



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"

Minutes of a Parliamentary Tea held on Wednesday, 14th Sept 2016
Thames Pavilion House of Common Westminster

Chairman: Greg Mulholland MP

Speaker: Iain Anderson, Interim Director, Midland Metro Alliance

Greg Mulholland extended a welcome to the Applrg annual Parliamentary Tea. He reflected on the present political situation with a new Prime Minister and ministerial team, including transport. Unfortunately, although the previous minister, Andrew Jones, was to have been at this event, the new minister, Paul Maynard, was unable to attend. It would have been good to have a DfT minister with us because we do not yet know what this government's view on light rail is.

The only real developments recently have been in devolution and even that has now changed with the departure of George Osborne as Chancellor. It has reopened the question of whether an elected mayor is necessary. It is a strange kind of devolution where communities are not able to decide for themselves on the precise form it should take. It is hoped that devolution will continue and indeed go further with more genuine local decisions.

There are many communities which would like to proceed with light rail and ultra light rail projects but have been constrained by the hand of Whitehall.

It is frustrating that it is unclear when, and even whether, the TramTrain project in South Yorkshire will finally get under way and prove what we already know – that the technology works and can play an important role in our urban transport systems. APPLRG has been very critical of the way the project has been handled and sees its role as "knocking heads together" to get some honest answers about the delays.

The technology should already have been in place and helping connectivity and congestion-busting in urban areas, particularly in the North.

In regard to Leeds, he said that it might seem strange that the Light Rail Group is being chaired by a representative of a city with no light rail, indeed the biggest city in Europe without light rail or underground.

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As more cities in Europe and the UK get light rail, Leeds' position becomes even starker and it is something that we hope to rectify.

Despite the announcement a few months ago of the cancellation of the NGT trolleybus scheme and the money for this still being on the table, there has been no mention by Leeds City Council or the West Yorkshire Combined Authority that light rail is being looked at in any form as a way to spend that money.

This is probably the last chance of a central government handout in the foreseeable future and it would be criminal not to invest this money in beginning a transformative light rail scheme.

Greg asked for the industry and campaigners to join the campaign for light rail in Leeds and help the people of Leeds to finally catch up with Nottingham, Sheffield and Manchester.

Suggestions would be welcomed on what form a light rail system should take.

Greg thanked the audience for coming, and his fellow officers of APPLRG. He announced that he had just been re-elected to the Chair for another year and that Jim Harkins had been reappointed as Secretariat to the Group.

He finally thanked the Group's sponsors Colas Rail, the LRTA and Light Rail (UK).

He then introduced the speaker.

Iain Anderson. spoke to a PowerPoint presentation, which can be found at <http://www.applrguk.co.uk/media/files/LR-Applrg-presentation14th-Sept-2016pdf>

He introduced himself as the Deputy Development Director for Colas Rail in the UK and a member of UKTram. But he was speaking now as the Interim Alliance Director for the Midland Metro Alliance.

He introduced the new permanent Alliance Director, Alejandro Moreno.

The newly formed West Midlands Combined Authority has an ambitious programme of expansion for Midland Metro but is keen to avoid some of the problems and subsequent bad publicity which affected the recent expansion to Birmingham city centre.

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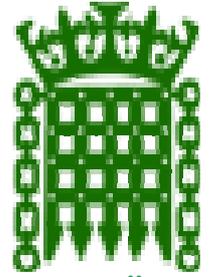
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Centro had already decided on an alternative approach to delivering future works.

The Combined Authority was formed in July this year, covering twelve local authorities and three LEPs and Iain quoted a number of statistics (see presentation) but the area needs a modern, integrated transport system in order to progress.

The Combined Authority has recognised the key role that light rail can play and have plans for an impressive series of enhancements, about £1 billion's worth, to be delivered over the next ten years.

He briefly described the existing Metro line 1 and the extension, opened in 2015 to Bull Street and to Grand Central in June 2016, together with a new fleet of CAF trams and enhancements to the depot.

The current programme is not one big project but a series of individual schemes, each with its own business case and TWA application.

1. The extension from Grand Central to Centenary Square. Due to the heritage status of the area, this section will be catenary-free. Subsequently there will be further extension to Edgbaston, along Broad Street, through Five Ways to the Hagley Road. At some future time this could be further extended towards the M5.
2. In Wolverhampton, an 800m extension to link to a new bus station and to the refurbished railway station. There will be potential for this line eventually to extend further towards Willenhall.
3. A spur of the recently extended line at Bull Street to the forthcoming HS2 terminus at Curzon Street and on to Digbeth. This will then be the basis for a future extension to Solihull, the NEC, the Airport, and, ultimately, to the HS2 interface station. A key function here is to link residential areas with work opportunities in the southeast of the city.
4. Wednesbury to Brierley Hill via a disused rail line. TWA approval is already in place for this. This is important in that it improves connectivity within the Black Country.

He showed a provisional schedule for the various schemes.

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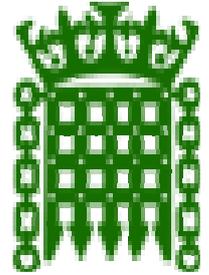
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The significance of the programme was that it was a sustainable ten-year programme, not a series of separately organised projects, which could be strategically planned.

