

# Privatised rail has left us with a fragmented and inefficient network that drives up costs and under delivers – McDonald

**Andy McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Transport**, commenting on a report by the Commons Transport Select Committee, said:

"Privatised rail has left us with a fragmented and inefficient network that drives up costs and under delivers.

"A railway works best as an integrated network but privatisation and franchising have meant breaking it up to create opportunities for companies to extract a profit, resulting in costly inefficiencies. For example, hundreds of people are employed full time on the railway to argue about which company is responsible for delays.

"It's not just that money which should be used to improve services or keep fares down is syphoned off or wasted, we have a confusing fare structure and services are disjointed and difficult to use for passengers.

"The current system is broken. It is time for our railways to be run under public ownership, in the public interest as an integrated national asset with affordable fares for all and long-term investment in the railway network."

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## News story: New powers to crack down on laser attacks

People shining laser pens to distract pilots, train and bus drivers could face fines of thousands of pounds or a jail sentence under stronger new powers designed to protect the public.

Shining lasers at any transport operator will become an offence under new legislation. This new law will make it even safer for aircraft travel as well as passengers using buses, taxis and trains both now and in the future.

Currently, it is an offence to shine lasers at pilots and offenders could

face fines of up to £2,500. But police do not have the powers to effectively tackle and investigate the inappropriate use of laser devices against aircraft, trains, buses and other forms of transport. One of the current laws means that police have to prove a person endangered the aircraft when committing the offence of shining a laser, whereas the new law will mean that police will only have to prove the offence of shining the laser.

Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling said:

Shining a laser pointer at pilots or drivers is incredibly dangerous and could have fatal consequences. Whilst we know laser pens can be fun and many users have good intentions, some are not aware of the risks of dazzling drivers or pilots putting public safety at risk. That's why we want to take the common sense approach to strengthen our laws to protect the public from those who are unaware of the dangers or even worse, intentionally want to cause harm. This kind of dangerous behaviour risks lives and must be stopped.

There are around 1,500 laser attacks on aircraft every year in the UK and we know there have been similar attacks on trains and buses. What I am announcing today (5 February 2017) are plans to give the police effective powers to investigate and bring those who misuse lasers to justice.

The powers and penalties for the offence will be outlined in upcoming legislation.

Steve Landells, Flight Safety Specialist at the British Airline Pilots Association (BALPA) said:

BALPA welcomes this move to tighten the law on lasers. Any move to give the police and authorities more powers to tackle this real and growing threat to flight safety is a good thing, and we are pleased that the government has included action on lasers in this bill".

The first laser attack on an aircraft was reported in 2004 with over 200 attacks reported per year by 2008. Since 2011, there have been approximately 1,500 attacks per year on aircraft.

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**[Weekly Road Report – West End Ward](#)**



## DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL – WEEKLY ROAD REPORT

### REPORT FOR WEST END WARD WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2017

Blackness Road/Glamis Road – temporary traffic lights for one week for gas main renewal.

City Road (at Pitfour Street) – temporary traffic lights for one week from Wednesday 1 February for Hydro Electric cable fault.

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## [Top procuratorate vows to get tougher with economic crimes](#)

China's Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) has promised severe punishments for economic crimes that affect interests of lots of people, including illegally absorbing public deposits and fundraising fraud.

It also urged procuratorates to give more priority to the prevention of financial risks, cracking down on crimes such as money laundering and underground banking, and take an active part in Internet financial risk management, according to an SPP statement.

The SPP also pledged to strengthen work against manipulation and insider trading in securities and futures markets, and in supervision of property markets.

High-profile cases of financial crimes have been reported in China in the past years, including the illegal fund-raising activity of Ezubao and the case of Xu Xiang, general manager of a Shanghai-based investment company indicted for allegedly manipulating the securities market.

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## 304 department-level officials receive disciplinary punishments in 2016

In 2016, 304 department-level officials from central government bodies received disciplinary punishment, according to disciplinary authorities.

Among the 304 officials, 126 were punished for violating the “eight-point” guidelines against bureaucracy and extravagance, according to a work conference on disciplinary work of central government bodies.

In 2016, discipline inspection authorities dealt with over 22,500 tip-offs concerning disciplinary violations of central state agencies’ officials, four times that of the previous year.