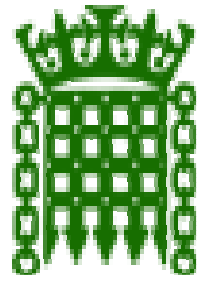


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Trams – Catalysts for Jobs, Renewal & Regeneration

All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group (APPLRG)

**Report of a meeting held at the House of Commons
Tuesday 19th March 2013**

Chairman: John Leech MP (Chairman APPLRG)

The Chairman apologised for late start to the meeting which was due to a last minute relocation.

John Leech: Welcome everybody to the All Party Light Rail Group and we have two college visitors from Liverpool, thank you for coming.

An introduction to Trevor Baxter. As the All Party Light Rail Group, while we are by definition in favour of trams and want to see light rail promoted and expanded around the country, I think we ought also sometimes take a moment to hear from people who perhaps are not as pro-tram as we are and to hear their concerns in relations to schemes that are being built or have been built or might be built in the future. I have come in for some criticism for inviting people to hear the opposite view but I feel as Chairman that we ought to listen to concerns raised by others and, if we disagree, challenge them. Trevor might be walking into the lion's den this afternoon but I am very interested to hear what he has to say and to hear questions from the floor following his presentation. So, over to Trevor Baxter.

Trevor Baxter (Resident of Tameside, Greater Manchester, and Freelance Reporter)

The full text of Trevor's presentation can be found on this website at:

<http://www.applrguk.co.uk/files/lr%20applrg%20metrolink%20address%20trevor%20baxter%2019%20march%202013.pdf>

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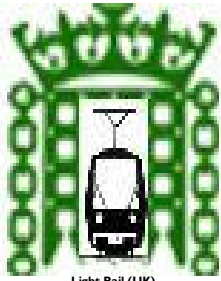
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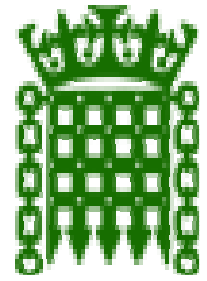


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Trams – Catalysts for Jobs, Renewal & Regeneration

Question Session

John Leech: To suggest that there are no economic benefits from light rail schemes vastly underestimates the success of a number of those schemes. The best example in Manchester is the route to Eccles without which we would certainly not now have the BBC in Manchester. Metrolink has had a massive effect on regeneration of the Salford area. Around Manchester there have been different impacts in different areas, the route to Chorlton for example is very popular and is changing people's behaviour and getting them out of their cars. I am not clear what the perceived benefits were in East Manchester but, in other sections, some of it was about regeneration, some about modal shift. I think Trevor has made some valid points about consultation and some of my own constituents have expressed similar concerns. On the congestion charge, yes people were saying that if you don't vote for the congestion charge, you won't get Metrolink. That was an argument of those in favour of the congestion charge as a way of persuading people to vote for it. I did not think for one second that we would not get Metrolink with out the congestion charge.

Trevor made a fair point in relation to construction times; there has been enormous frustration about the length of time that it takes to build light rail schemes and I think that is something that the industry needs to take on board. It never ceases to amaze me, and this includes heavy rail schemes, how we seem to do things more slowly than other countries. It may be that we do things more thoroughly and we do consultation better than other countries and if you want consultation that is not going to speed up the process. Finally I think there is lots of evidence that where Metrolink has been built, property prices do go up although certainly there are problems during the construction phase.

Trevor Baxter: On that last point, that is where the problem lies. For six and a half years you are unable to sell your property or you are going to sell it at a complete loss because of the work that is going on in front of your doorstep. There has been so much uncertainty about 3A and 3B – are we going to get the Metrolink, are we not? That uncertainty has been going on since 1998 and the same in Wythenshawe and yet you cannot sell your house, you have to wait a year and a day. So what happens if you want to move in that time? You are being penalised for a scheme that you don't particularly want – is that fair? It's a 1973 act – was there any light rail in this country when that act was passed?

