake-up call to this Government who have so far refused to even measure the scale of the problem let alone come up with effective policy solutions.

“From the 800,000 children suffering from mental health difficulties, the 46,000 thought to be in gangs, or the 119,000 homeless or in unstable housing, these figures lay out the startling facts about the lives of vulnerable children who have largely been ignored by this Government.

“The

Government should be taking action now to support every child and ensure that they are safe, secure, and have a roof over their head.

“Labour will

enshrine the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into law, as we tackle the root causes of vulnerability, such as housing, crime, and poverty, deliver

universal infant free school meals to address food poverty and school based counselling in secondary schools to support vulnerable children, as we ensure every child gets the best possible start in life.”

Ends

[New measures draw Taiwan people to mainland](#)



Artists from Taiwan and the mainland stage a puppet show during the Ninth Straits Forum in Xiamen, Fujian province, in June. [Photo/ Xinhua]

A growing number of the island’s residents are relocating, lured by new policies, financial incentives and a wider range of opportunities.

‘Since I opened my first store in Sichuan province in December, the mainland’s business potential has exceeded my expectations. I now have four stores,” said Ken Huang, an entrepreneur from Taiwan.

The 37-year-old owner of a handbag brand was among 8,000 people from the island who participated in a weeklong trade exhibition at the Ninth Straits Forum in Xiamen, Fujian province, last month. Most of the attendees were seeking opportunities to expand their businesses in the mainland and exploring the possibility of trading internationally.

Last month, communications and exchanges between people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits continued to rise, despite recent setbacks in political ties.

Although tourism and business activity are developing rapidly, high-level communications between the mainland and Taiwan have been at a low point for more than a year. The relationship between the two sides had been developing constructively based on the 1992 Consensus, a formula for relations between Taipei and Beijing rooted in the understanding that there is only one China, and opposed to "Taiwan independence".

Things changed in May last year, when the Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan denied the existence of the 1992 Consensus, consigning dialogue to the deep freeze. That means the Straits Forum – composed of 21 major trade fairs, symposiums and exhibitions – is now the biggest platform for people from both sides of the Straits to seek career opportunities and better lifestyles.

During a speech at the forum, Yu Zhengsheng, China's top political adviser, announced a series of new policies to be rolled out in the coming months to benefit Taiwan residents in the mainland, and help them enjoy the same status as mainlanders in terms of financial and public services.

A growing presence

The new policies have been formulated as a response to the growing number of people from Taiwan settling in the mainland. According to a report conducted in April by 1111 Job Bank Co in Taiwan, about 700,000 Taiwan residents live and work outside the island, with about 350,000 of them working in the Chinese mainland. Meanwhile, research conducted in March by the Global Views Survey Research Center in Taiwan suggested that nearly 60 percent of Taiwan residents ages 20 to 29 would be willing to work, study or invest in the mainland.

Last year, the number of new businesses in the mainland owned by Taiwan residents rose 32 percent, and by February, nearly 4,000 sole proprietors from the island were operating in the mainland.

More than 20 new policies will be released in the coming months to help Taiwan residents find their feet in mainland cities.

Seven-year-old stirs up internet with his 'six-pack'



7-year old Chen Yi boasts amazing physique. [Photo: xdkb.net]

The internet is buzzing about pictures of a 7-year old who is sporting the physique of a world-class athlete.

Local internet site xdkb.net interviewed Chen Yi after he dominated a gymnastics meet in Zhejiang's capital, Hangzhou, recently.

While Chen Yi won six gold medals and one silver, what have made the headlines are the pictures of him posing!

The boy's mother, Zhang Hongyu, said that her son was born with innate

athletic talent. She claims that when Chen Yi was just 2 years old, he could do a pull-up with just one arm. "He started walking when he was just 11-months old, and he learned to ride a bicycle before kindergarten," Zhang recalled with a proud smile on her face.

Chen Yi was accepted into the local gymnastics school at the age of five. He now lives at school and only goes home during the weekends. Although his training is tough and intensive, his mother says he never considers giving up.

Asked how he was able to develop his physique, Zhang credits the training her son is going through. "There is nothing special about his diet," says Zhang "Just like other normal kids, Chen Yi eats around a dozen dumplings for a meal. He also enjoys vegetables, such as cucumber and lettuce."