Iain then explained the philosophy and structure of the Alliance. He defined an alliance and outlined the criteria for selection of members, the members and the principles underlying the Alliance, which consists of three main entities, the client, the designer and the contractor

He stressed that the Alliance was not a legal entity and did not employ anyone. Everyone in the alliance will continue to be employed by their parent company. Strategic direction is given by the Alliance Leadership Team, made up of three senior executives of the three primary entities, to the Alliance Director, who is essentially the managing director.

He is supported by an Alliance Management Team of five directors.

At any one time there will be a number of projects at different stages of development and resources will be allocated between them as required. A single culture and Alliance identity will be developed with the adoption of 'Best for Alliance' as the fundamental principle underpinning all decision making.

There is a single IT platform to ensure efficient communication between the various parties.

It is important to get the right people into post as alliance working does not suit everybody. There will be a Single Project Alliance Agreement signed by all parties, with sharing of gain and pain and equitable sharing of risk rather than risk transfer.

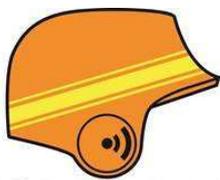
There will be aligned goals which ensure a 'win-win' / lose-lose' environment and the commercial model will be supported by suite of Key Result Areas

The benefits of alliancing are, therefore, an integrated team with aligned commercial goals. Shared risk and reward and a win-win commercial model ensures all parties remain focused on 'Best for Alliance' Access to high quality resources from industry leaders and global best practice.

The long term 10 year view allows decisions to be made on a strategic basis and economies of scale to be realised and benefits of efficiencies from learning will be passed from scheme to scheme over the life cycle of the Alliance.

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Early contractor involvement will maximise the benefit of potential innovations and efficiencies.

The Alliance has been working together since May this year with the Alliance Agreement formerly signed in early July.

The business plan has been agreed for the first year and a move into an interim office in Victoria Square, Birmingham has been achieved. Appointments are taking place with staff numbers currently around 85 and anticipated to grow to circa 120 by Christmas and there is an ongoing programme of induction, orientation and team building.

The Alliance has taken ownership of the partially completed designs for Centenary Square and Wolverhampton and is undertaking an efficiency review whilst also developing the target costs for approval. TWA approval has been received and utility diversions are well in hand with construction anticipated to start on both schemes in 2017.

Meanwhile the Alliance is proactively engaging with stakeholders for early stage development for Wednesbury-Brierley Hill, Birmingham Eastside, and East Birmingham, with TWA application expected in early October.

This is a bold decision by the Combined Authority to try something different and to achieve further efficiencies and is a fantastic opportunity to drive the regeneration of the West Midlands. It is more than just a tram.

It will be: a key trainer in the region through the Midland Metro Academy, a driver of economic regeneration along the route by bringing employment and enhancing connectivity, and a contributor to increased accessibility and mobility as part of an integrated transport solution.

All in the Alliance are committed to deliver on our promises and to repay the trust that has been shown.

Iain then showed a video on the setting up and work of the Alliance.

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Questions

John Parry (PPM) compared the map of the system to a large tree with a few branches, leaving much of the West Midlands conurbation not served by either the Metro or heavy rail. At present feeders to the network must be by bus.

Would there be a role for ultra light rail to provide some of the twigs for the tree in the form of feeder services?

Iain Anderson said that at present there was not a tram "system" only a line and the object of the current proposals was to develop a system. There is an integrated transport policy, defined by the Combined Authority. The Alliance's remit is to deliver the planned schemes but there is a separate Alliance "2030" team which will look at further developments and report early next year and could well consider lighter feeder options.

The Combined Authority is also responsible for the previously proposed Sprint bus network, which is not universally supported by members of the Authority, so alternatives may arise there.

Lewis Lesley (Trampower) asked about the operator of the network, currently National Express, who subsidise the operating costs of the existing line.

Will they operate the enlarged network and will it be self-funding?

Iain Anderson said that the procurement exercise for the next franchise had just started and the new operator, due to take over in 2018, will emerge as a result of this process.

The operator may not be a direct member of the Alliance but will be very closely engaged. National Express has a representative in the Alliance office. Operational subsidy is a matter for the operator not the Alliance.

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David Holladay (STRAIL) asked whether there were any plans for altering the existing line and whether lessons would be learnt from the recently completed works.

Iain Anderson replied that there were a number of renewal schemes for line 1 but there are no current proposals, that the alliance has been made aware of, to alter the line of the route. The Alliance was very keen to learn not just from what has happened in the West Midlands but from other systems.

The exact form of the new lines, whether on-street or on segregated right-of-way would depend on the location but the most efficient means and the most passenger-friendly outcome would be chosen.

Jim Harkins (Light Rail (UK)) asked whether there was a member of the Alliance responsible for consideration of air quality

Iain Anderson said that this was an area that Pell Frischmann would take on as part of their responsibility for environmental issues.

Jon Reeds (SGUK) asked what the programme would cost and how it was to be paid for.

Iain Anderson said that the total budget was around £1 billion.

Money would come from a variety of sources, many of which have already been identified and funding secured.

Jim Harkins said that the group's two campaigns for the coming year were TramTrain and pollution. Pollution came from two sources, tailpipe emissions, which the government had acknowledged, and the "Oslo effect", particulates from road surface, tyre and brake lining wear, which was still largely ignored.

The Group is also concentrating on the Leeds city region as well as other areas and volunteers to assist campaigning would be welcome.

Greg Mulholland thanked Iain Anderson for his contribution and closed the formal part of the proceedings.

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