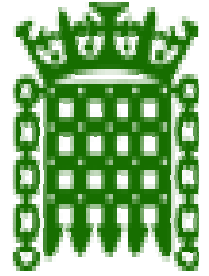




## All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group

House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA  
Light Rail & Trams, Affordable & Sustainable Transport

"The past we inherit, the future we build ourselves"



"TramTrain does it Greener and Cheaper on lightly used railway lines and in the streets"

# South Suburban rail plan gets ScotRail boss' backing



Photo: Light Rail (UK)

A tram train in operation in Kassel, Germany

Monday 14 March 2016

Proposals to run hybrid train-trams on the South Suburban rail line have received a boost from the boss of ScotRail.

Managing director Phil Verster told MSPs they offered a "real practical solution" to easing pressure on the rail network.

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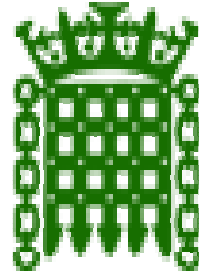
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Tram-trains, which are being trialled in Yorkshire and are widely used in Europe, can run on both tram and train tracks.

They could be introduced in Edinburgh under plans by Network Rail to electrify the "South Sub" to divert more freight trains from running through Waverley.

The tram-trains could run into the city centre before switching to tracks on streets.

Mr Verster was previously involved with the Yorkshire experiment in his last job as Network Rail's London North East route managing director.

Mr Verster told the Holyrood's infrastructure and capital investment committee yesterday that tram-trains "must be on the cards for so many cities". He added: "They are a real practical solution to get footfall off the rail network."

The South Sub, which arcs round the south side from near Murrayfield Stadium to Brunstane, lost its regular passenger trains more than 50 years ago, but is still used for diverted services and freight trains. The Capital Rail Action Group, which has pressed for greater use of the line, said Mr Verster's support was significant because the ScotRail Alliance covered both the train operator and track owner Network Rail.

Chair Lawrence Marshall said: "Tram-trains would ease the pressure on the existing railway and open up new travel opportunities for the city."

He said a tram line could be built to link the South Sub to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, just south of the line. Stations could be re-opened at Gorgie, Craiglockhart, Morningside, Blackford or Newington, Cameron Toll, Craigmillar, Niddrie and Kinnaird Park.

Managing Director Light Rail (UK) Jim Harkins said: TramTrain could leave the Edinburgh Tramline at the Haymarket stop (giving cross platform tram access to Princess Street and frees up platform space) by turning right city bound immediately after the stop (radius is greater than 25m so current vehicles can cope), into Dalry/Gorgie Road and using further along, the road vehicle access to the South Suburban rail line.

It would be possible to retro fit the current CAF vehicles with batteries or super capacitors short term, or use a low cost overhead now available on the market, rails raised to meet platform height and the sparse freight traffic timetabled during the dark hours, this is done with the TramTrain on the Nexus Tyne & Wear system and elsewhere, a simple low cost solution practised elsewhere in Europe

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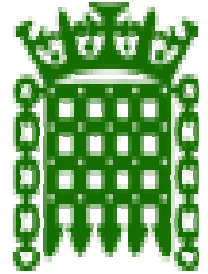
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A simple but ingenious solution to mixed gauge bodies on the Kassel TramTrain system

Photo: light Rail (UK)

In view of the recent pollution warnings, this would be significant way of achieving modal switch out of cars onto public transport.

Committee convener and Edinburgh Southern SNP MSP Jim Eadie led a debate at Holyrood last month, which secured cross-party support for developing the line.

Transport minister Derek Mackay told MSPs in the Chamber: "I am happy to take the issue further, but I give a strong message that I want to see clear evidence from the [public-private co-ordinating body] South East of Scotland Transport Partnership and City of Edinburgh Council that the issue is a priority for them."

Courtesy : Edinburgh News

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