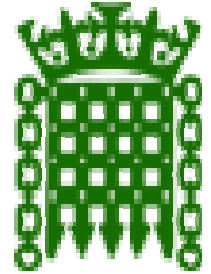




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House of Commons
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Light Rail & Trams, Affordable & Sustainable Transport

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



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

Meeting at the House of Commons, Wednesday, 18th January 2017

Chairman: Greg Mulholland MP

Speakers:

Andrea Lee
Healthy Air Campaigner
Client Earth

**Lewis Lesley and Stewart
Saunders,**
Preston TramPower Group

Ben Still
Managing Director
West Yorkshire Combined
Authority

Greg Mulholland

Welcomed the audience to the meeting, with a special welcome to Councillor Keith Wakefield, Leader of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. He said that the Group was very keen to engage with local authorities as they are increasingly the prime movers behind local light rail schemes. He then introduced the speakers.

The first speaker was Andrea Lee from Client Earth, who were instrumental in taking the government to court over the failure to meet air quality targets. Air quality is a major item in APPLRG's campaigning, with light rail being an important means of improving air quality in large towns and cities.

The Group has particularly highlighted the "Oslo effect" as well as tailpipe emissions and believes that the health problems caused by poor air quality will have to be at the heart of transport decision-making.

Andrea Lee

spoke to a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Fighting for our right to breathe clean air". The presentation can be found at <http://www.applrguk.co.uk/media/files/LR-APPLRGClient-Earth-Presentation-18-Jan-2017pdf>

Andrea Lee is the Healthy Air Campaigner for Client Earth, an environmental law charity, which uses the legal system to bring about change in areas such as climate change, forestry and biodiversity as well as clean air issues.

She paid tribute to Client Earth's legal team for their work in bringing the recent court case against the government. Air pollution is, according to the WHO, the biggest environmental health risk across the world. In the UK, although the pollution from coal burning which produced the smog of the 1950s has disappeared, it has been replaced by much less visible pollution from internal combustion engines in vehicles.

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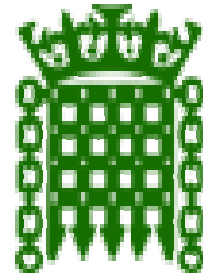


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The particles that make up part of this pollution are less than a third of the width of a human hair or even smaller and cannot be seen. Their diameter is measured in micrometres, from PM₁₀ (ten micrometres diameter) down to PM_{2.5}. While most smoke particles are trapped in the nose and throat, these small particles go down into the lungs and the very small particles can go deep into the lungs and into the bloodstream to be carried round the body. Traces of particulate matter have been found in brain tissue. This is where the possible link with diseases like Alzheimer's arises. This particular link is not yet proven but the general link from particulates and nitrogen oxides to illness and death from heart attacks and respiratory diseases, as well as premature births and other problems, is well known. Last year the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health published a report "Every breath we take" which catalogues all the evidence for pollution impacts on health that are known at the moment.

They calculated that about 40,000 premature deaths a year in the UK are caused by air-borne pollutants. There are also concerns over inequality as those lower down on the economic scale and ethnic minorities are more likely to be exposed to illegal levels of air quality.

The right to clean air is not just a moral right but is now a legal right. Of the many pieces of air quality legislation the one we focus on is the Ambient Air Quality Directive, on which we successfully took the government to court. This sets legal limits for the concentration of a set of pollutants and dates by which these levels should be met. If the legal limits are exceeded then the responsible authority, in the case of the UK the Secretary of State for the Environment, has to be developing plans containing appropriate measures to keep the period of non-compliance as short as possible.

So the UK should have been meeting the legal limit for nitrogen dioxide in 2010 but by 2010 only three of the 43 zones in the UK complied. This is what triggered Client Earth's first legal challenge Action was discussed with the government but in the case of 16 zones the problems were so huge that they were not even going to apply for the time extensions that they could have asked the European Commission for. These zones included London, Manchester, and Birmingham. They did not expect London to meet the legal limits until 2030.

