

TramForward

Campaigning for Light Rail

PRESS RELEASE FROM *TramForward*

20 May 2009

TramForward welcomes funding for Metrolink expansion

Light rail campaign *TramForward* welcomes the announcement by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities on Wednesday 13 May of a funding package to complete the previously stalled Metrolink tram extensions. Funding would be from local and regional sources which would be supplemented by the early release of promised government money. This agreement has been achieved by support across the political divide for the common good of Greater Manchester.

The expansion of Metrolink, known as the Big Bang, was first announced back in 2000 but the Government withdrew the scheme in 2004 due to rising costs, prompting the "Back on Track" campaign.

In 2008, the Government agreed to pay towards a scaled-down "Mini Bang" expansion to Rochdale railway station, Chorlton and Droylsden, while later that year the full "Big Bang" expansion was made conditional on the introduction of a £5 a day congestion charge, which was rejected by residents of Greater Manchester in a referendum in December.

But now, five months later, the 10 Greater Manchester councils have agreed a package to fund the remaining "Big Bang" extensions to Manchester Airport, East Didsbury, Ashton-under-Lyne and the town centres of Oldham and Rochdale, as well as a second city crossing between Victoria and G-Mex.

Construction work on the new Metrolink lines, which would create up to 21,000 jobs, could start in late 2009.

TramForward commends the people of Greater Manchester for their determination in working to achieve a comprehensive modern tramway system which will be an example to other British cities, and it urges Secretary of State for Transport Geoff Hoon to approve the proposals and confirm the allocation of the Government funding which will be required.

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.lrta.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.
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