



National Joint Utilities Group Ltd
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23rd October 2009

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing on behalf of the National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG), the UK's only trade association representing utilities and their contractors on street works issues. NJUG welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to your inquiry *Light Rail and City Regions: a 21st Century Mode of Transport*.

NJUG is unfortunately unable to provide oral evidence in addition to the written evidence below.

NJUG does not request that you treat the whole, or any part, of the written evidence as confidential.

Below is a memorandum providing NJUG's written evidence in relation to this inquiry. If you should have any queries, or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Les Guest
CEO
National Joint Utilities Group Ltd



**Written evidence for Inquiry into Light Rail and City Regions:
A 21st Century Mode of Transport**

To: All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group and pteg

By: The National Joint Utilities Group

1. Introduction to the National Joint Utilities Group

1.1 The National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) is the UK's only trade association representing utilities on street works issues. NJUG is also the utility arm of the Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee, HAUC(UK), working collaboratively with local authorities to better the standards of road and street works in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

1.2 Our focus is on promoting best practice, self-regulation and a two-way working relationship with Government and other relevant stakeholders. A copy of NJUG's *Vision for Street Works*, which demonstrates our commitment to supporting the implementation of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) as well as existing street works legislation and codes of practice, can be located at <http://www.njug.org.uk/category/3/pageid/8/>.

1.3 Our current members include the Energy Networks Association (representing electricity and gas), Water UK (representing all water and wastewater companies), National Grid, Openreach, and Virgin Media. Our Associate Members, all of whom are utility contractors, are Clancy Docwra, Skanska Utilities, Balfour Beatty, Morrison Utility Services, Morgan Est, NACAP, PJ Keary, First Intervention, Carillion, Enterprise, Laing O'Rourke and Amec. Including members through trade associations, NJUG represents thirty-seven utility companies and twelve utility contractors.

1.4 NJUG welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to your Inquiry into Light Rail, Light Rail and City Regions: a 21st Century Mode of Transport.

2. Executive summary of key points of submission

2.1 The key points of this submission are focused upon the implications that light rail systems may have for utilities.

2.2. These include impact upon utility apparatus; impact upon utility works; economic implications; and resulting implications relating to the community.

3. Key points

3.1 Utilities undertake works for four reasons: safety, security of supply, to connect or upgrade customers' supplies, or to divert apparatus to facilitate major highway improvement schemes and transport or urban regeneration projects. Examples of the latter include Crossrail, the 2012 Olympics, tram projects, or new urban and housing developments.

3.2 To allow for the laying of tram systems, any utility networks beneath or in the swept path vicinity of the tram route may well need to be diverted to allow for safe future access for maintenance, repair and new services. In addition, unacceptable risk of stray current interference or damage to utility apparatus may necessitate protection or relocation works. No utility work can be undertaken in the immediate vicinity of a tramway without a closure of the tram network and a shutdown of the associated electrical supply. It is therefore not an option to leave utility apparatus insitu directly underneath or in the close proximity to a tramway system where 24/7 immediate access is required to ensure the security of supply.

3.3 An example of the level of cost involved in diversionary works can be taken from the current Edinburgh tram project. The total cost of the system was estimated at the start to be £550 million, with £70 million of that on utility diversions.

3.3 The need for extensive consultation prior to construction is essential in order to facilitate the co-ordination of any utility diversionary works necessitated by a scheme. Utility works are often by necessity restricted during the construction of light rail systems, resulting in a large number of essential works needing to be brought forward and undertaken before tram infrastructure starts to be constructed. Therefore advanced planning involving affected utilities is an essential element tramway construction projects to ensure efficient co-ordination of necessary works can be undertaken at the earliest possible opportunity.

3.4 Long term utility investment works, planned months and often years in advance, may require re-scheduling to accommodate the tram project timescales . As a result, a backlog of necessary works often occurs, including maintenance work required for safety purposes.

3.5 Extensions in the duration of works, combined with the delay caused to maintenance and planned works, also have implications for the wider community, causing increased frustration at the slow progress. Utilities are as a result inevitably subjected to an undeserved increase in customer complaints.

3.6 With exception to consideration of the above, utilities fully support initiatives such as light rail projects that assist in reducing congestion by offering alternative modes of traveling to automobiles.

Evidence ends