

TramForward *Campaigning for Light Rail*

PRESS RELEASE FROM *TramForward*

25 February 2010

***TramForward* welcomes publication of Light Rail and the City regions Report**

TramForward welcomes the publication of the findings of the All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group Inquiry into Light Rail and the City Regions. At a meeting at Westminster Paul Rowen, MP for Rochdale who chairs the group, launched the report of the Inquiry held last autumn, in which a panel of MPs scrutinised submissions from more than 30 organisations.

The Inquiry found that light rail is best suited to heavily used urban corridors, where their speed, reliability and capacity can be fully exploited. Furthermore, evidence suggests that modern tram systems are very successful in attracting motorists out of their cars, reducing congestion, improving safety, providing access for all, transforming perceptions, improving the urban environment, and supporting regeneration.

Nevertheless, the Inquiry found a 'lack of coherent policies and consistent direction' from the Department for Transport, which creates uncertainty in the industry and stifles development, leading to delays and cost inflation. In contrast the European experience is characterised by relatively faster delivery and lower costs.

Light rail in the UK is disadvantaged, compared to other transport modes, by the current appraisal system, which fails to take into account the full range of benefits that trams have to offer, while trams also experience less favourable treatment in the levels of local contribution and utilities betterment required.

The report calls upon Government to work together with local transport authorities and the light rail industry to address and solve these problems to ensure fair treatment for trams in the future.

Geoff Lusher, Chairman of the Light Rail Transit Association said "we support the Inquiry's recommendations and look forward to a more robust government policy towards light rail. In order to survive and prosper in the modern world, our city regions need to be able to plan, develop and finance transport systems appropriate to their needs."

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.
5. Press enquiries - please contact:

Brian S. Lomas, Development Officer, Light Rail Transit Association
7 Crofton Avenue, Horfield, Bristol BS7 0BP
Telephone: 0117 951 7785
E-mail: development@lrta.org

Geoff Lusher, Chairman, Light Rail Transit Association
86 Heritage Court, Warstone Lane, Birmingham, B18 6HU
Telephone: 07768 457911
E-mail: glusher@lrta.org