In the absence of a planned solution Client Earth decided to take legal action, which finally went to the Supreme Court, which decided that the government was in breach of its legal obligations.

The final ruling in 2015 was that the government should be in no doubt about the need for immediate remedial action and that new plans should be drawn up by the end of 2015 to show how the UK would meet the legal limits in the shortest possible time.

The government did this but we did not consider the plan was good enough to achieve the object. There was an overall plan and a plan for each zone which stated that most zones would reach the target by 2020 but London not until; 2025.

Only one new measure was brought in which extended the need for clean air zones to be set up to five additional cities.

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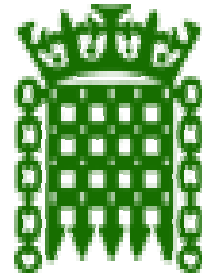


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Clean air zones were thought to be one of the most effective ways to tackle the problem. Clean air zones were a rebranding of Low emission zones, restricting certain vehicles from entering the area based on their emission levels. Clean Earth considered that the government had been using over-optimistic modelling assumptions in reaching the dates that they set. The Volkswagen scandal highlighted the inaccuracy of laboratory tests for assessing actual diesel vehicle emissions.

Many new diesel cars are actually emitting many times the legal limit for pollutants but would be admitted to clean air zones because their official (lab tested) levels are acceptable.

So, last year another legal challenge was initiated on the basis that the government were not complying with the original Supreme Court order. In October the High Court ruled that the government's plans were inadequate and that they would have to produce revised plans by April 2017 for public consultation, with final publication by the end of July 2017. This time a technical report would also be required. The quickest route to compliance must be chosen.

The rules are such that if any one place within a zone fails to comply then the whole zone fails. This means that any future infrastructure projects, such as airport expansion must be shown not to lead to a breach of air quality limits. Immediately following this ruling the Prime Minister undertook to take appropriate action. DEFRA has set up a joint air quality unit with the Department for Transport which is currently working on the plan.

If there are any ideas out there which would lead to an improvement in air quality then this is a good time to put them forward.

Government figures suggest that road transport is responsible for 80% of emissions and diesel-engined vehicles, cars, vans, lorries and buses, are the main problem; petrol engines are relatively cleaner. Diesel-engined vehicles are largely failing to meet current limits. There is no silver bullet to solve the problem. At present Client Earth is pressing for a national network of clean air zones, which appears to be the most effective means we have of tackling air pollution in urban areas and we want cars to be targeted, at present only heavier vehicles are being dealt with.

This needs to be done as quickly as possible. We are basing this on the Euro 6 limits but they must be for actual emissions. It is not enough to discourage people from driving; walking, cycling and public transport must be promoted.

We also need to look at enhancing the legal requirements as the current legal limits fall short of meeting WHO guidelines on clean air. We also need, for instance, to consider the danger from particles from brake, tyre and road wear alongside tailpipe emissions.

We are calling for a new Clean Air Act to cover all this and to make the UK a world leader in the field able to export its expertise worldwide, because this is a worldwide problem.

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Email aptrguk@aol.com www.aptrguk.co.uk

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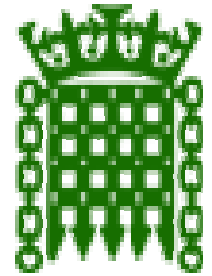
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Questions

Greg Mulholland

asked, given that light rail clearly has a greener form of technology than combustion engine vehicles, how Client Earth and APPLRG could work together to campaign for cleaner air.

Andrea Lee

replied that there was not one solution but that light rail was one of a number of measures that could be used. She hoped that Client Earth had opened the door for government to take solutions such as light rail more seriously.

They now have a legal obligation to be looking at all solutions and to take action and it has now got to the point where cost cannot be used as a reason not to do things.

Greg Mulholland

asked how we could make transport decision-makers aware of the need to reduce particulates, because, even if there were a switch to electric cars, there would still be particulates coming from road surfaces and tyres.

