

Scotland's exercise blackspots revealed

20 Feb 2017



Scotland's most and least active areas have been revealed in an official Holyrood survey.

The report, which will be presented to the Scottish Parliament's health committee tomorrow, will show a huge disparity in how active residents.

As a result, the Scottish Conservatives have urged the SNP to provide the necessary action to make Scotland an active nation.

The study of more than 3000 people highlighted the percentage of non-participants in regular sport or physical activity based on postcode.

Aberdeen proved to be the least active area in Scotland with statistics revealing that 35 per cent of respondents from the Granite City don't participate in regular activity – 23 per cent behind leaders Falkirk.

Kilmarnock also collated worrying results, 25 per cent of its respondents putting their name under the non-participation brackets.

Scottish Conservative sport spokesman Brian Whittle said:

"This report reveals the SNP's inability to promote the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle.

"It's hugely important to participate in regular activity, and it's known to come hand in hand with living a healthy and happy life.

"It's sad that the SNP has failed to make the most of Glasgow's Commonwealth Games' potential to make Scotland a healthy and active nation for years to come.

"There are of course various barriers preventing participation in regular activity – lack of time, money and self-confidence to name but a few.

"The SNP seems to only talk about making so many improvements. Now people are realising it has no idea how to address these issues.

"That's why we urge the SNP to read over the Scottish Conservatives' long-term consultation, a document that we believe will go a long way in tackling the obvious inequality of access across Scotland.

"The Scottish Government claims it wants to shed Scotland's unhealthy image.

"However, the only way to start making Scotland a healthier and more active

nation is to start knocking these barriers down.”

Click here to read a copy of the report:

www.parliament.scot/S5_HealthandSportCommittee/Meeting%20Papers/Public_Papers_21_Feb_2017.pdf

A copy of the Scottish Conservative healthy lifestyle strategy:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Scottish-Conservative-Healthy-Lifestyle-Strategy.pdf>

China to improve gov't service in townships

The central authorities have issued a document calling for improved public services at the township level.

The document was issued by the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council.

Township governments should provide quality education in rural areas with suitable teaching environments, safe campuses and support for under privileged students, according to the document.

It called on township governments to offer better training and vocational opportunities to rural residents, and ensure basic social services for special groups including the disabled, migrant workers, and children living in poverty.

Governments at the township level should implement national insurance policies and improve public health services, said the document.

It stressed that ancient villages of great historical and cultural value should be properly protected and developed, adding that township governments should also improve their service in areas such as environmental protection, food safety and juvenile protection.

The document urged governments of county-level and above to provide financial support for infrastructure, public services and other social undertakings in townships, and to encourage loans and investment to small towns and villages.

Township government budgets and spending should be strictly regulated to fend off local debt risks and guarantee fiscal balance, it said.

The document also called for preferential policies for township officials,

such as easier promotions and subsidies, to attract talent to work in townships.

The underinvestment in infrastructure spending in the north is totally unacceptable – Andy McDonald

Andy

McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, commenting on an IPPR report which shows underinvestment in transport in the north, said:

"The underinvestment in infrastructure spending in the north is totally unacceptable. We need to ensure economic growth is spread beyond just London and the South East. Having a balanced economy is good for the UK as a whole but the Government seem determined to invest in London at the expense of the rest of country.

"It's short-term thinking that means our regions are starved of investment when they have so much potential for growth, and it shines a light on the Government's self-defeating economic strategy which says that meeting the transport needs of London should come at the expense of our regions.

"Labour would make sure that the transport needs of the South-East are met whilst rebalancing the economy and making the necessary investment in transport infrastructure right across the UK, including prioritising a CrossRail for the North to improve connectivity between our Northern cities."

Long-Bailey writes to Greg Clark to demand guarantee of jobs for Vauxhall

workforce

Shadow

Business Secretary, Rebecca Long-Bailey, writes to Greg Clark about potential sale of Vauxhall to Peugeot-PSA

The

Shadow Secretary for BEIS has today written to Greg Clark, Secretary of State for BEIS, urging him to guarantee that jobs and terms and conditions of the Vauxhall workforce will be protected in the event of the company's sale to Peugeot-PSA.

Rebecca

Long-Bailey has also requested an Urgent Question on the matter in the House of Commons, which will be taken at 3.30 today.

On

the threat the proposed takeover poses to the UK workforce, Rebecca Long-Bailey said:

"These reports are deeply worrying to the 4,500 workers employed at Vauxhall's Luton and Ellesmere Port plants, and to the tens of thousands of employees in its retail, support and supply chain operations. PSA's history of axing jobs in the name of rationalisation are also concerning. Britain's automotive industry has become a world-leader by developing its skilled and highly-committed workforce and becoming more productive, not by ruthlessly driving down costs."

On

the implications of the proposal for the Government's industrial strategy, Rebecca Long-Bailey said:

"a piecemeal, ad hoc approach will see our automotive sector lurch from crisis to crisis as the uncertainties created by Brexit begin to take their toll. Waiting for car makers to go to the brink before offering them support is the very antithesis of an industrial strategy."

