

TramForward

Campaigning for Light Rail

PRESS RELEASE FROM *TramForward*

13 August 2011

***TramForward* welcomes Low Cost Advice from Minister ahead of Edinburgh Tram Review**

TramForward is encouraged by UK Government Transport Minister Norman Baker's interview on BBC Radio 4's Face the Facts on "Edinburgh's Trams Mind the Funding Gap" on Wednesday 10th August 12.30.

Mr Baker referred to a review currently underway at his Department looking at means of bringing down the cost of tramway construction projects. In a separate interview on the same programme two days earlier Mr Baker had cited the excessive cost of moving utilities as a major factor in cost escalation, as it was in Edinburgh. He suggested that, combined with lighter track construction, moving all utilities might not be necessary. Utility companies could be given access after the line had been built as required, the disruption to tram services could be minimised by greater use of crossovers to allow single track running and/or the use of temporary track, common in mainland Europe. It must be remembered that the first generation of tramways ran without disruption on roads with utilities buried under the tramway track.

Mr Baker was confident that the construction costs of tramways can be brought down and *TramForward* eagerly awaits the publication of the Department for Transport report in the near future and hopes its findings will be of value not only to Edinburgh Council but Transport Scotland in helping clarify simpler construction methods and costs in Tramway and Light Rail Projects. More specifically it could help identify further cost savings after the August Report to Edinburgh Council on Edinburgh Tram finance and funding.

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 Wolsley 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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