

Woodhead Pass Closure - A Vision of the Future

Did the closure of the Woodhead Pass this week offer us a vision of what village life might be like with the introduction of the Translink Rolling Highway service. Julian Newton, Managing Director of Translink UK Ltd believes it did. "Without the HGV's and the attendant fumes, vibration and noise, the villages of Tintwistle and Hollingworth were a picture of tranquillity" he says. "Furthermore, by transferring the heavy freight from Road to Rail the environmental impact will not only benefit the local community. We estimate that Carbon Dioxide emissions, the main cause of Green house Global Warming, will be reduced by upwards of 100,000 Tonnes per annum.

The topography of the Woodhead line between Hattersley and Tinsley, Sheffield lends itself perfectly to the use of Regenerative Braking. This system switches the diesel electric motors to generators on the downward slope thereby slowing the train and at the same time producing electricity, which is then stored in batteries. The stored electricity is then used to power the motors when the train is going through built up areas, reducing noise levels and assisting the diesel engine on the uphill part of the journey. The system, which resembles a scaled up version of the technology used on the Toyota Prius hybrid car, increases the energy efficiency of the locomotive by over 20% thereby reducing Carbon emissions.