Stephen Joseph (Campaign for Better Transport): There were lots of road schemes at that time and that was what the act was for

Trevor Baxter: But it's now being applied to trams, how can it be applicable?

Ian Souter (Independent consultant): Why should there be any difference?

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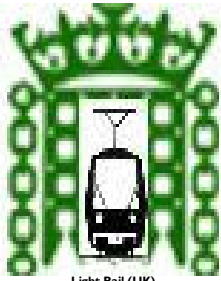
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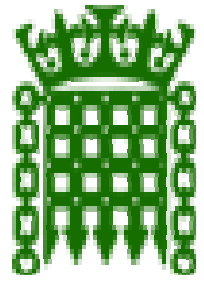


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Stephen Joseph: I do not see what the difference is, because road schemes can also take six and a half years. I do not see why you are not getting compensation.

Trevor Baxter: The M60 was bulldozed through the area that the Metrolink is going through now and residents that lived miles from the motorway got lots of compensation because it was constructed under a different act of parliament – it was a Highways Agency scheme.

Stephen Joseph: If it had been a local road scheme you would have found exactly the same problem. That does not mean it is right but it was designed for roads and it is bad for them as well.

John Leech: This is not a problem that is specific to light rail.

Trevor Baxter: Then the more reason why the act should be changed. Why should people have to put up with this uncertainty?

John Leech: We will take that away for consideration.

Nico Dekker (RSC Ltd): On your observation that the promised frequency of service has not materialised – it is very early days, the plan is that when 3B is complete the frequency on the Ashton line will be increased to six minutes.

Trevor Baxter: The Bury-Altrincham line has been in operation since 1992, there is not a six-minute frequency on that and that is one of the most popular lines as Mr Leech will confirm.

John Leech: The tram has a much more frequent service than the old heavy rail system. The heavy rail service of the Styal Line through my constituency is far less frequent than the tram service

Trevor Baxter: But why not spend the money on improving the rail infrastructure rather than changing to light rail.

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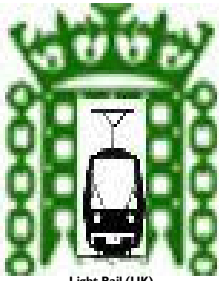
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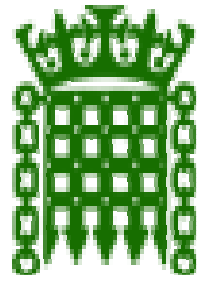


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Andrew Braddock (UK Tram, LRTA): There was a proposal to have a very expensive underground railway connection between Piccadilly and Victoria, the so-called Picc-Vic scheme, which in a city the size of Manchester, even with the regional population added in, would have been very hard to justify; therefore it did not happen. To some extent Metrolink was a substitute for that very expensive tunnel scheme and there is absolutely no doubt that the passengers carried by the Bury and Altrincham lines are way, way above what they were when they were separate railways coming into their separate terminals. As I read the timetable, there is a six-minute frequency and it splits: It is twelve minutes through from Bury to Altrincham; twelve minutes from Bury or Altrincham to Piccadilly and that has been there for a very long time. The point Nicco makes is a good one- Droylsden is a step along the way to Ashton and when the line is completed, there will be a six-minute frequency along part or all of it.