On

the need to give workers in the UK the same protections given to European counterparts, Rebecca Long-Bailey said:

"failure

to provide equivalent Government support to Opel's UK sites as that seen in France and Germany, and to ensure full parity of treatment between Opel's UK

and French workers would be a betrayal of the UK workforce.”

Ends

**Editors’
notes**

– It
has recently emerged that General Motors is discussing the sale of Opel,
which
includes Vauxhall, to PSA Group.

– 4,500
workers are employed at Vauxhall’s Luton and Ellesmere port plants, along
with
tens of thousands more who are employed in the retail, support and supply
chain
operations.

– These
jobs are under threat from the proposed sale, should Vauxhall cut back
production, a particular concern given the PSA Group has a reputation for
cutting jobs to rationalise production.

– The
French Government owns a 14% stake in PSA and the German government is
providing financial support to its Opel sites.

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The
full text of the letter is as follows:

Dear
Rt Hon Greg Clark MP,

I
am writing to request an urgent meeting to discuss reports that General
Motors
may be about to sell its European business, Opel, to PSA, the owner of
Peugeot
and Citroen brands.

These
reports are deeply worrying to the 4,500 workers employed at Vauxhall’s Luton
and Ellesmere Port plants, and to the tens of thousands of employees in its
retail, support and supply chain operations. PSA’s history of axing jobs in
the
name of rationalisation are also concerning. Britain’s automotive industry
has
become a world-leader by developing its skilled and highly-committed
workforce

and becoming more productive, not by ruthlessly driving down costs.

I understand that you met with PSA executives on 16th February and that the Prime Minister is due to meet PSA CEO Carlos Taveres shortly. I am keen to hear in detail what assurances they were able to give you about their plans for Vauxhall, and what you and your Government are doing to ensure that PSA do not turn their backs on Opel's UK workforce.

Like you, I welcomed Nissan's decision late last year to continue to invest in the UK, but argued at the time that all car manufacturers should be given the same assurances. Recent developments have underlined this point. It was reported over the weekend that PSA have now been given the same guarantees, but I remain concerned that a piecemeal, ad hoc approach will see our automotive sector lurch from crisis to crisis as the uncertainties created by Brexit begin to take their toll. Waiting for car makers to go to the brink before offering them support is the very antithesis of an industrial strategy.

This is particularly so given that the French Government owns a 14% stake in PSA. In light of predictions by analysts and industry experts that French workers will be left unscathed by any buy-out, and that job losses will fall elsewhere, including in the UK, it is hard not to worry that the British Government's hands-off approach is letting workers down. Even the German Government is providing financial support to its Opel sites, and workers in Germany are much harder to sack than those in the UK. Under such circumstances, failure to provide equivalent Government support to Opel's UK sites as that seen in France and Germany, and to ensure full parity of treatment between Opel's UK and French workers would be a betrayal of the UK workforce.

In the longer run, it is clear that the Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper launched last month has done little to reassure manufacturers weighing up whether or not to stay in the UK after we leave the European Union. Urgent action is needed to encourage the reshoring of manufacturing supply chains and secure single market access for key exporting industries. Without this, there is a real danger that many of our finest manufacturers will fall victim to new import and export tariffs.

The next few days will be critical in determining the future of Vauxhall in the UK. I would therefore be most grateful if you would agree to meet me as a matter of urgency to discuss what action you are taking to protect the jobs and terms and conditions of Opel's UK workforce. It may also be welcome to involve those MP's representing areas directly affected by this issue in our discussions for example those members representing Luton and Ellesmere Port.

Yours
sincerely,

Rebecca
Long-Bailey

Shadow
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

[Container terminal in court after worker injured](#)

London Container Terminal (Tilbury) Limited (LCT) has been fined after a worker was seriously injured when the 'straddle' carrier he was driving overturned at Tilbury Docks in November 2014.

Basildon Crown Court heard that on 16 November 2014 a worker inadvertently drove his straddle carrier into a large excavation at the docks. The court was told that looking down from his cab, the driver did not see the road cones, small flashing lights or the ticker tape around the excavation because it was dark and the weather conditions were poor.

The straddle carrier, a vehicle used in the port terminal for stacking and moving freight shipping containers, toppled over. The worker suffered life changing injuries, his head wound required 29 staples to close and he continues to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the precautions taken by LCT were wholly inadequate to prevent the vehicle from being able to enter the excavation. The court heard that all of the straddle carrier drivers working in the vicinity of the excavation had been exposed to the risk for several days during the course of the excavation works.

London Container Terminal Limited of Northfleet Hope House, Tilbury Docks,

Tilbury pleaded guilty to breaching sections 2(1) and 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and have been fined £180,000 and ordered to pay costs of £73,296. London Container Terminal ceased trading in December the fine will be paid by the Port of Tilbury (London) Limited.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Inspector Nicola Jaynes said: "This was a serious incident and that could have been much worse. This was preventable if LCT had the correct safety precautions in place. This case serves as a reminder that suitable precautions are required to protect both pedestrians and vehicles from entering excavations."

Further information on how to reduce the risks involved with workplace transport can be found at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/index.htm>

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. hse.gov.uk^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.