Andrea Lee

said it was important to stress the health hazards of pollution. Client Earth is now working with the UK Health Alliance to stress the medical aspects

Jim Harkins (Light Rail (UK))

said they were working with a group supporting the case of a Mrs Swanson? who is taking Transport for London to court over the loss of her daughter through respiratory illness resulting from transport emissions. They had been advised that there is now a case to challenge decision-makers for providing unsafe transport. This is particularly where authorities are providing bus services where pollution from the "Oslo effect" is greater than from tailpipe emissions.

Andrea Lee

replied that it was difficult to move forward on this as particulate pollutants did not exceed legal limits. Client Earth is looking at this in respect of duty of care and human rights but breaches here would be much harder to prove.

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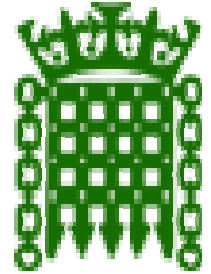
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John Parry (Parry People Movers)

said that improvements tended to come from advances in engineering rather than from laws. The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution was saying these things in the 1990s but the problem is still there.

Andrea Lee

agreed but said that the legal rulings should be seen as an opportunity to produce the necessary technological solutions and to persuade government to invest in those solutions and support the growth of clean technologies. We have to keep pushing.

Chris Belk (Conservative Transport Group)

said they were looking at driverless vehicles which would reduce pollution by the elimination of heavy braking and stop-start driving, cutting brake and tyre wear. The government should be taking more interest in this development.

Andrea Lee

pointed out that Client Earth did not profess to have expertise in all the possible technologies that might help solve the pollution problem. The government is assuming that things will improve through technological advance but they need to accelerate that process.

Tim Kendell (TramForward)

thought that change tended to come about through regulation and enforcement and cited the Health and Safety Executive and the Rail Inspectorate as regulators in their fields.
Do we need a regulator for air quality, especially if we leave the EU which is currently laying down most of the standards in this area?

Andrea Lee

agreed that at present the European Commission provides the regulatory role. We will need a UK body to provide enforcement under the Clean Air Act.

Dave Holladay (STRAIL UK)

said that more emphasis was placed on moving vehicles in city centres than moving people. Roads such as Oxford Street in London and Oxford Road in Manchester were frequently clogged with lightly loaded, slow-moving buses.

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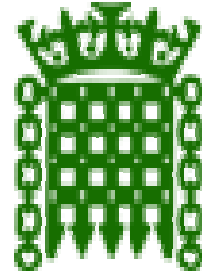
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A light rail system for city centres with rapid boarding and prepaid or free fares would reduce the number of buses and improve congestion and pollution problems. How can we persuade planners of this?

Andrea Lee

agreed and said that the next few months were a perfect opportunity for such suggestions to be put to DEFRA and DfT

Peter Roche (TramPower)

emphasised that light rail was the way forward not electric or driverless cars.

Greg Mulholland

thanked the speaker for an important presentation and looked forward to cooperation between APPLRG and Client Earth in pursuing the clean air agenda.

He then introduced Lewis Lesley and Stewart Saunders who were to give a joint presentation on the developments in Preston and other proposals from TramPower. This was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation, which will be available on the Latest News page of the APPLRG website <http://www.applrguk.co.uk/Latest-news>

Lewis Lesley

briefly described his previous academic career, including fifteen years research on how to get people out of cars and on to buses. He quoted Runcorn New Town, built around a busway which was predicted to lead to fifty percent of all journeys being by bus. In 1982, fifteen years later, only fifteen percent of trips were by bus and today it is five percent. Nobody has managed to get people out of cars on to buses.

