

Driving people off the roads

The Transport Minister thinks Wales was right to impose 20 mph speed limits in many places. She has told Councils in England it's fine by her if they want to harass more drivers off the roads with closures, narrowing, lane removals, lower speed limits, more bollards and painted regulations.

Yet she belongs to a government which says it wants to boost the economic growth rate. Hasn't she realised how dependent businesses and their customers are on cars, vans and trucks? Doesn't she know every extra traffic jam from less roadspace cuts down how much work people can fit in to a day, puts up the costs of doing business and adds to CO₂ as vehicles keep their engines running for longer to cope with delays and go slows in lower gears.

You can't take the weekly shop home on a bike or get to most places by train. Roads are nationalised. Motorists are made to pay many times the cost of providing them with Vehicle excise Duty, VAT, Fuel Duty, road tolls, congestion charges and parking charges. The road provider regularly closes roads, allows utility providers to dig them up and put pipes and wires under main routes and fails to maintain them to decent standards. The owners of Heathrow do not close the runways to put in pipes and wires or to under take surface maintenance at busy times when people need to fly. Why does the state as road provider treat overcharged drivers so badly?