

Latest figures from Bus Passenger Survey show Government plans will not put passengers first – Daniel Zeichner

Daniel

Zeichner MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Minister, commenting on the publication of the Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey figures for Autumn 2016, said:

"These results show once again that compared to national operators, municipal bus companies provide some of the best bus services in the country. The Government's plans to ban local authorities from forming their own bus companies in the future clearly flies in the face of all the evidence.

"This year's survey also suggests that congestion is becoming an increasing problem for bus users. With traffic projected to grow, this problem is only going to become worse. We really need to see local authorities and bus companies using the tools available in the Bus Services Bill to address congestion, and clean up our air."

Police staff confidence hits new low

22 Mar 2017



Police officer confidence throughout Scotland has hit a new low, an internal survey conducted by Police Scotland has revealed.

The shocking statistics show that just one in 10 police officers believe that Police Scotland has a "positive future."

It was reported this morning that the questionnaire asked all staff their thoughts on the statement: "I feel positive about the future within Police Scotland."

Results revealed that only 10 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement – while 71 per cent suggested they either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The severe confidence crisis looks set to continue over the next few years

with the force facing huge budget pressures on the SNP's watch.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross said:

"This survey puts a spotlight on just how little confidence there is within the police for the single force.

"Officers and staff need to have full confidence in Police Scotland if they are to work to the best of their abilities and keep Scotland's communities safe.

"It's extremely worrying that almost four years on from the SNP centralising our police forces, morale within the organisation remains at rock bottom."

For a copy of The Sun's exclusive article regarding the survey click here:
<https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/756737/shock-stats-reveal-police-morale-has-hit-new-low-as-just-one-in-10-cops-back-the-forces-future/>

[David Hodge's resignation makes the need for full disclosure from the Government more pressing – Teresa Pearce](#)

Teresa

Pearce, Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, commenting on the news that Surrey

County Council Leader David Hodge is standing down as the Local Government Association's Conservative group leader, said:

"It appears that the row around the Tory sweetheart deal for Surrey Council has claimed a victim with the resignation of David Hodge as the man responsible for

standing up for all Tory councils. Perhaps that's unsurprising given the accusations he colluded with the Government over a favourable deal not available to other councils.

"This doesn't put the matter to bed however. Theresa May has failed to come clean about the terms of the deal offered to Surrey, failed to apologise for her Government's misleading suggestion that there had been no such deal and would not give the assurance that other local councils will get the same treatment.

“David

Hodge’s resignation makes the need for full disclosure from the Government more

pressing. What we need from the Tories is a long term sustainable plan for funding social care, rather than cosy deals for Tories councils.”

[Jonathan Ashworth responds to news that three more trusts have been put into financial special measures](#)

Jonathan

Ashworth MP, Labour’s Shadow Health Secretary, commenting on news that three more trusts have been put into financial special measures by NHS Improvement, said:

“The

Government’s inept mismanagement of the NHS is pushing hospital finances to the

brink. NHS Providers have already warned this week that delivering services within the current financial settlement is “mission impossible”. The news today

that another three hospital trusts have been forced into financial special measures just illustrates the deepening financial challenge facing the health service.

“Theresa

May can’t keep on forcing hospitals to choose between balancing the books and providing safe patient care. By underfunding the NHS for so long, the Prime Minister is putting patients at risk. The Government needs to set out a long-term,

sustainable financial settlement for the NHS which allows hospitals to provide

the top quality health services which Britain’s patients expect.”

[End of an era for RAF Lossiemouth Tornados](#)

End of an era for RAF Lossiemouth Tornados

XV(Reserve) Squadron, the Tornado Operational Conversion Unit, completed its final formal flying on Friday 17 March 2017. The disbandment of the Squadron, after 102 years' of service, on Friday 31 March 2017 will see the end of the Tornado GR4 era at RAF Lossiemouth.



To mark the end of this period in the Station's history, Tornados from XV(Reserve) Squadron carried out a final sortie that included flying by Aberdeen and Leuchars airfields and Tain Air Weapons Range. These sites have all been instrumental in the training of aircrew at RAF Lossiemouth to operate the Tornado. The aircraft returned to RAF Lossiemouth in the early afternoon and carried out a series of flypasts over the Station.

The Tornado Weapons Conversion Unit was based at RAF Honington in Suffolk when it received the XV (Reserve) Squadron title in 1992. It moved to RAF Lossiemouth in November 1993 and then with the closure of the Tri-national Tornado Training Establishment in March 1999 XV (Reserve) Squadron assumed responsibility for the training of all of the RAF's Tornado GR4 pilots and Weapon Systems Operators in both initial training on the aircraft and in post-graduate courses. Over the past 24 years the Squadron has been the life-blood of the front line ensuring the squadrons were provided with combat capable aircrew. The final ab-initio pilot finished his training at the end of January, and the last refresher pilot, returning from a tour instructing at RAF Valley, graduated at the end of February.



Whilst the Tornado Operational Conversion Unit will cease from 31 March, the RAF will continue to utilise the Tornado GR4 until it is finally withdrawn from service in 2019. RAF Marham in Norfolk is the base of the RAF's front line Tornado squadrons from where aircraft and personnel are deployed to support current operations.

Wing Commander Paul Froome is the Officer Commanding of XV(Reserve) Squadron, and took part in the

flypast. He said:

“The
disbandment of XV(Reserve) Squadron is a milestone in the drawdown of the
Tornado fleet, but I can say hand on heart that every member of the
Squadron,
past and present, has delivered an exceptional level of service and
commitment
to the Tornado fleet and the RAF.”



Three
frontline Tornado squadrons have been based at RAF Lossiemouth since the
early
1990s:

12 (Bomber) Squadron was already based at RAF
Lossiemouth with the Buccaneer when it was re-equipped with the Tornado GR1B
in
October 1993 in the Maritime Strike role. The Squadron was disbanded at
RAF Lossiemouth on 31 Mar 2014, however it was resurrected on 12 Jan 2015 at
RAF Marham.

14 Squadron was based at RAF Bruggen with the
Tornado GR1 before returning to the UK and was based at RAF Lossiemouth from
1
Jan 2001. The Squadron was disbanded on 1 Jun 2011. The number
plate was passed to a new ISTAR unit which had been operating as part of
V(Army
Co-operation) Squadron at RAF Waddington.

617 Squadron was equipped with the Tornado GR1
at RAF Marham when it relocated to RAF Lossiemouth in May 1994. It was at
this point that it adopted a Maritime Strike role as well as its overland
strike role. The Squadron was disbanded in March 2014, however it has
since been reformed and is re-equipping with the F-35 Lightning II.

Each of these squadrons deployed personnel and aircraft to Operations
TELIC, HERRICK and ELLAMY where the Tornado GR4 exploited its range and
payload
in the Close Air Support and Interdiction roles.



RAF Lossiemouth will maintain the provision of
Quick Reaction Alert (Interceptor) North, or QRA as it is commonly called,
as
its primary role. The
strategically important position of the Station on the northern Scottish
coastline makes it an ideal location to maintain aircraft and crews on high
alert, in order
to scramble and intercept unidentified aircraft approaching UK airspace. This

is the basis of QRA and is a duty that
has been maintained by the Royal Air Force on a 24/7 basis for decades. The
Station will also see growth in the near
future as a fourth Typhoon squadron is formed here and 9 P8 Poseidon
Maritime
Patrol Aircraft are based here.

Editor: Flt Lt Ian Smith

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