He referred to the National Audit Office report, which said that trams were bad value for money and which led to the drying up of government money for tram schemes. In 2011 the DfT report "Green light for light rail" which although superficially encouraging placed emphasis on bringing down the cost of tram schemes to "European levels". Government policy has been to encourage bus schemes as a cheap and rapid answer to transport problems but once people have access to cars they will not switch to buses. He demonstrated figures showing the low percentage share of journeys by bus, particularly outside London and the correlation between bus patronage and the proportion of households having access to a car.

He showed how buses in Oxford Street contributed to air pollution by comparing figures of normal days with a bus strike day. This year the annual maximum for excessive air pollution has already been breached.

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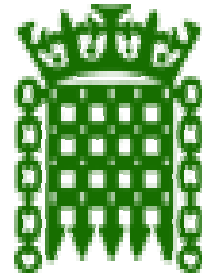


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The current going rate for a new tramway is around £300m, which would buy 12 schools, 3 hospitals or 3500 houses.

Tramway construction is also extremely disruptive to the day to day life of the city with wholesale utility diversions and massive track foundations being laid.

Innovations proposed by TramPower, LR55 track and simplified overhead, mean that roads do not have to be extensively excavated.

If the road is capable of bearing a 44tonn lorry, it can support a tram without the need for huge concrete foundations.

TramPower calculates that 100 metres of tramway can be installed per week – track and overhead - greatly reducing disruption to local businesses.

TramPower's City class tram is the lightest vehicle currently on the market. All these developments have been extensively tested.

Preston was chosen because it is low down on the government's radar for investment. It has a population of 120,000 and was designated a city in 2002, but it has poor air quality and bad congestion.

Most trips are by car, only 7% by bus. TramPower's proposed tramline is largely on an old railway line, with the westernmost section running along the main street.

The scheme will be financially self-supporting – no public subsidy. Approval will be sought through local planning applications and by private agreements, not via the Transport and Works Act.

At the end of last year planning permission was granted for the depot and a section of test track.

The full line will be fully depreciated so that life-expired assets can be renewed from revenue. This is in contrast to conventional systems which need to apply for extra grants to replace track or rolling stock.

Research has shown that heavy goods vehicles and buses are the principal cause of damage to tram track. A section of TramPower's LR55 track was installed in Rotherham bus station and was subject to 2.5m bus movements per year, equivalent to around 30 years wear on a normal road, for four years without damage.

A small section was also installed on the Sheffield Supertram system in 1996 and has survived being crossed by 100 (now risen to 300) goods vehicles per day without maintenance, unlike the surrounding conventional track, and is good for another 15 years.

It has also been possible to demonstrate that access to utilities can be obtained with the track in situ and the trams still operating.

It was important to get the people of Preston on side.

A survey carried out by questionnaire in two housing estates that backed on to the proposed tramline yielded a 42% response, compared with 12-15% response for typical local authority surveys. 80% of those responding were in favour of trams and expected to use them at least twice a week, which exceeded the prediction in TramPower's own revenue forecast.

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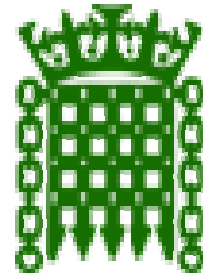


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A leaflet explaining the proposals was widely distributed locally and there was considerable local press coverage.

A survey of businesses in the main shopping street produced a 70% response with around 80% of responses supporting the tramway.

The benefits of the scheme can be summarised as representing a big investment in Preston; significant improvement to public transport; significant modal shift from car to tram, bringing less traffic congestion and pollution; and a big boost in confidence in the local economy.

Professor Lesley then went on to describe the TramPower proposal for Leeds (Supertram 3) running from a Park & Ride site on the M621 in the south of the city, through the city centre and out to Headingley and Bramhope in the north.

He compared expenditure using TramPower's technology with the figures for the rejected 2003 proposal (Supertram 2), which gave a bottom line of £10m per km as against £15m (at 2003 prices) for the earlier scheme. The TramPower figure is comparable with average European tramway costs.

He referred to the near impossibility for small companies with innovative proposals of bidding for public projects due to the requirement to demonstrate three previous contracts. This was the reason for adopting the privately funded route.

