

TramForward

Campaigning for Light Rail

PRESS RELEASE FROM *TramForward*

12 June 2008

***TramForward* WELCOMES PARLIAMENTARY TRAM-TRAIN DISCUSSIONS**

MPs and Lords pose questions to Government - Light rail campaign concerned over scope of trial

Light rail campaign *TramForward* has welcomed the question put by Nick Palmer MP to the transport minister on 9th June. The previous week Lord Bradshaw had made a similar point in the House of Lords. *TramForward* has been lobbying hard for the development of light rail in the UK, including tram-trains which can operate both on town centre tramways and on railway lines.

Dr. Palmer asked for details of where and when the second, street-running, phase of the planned tram-train trial will take place. Tom Harris, Minister for Rail, replied that: 'The first phase of the tram train trial will start in 2010 and it will take two years to test the technical and operational feasibility of tram train and gather the necessary data to understand the costs and benefits. Subject to successful completion of the first phase there is an option for a second phase to use the Sheffield Supertram network to see what additional benefits the vehicles can deliver when extended on to city centre tram lines.'

After receiving the Minister's reply, Dr Palmer commented: 'Tram trains are used to good effect on the continent, and especially in Nottingham's twin city of Karlsruhe. There are several locations in the UK, especially around the East Midlands, the North-West and South Yorkshire where trams could run along both heavy railway lines and then use light rail along the streets to access the heart of the city. In Nottingham, Sheffield and Manchester we have highly successful tram systems, which can easily be linked to the local rail networks. I am pleased that further trials on the streets are planned.'

TramForward believes that lighter rolling stock with improved acceleration and braking can and should be trialled in the UK to assess improvements to public transport provision and other benefits. The Sheffield-Huddersfield proposal is not, in itself, tram-train - the essential element of which is the ability to operate on both railway lines and street tramways. *TramForward* regrets that such a crucial part of the tram-train concept is not to be addressed in the first phase of the trial.

'We're looking at getting on a tram in one town centre, travelling along the streets and then on to a railway track and zooming along to the next town before being delivered to exactly where you want to go in the centre again,' said Geoff Lusher, *TramForward's* deputy chairman. 'That's what a successful tram-train system is all about: taking people from where they are to where they want to be - quickly, economically and without hassle. With rising oil prices we need to think forward. Tram-trains are a transport mode for a better future.'

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. *TramForward* is the campaigning arm of the Light Rail Transit Association.
2. The Light Rail Transit Association is the world's leading organisation campaigning for better public transport through light rail, tramway and metro systems in our towns and cities for 70 years. It also supports the revitalisation of suburban and rural transport through the application of light rail.
3. The LRTA acts through its network of local branches, which campaign for better transport in their localities.
4. Membership of the LRTA costs under 12p a day. To join, visit www.lрта.org or write to the Membership Secretary, LRTA, 38 Wolseley Road, Sale, Greater Manchester, M33 7AU. Members of the LRTA receive the monthly magazine *Tramways & Urban Transit* - written and read by experts in the field - and gain other benefits including discounts on videos and books, tours of transport systems and cut-price admission to selected transport sites.
5. Press enquiries - please contact:
Geoff Lusher, Deputy Chairman, Light Rail Transit Association
86 Heritage Court, Warstone Lane, Birmingham, B18 6HU
Telephone 07768 457911
E-mail glusher@lrta.org