Currently local authorities are convinced that transport development has to be publicly funded and are unaware of how much private money is already being invested and in the future potential of private investment.

Tramways could represent a safe long-term investment. He referred to his 2011 book "Light rail developers' handbook".

Professor Lesley then handed over to Stewart Saunders, who before joining TramPower was formerly Principal Transport Planner at the London Borough of Croydon and before that a highway engineer.

Stewart Saunders

listed the previous London tramway proposals, namely West London Tramway, Cross River Tramway, Oxford Street Tramway and Croydon Tramlink, of which only the last named came into being. TramPower is proposing "Southwark Supertram" running from London Bridge to Denmark Hill via Elephant and Castle and Camberwell Green.

This line could become part of a central London network, one east-west from Limehouse to West Kensington via Oxford Street, and two north-south, one following much of the original Cross River Tram route.

In conclusion, there is much public support for trams. In Croydon car traffic on central streets was reduced by nearly 20%. In the early days, one in four passengers had previously commuted regularly by car but not many car drivers will willingly transfer to buses.

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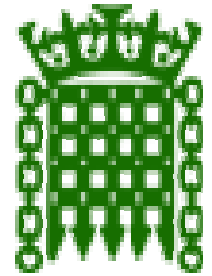
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Major problems with building the Croydon system were the disruption caused by excavating the streets to lay huge concrete track foundations and the expense of utility diversion, problems which TramPower's technology will largely avoid.

TramPower's budget for the construction of the Southwark Supertram is one third to one quarter of what TfL would normally budget for such a line, under £70m as opposed to £275m.

Greg Mulholland

thanked both speakers and said that this was very encouraging for those northern cities still lacking tram systems.

Questions

Sophy Tayler (SE5 Forum) asked what could be done to take projects, such as the Southwark Supertram, forward.

Lewis Lesley

thought that education was the key, not only of the decision makers but the people who vote for them. Even when people have seen trams in other countries they cannot always relate this to their home environment.

Impressions of how trams would look and how they would work are very important.

Greg Mulholland

said that APPLRG was very keen to engage with local groups and transport campaigns and he encouraged any such to leave their contact details with Jim Harkins, Group Secretariat. The Group welcomes talking to all: campaigners, experts, users, manufacturers, councillors and planners.

Keith Wakefield

(Leeds City Council) commented on the length of time taken for decisions to be made. He asked the overall cost of the proposed Preston line.

Lewis Lesley:

About £25m for 9km.

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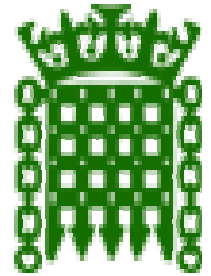
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Greg Mulholland

agreed that time taken for decision-making was a major problem for new schemes along with utility diversion and overall costs. We should be challenging ministers about how that can be improved and we need the views of councillors and planners as to how this can realistically be done. The possibility of local planning applications rather than TWA is one avenue that could be investigated.

Tim Kendell (TramForward)

said that TWA, as well as giving compulsory purchase and planning permission, provided a way of protecting people's rights as well as protection against subsequent legal action for nuisance.

Lewis Lesley

replied that they had been advised that if the local authority, representing the local people, has made a planning decision it is then very difficult for anyone to show that it is unreasonable. The Roe case in Sheffield suggests that TWA does not give complete protection against legal actions. TramPower has had extensive dialogue with Network Rail over the use of the old railway line and NR are now going down the planning route for most of their projects because it is simpler.

Colin Sworder (Integrated Sky)

drew attention to a new transparent procurement process developed by the Department of Defence which involves forums to which smaller businesses can contribute and which should make innovation easier. Innovation and the involvement of small businesses are taken into account in the procurement process.

Greg Mulholland

thought that this was another topic the Group could take up and asked Colin Sworder to contact Jim Harkins. He then introduced the third speaker, Ben Still, Managing Director of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to speak about the plans for the Leeds.

Ben Still

spoke to a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Towards a shared vision for transport in Leeds and the City Region", which can be found at <http://www.applrguk.co.uk/media/files/LR-Applrg-West-York-Light-Rail-Jan-2017pdf>

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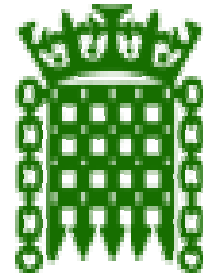


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He said that he had been in post for a year. He also introduced, in the audience, Liz Hunter of the WYCA and Councillor Keith Wakefield, and explained that the Combined Authority subsumed the Passenger Transport Executive, so is the body along with Leeds City Council that will be progressing transport schemes.

It is not a planning authority but sets the strategic framework for planning. He emphasised the size of the Leeds City Region both geographically and in terms of economic activity.

It is on a north-south east-west crossroads and it is important that these routes have good access to the city.

A strategic economic plan has been developed laying out the ways to stimulate economic growth and transport, as a facilitator for that growth, is a key part of the plan. The plan also covers environmental factors and questions of air quality are critical.

To achieve economic growth how do you make businesses more productive and connect skills, education and jobs? Transport has a key enabling role in that.

It is recognised that whenever transport investment occurs there are winners and losers, so how to create inclusive growth, which connects as many people as possible and does not leave communities, particularly deprived communities, behind?

This has a bearing on the plans for the use of the money released by the cancellation of NGT.

Sitting beneath the economic strategy is the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy which was out for consultation last year and is now about to go before the Transport Committee, chaired by Councillor Wakefield.

This is the latest incarnation of the Local Transport Plan and does not just cover Leeds but other places in West Yorkshire.

In Leeds itself, air quality is now high on the agenda.

There are also challenges facing the bus network, where patronage continues to decline.

Last summer the government announced that they were not going to approve the New Generation trolleybus scheme, which ran on a north-south alignment, but that they were going to take the unusual (but welcome) step of passing the funding to the WYCA for spending on public transport in Leeds.

There were however subtle strings attached – it must be spent on public transport, it must be in Leeds, it must be spent quickly (ideally within the life of this parliament), it is expected to be a number of schemes rather than one big one and, most importantly, it should be spent in a way that is as inclusive as possible. The requirement, therefore, was to benefit as many people as possible in a short time, which led to the initial focus on the bus network.

First Bus had already made promises on improving the bus fleet as part of their objection to the trolleybus scheme and are now prepared to invest in environmentally friendly buses.

Therefore, although there is only £173.5m of government money, the amount going into the business case is £270m.

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Secretariat provided by
Light Rail (UK)

Warrington, Cheshire, England,
United Kingdom WA2 9TZ

Tel 01925 243500, Fax 01925 243000, 07721378223

Mr Jim Harkins FCILT

Email appruk@aol.com www.appruk.co.uk

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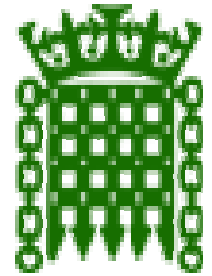
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House of Commons
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There is a focus on connecting to the new station and to HS2 when it comes, so quite a bit of emphasis on heavy rail. The WYCA has definitely not lost sight of the need for a mass transit solution for the city and the city region, so some money will go to planning how that will develop. The plan was submitted to government at the end of December and they will probably decide by the end of the financial year whether to accept it or not.

We are not waiting for that decision to do some of the preparatory work that will be required. The outline business case is available on the WYCA website. It basically comprises a series of investments in the key bus corridors alongside the rebranding of the bus network and behind that is the concept of a single public transport system regardless of mode.

The developments are spread across the city in order to benefit as many people as possible. There are also enhancements of some existing railway stations and building some new railway stations because heavy rail for a polycentric area like Leeds City Region is a critical mass transit mover.

We cannot stress enough that we have not forgotten about mass transit, which is at the centre of our thinking for the long-term future of the city and maybe not so long-term given some of the things that we have heard this afternoon.

We do understand the benefits of mass transit and we have been trying for many years to bring it about. To sum up we have a role for bus in the short term, a critical role for rail in reaching out across the urban centres in the city region but we do see the key role for mass transit, not just within Leeds but to Bradford and Wakefield as well.

Important factors in developing a new mass transit option are, firstly, that there has to be a strong "economic fit" with the rationale of the city region; secondly, a strong case must be developed. Do we understand where the city and region are going to grow? This is partly why we are developing buses in the short term because if we can reverse the decline in bus use we can begin to see where to put light rail or other mass transit corridors.

There is already discussion on possible corridors.

A most important factor is getting local political and stakeholder consensus. The previous unsuccessful schemes did not command that consensus.

There will never be absolute agreement, but we need a strong lobby of people agreeing on the right solution for the city. So, not only a strong business case is needed but lots of dialogue with all those affected and with decision-makers and experts.

How long will this take?

Not very long.

The first phase of Leeds Council's conversation with its people and with business communities has taken place and a more targeted phase will continue this year.

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Warrington, Cheshire, England,
United Kingdom WA2 3TZ
Tel 01925 243500, Fax 01925 243000, 07721378223
Mr Jim Harkins FCILT
Email aptrguk@aol.com www.aptrguk.co.uk

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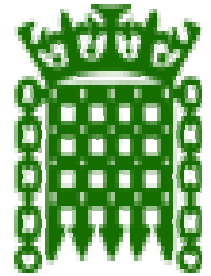


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Other things will need to be coordinated with the discussions on mass transit, such as the work around Leeds station and the new HS2 station and the development to the south of the station.

There are opportunities, therefore, to make sensible planning decisions to design the city for the future and we are keen to ensure those opportunities are not lost.

Work is needed both to develop the business case and to look at the technology, including the impact of autonomous vehicles

There is very little road space in the city centre, so what is the long term future, what kind of city are we designing?

There are big challenges for the next months but we have the opportunity to design a transport system that befits the people of West Yorkshire.

Greg Mulholland

thanked the speaker. He thought the important factor was that WYCA were still committed to a light rail scheme and APPLRG would like to work with the authority over the year.

He asked that since the £173m is now going on something else, how will any light rail project now be financed?

Ben Still

replied that it would be wrapped up in the wider fiscal settlement that is coming as a result of devolution. The critical thing at the moment is: can we build a consensus on the options?

There will be funding, especially if, as we have heard this afternoon, these things need not cost as much or be as complicated as they have been historically.

If we can find a solution we can all agree on, we can find the money.

Keith Wakefield

said that the afternoon had been extremely useful.

Leeds was taking air pollution very seriously and it was a high political priority, as was the vision that people want to see over the next twenty years of a metro system for Yorkshire.

Communities in Yorkshire have a high sense of their own individuality, so keeping a consensus over big projects such as HS2 and the Northern Powerhouse can only be done by integrating so that everyone benefits

The fear is that it is just for Leeds and not a benefit to anyone else, but there have been few arguments against a mass transit system.

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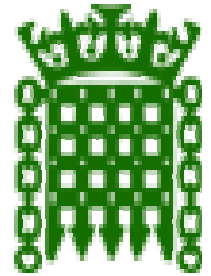
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There is consensus; a lot of interest, a lot of excitement.

Eight thousand people in Leeds responded to our consultation -- people want to see change.

Greg Mulholland

thanked Ben Still and Councillor Wakefield and said that everyone in the room would be pleased to have seen and heard a clear statement from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority that mass transit is on the table and is to be properly looked into and a business case developed this year.

He repeated his offer for the Group to work together with WYCA.

The Group would be delighted to see WYCA later in the year for a presentation on a definite plan.

He thanked all the speakers and the audience for attending and closed the meeting at 17:03.

Secretariat JH & MW

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