I have just had a chance to flip through this [Trevor Baxter's file of newspaper cuttings] and it would not be difficult to trawl the newspapers almost anywhere, especially in the UK, because we have a wonderfully negative press which will pick this thing up. Frustrated Metrolink commuters are easy to find and they are easy to get to tell their story. There are lots of good-news stories about Metrolink which have not been covered. Certainly there are problems and what you are reflecting is the agony of construction of such schemes – they take too long. I am not totally convinced that they take longer in the UK than elsewhere but it is fair to say that we are much more sensitive in the UK than, say, a country like France is to the views of the people. If there is a groundswell of opinion among the people that this is not what they want and it should be done differently, then politicians will listen much more than they do in other countries and that will add months, sometimes years, to the timescale. I think it is a pity the very bad impression you have got, and rightly so, from the frustration of people who want to sell a property in Drylesden. What I have never understood is why we do not, as happens in some other countries, say "if this is worth doing it is going to dramatically increase the value of properties in Droylsden and if Mr Baxter wants to sell his property then we the authority will buy it from him at a fair value because we will be absolutely confident that in ten year's time we can sell Mr Baxter's property for 35-40% more than we paid him". If I were a politician that is the first act I would pass – if you politicians think that this is right thing to do – put your money where your mouth is. This was done in Grenoble where almost every business along the Avenue Alsace-Lorraine, where the new tramway was being built, demanded that they be bought out and the mayor bought 12 or 15 businesses. When the tram was finished and all the problems were over and it was running well and thousands more people were using it and leaving their cars at home, every one of those businesses went back to the mayor and said we made a mistake we would like to buy our business back and the mayor said of course but it will cost you 35% more.

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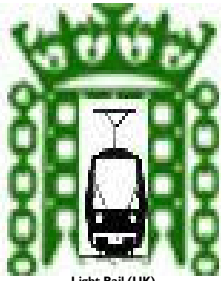
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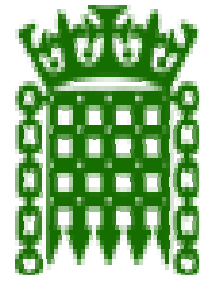


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That is what we should be doing and I am very sorry that we do not, whatever the legal complications. The other thing we have to bear in mind is that cities in the UK have to a great extent been left behind and we have relied totally (and London is no different with 8,500 diesel buses) on buses to do things that buses cannot do. I walked along Victoria Street this afternoon and there was a nose-to-tail queue of buses belching out fumes. Buses are relatively small vehicles; you need trams to give a more effective service to people in busy urban areas and you will get people out of their cars. Metrolink has already got people out of their cars and it will get a lot more people out of their cars as the big bang is finished. That is a success that you cannot overlook. I know there are a lot of problems with the current operation of Metrolink. The signalling/communications system has let them down, the construction delays have let them down, lots of things have let them down but these problems will be overcome and, in ten to fifteen year's time when Manchester has completed this process, I think you will find very few negative views of the kind the you are listing today; although I can understand why you have them.

Trevor Baxter: You are just glossing over the fact that there are problems. Firstly I am not trying to sell my house and I am not affected by falling property values.

Andrew Braddock: But there will be people who are.

Trevor Baxter: There are thousands of people who are, all the way from Clayton to Ashton. TGM have said all along that there will be trams at a six-minute frequency, there is no mention of capacity and to say that we are going to get a six-minute frequency when the tram goes through to Ashton is nonsense. They sold Metrolink 3A on the frequency of six minutes. There was never a chance that a six minute service was going to start because they do not have the trams and they do not have the people to use them and 3A will never be used apart from going to Etihad stadium every second week. It is a complete waste of time, money and energy.

Jim Harkins: To be fair to Metrolink, not all the new cars are in service yet – there are technical problems. When they are you will get your six-minute service.

Trevor Baxter: There is no way that those trams will come to Droylsden for years, because there is nobody using them

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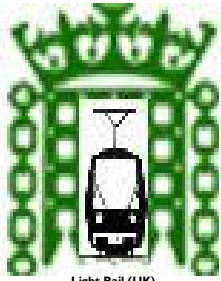
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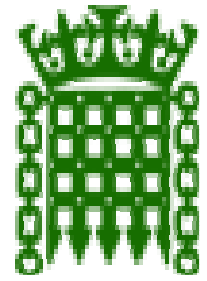


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Jim Harkins: Nobody used the Eccles service to begin with; they said it was the tram to nowhere; it was too slow, but try getting on it now at peak. These things are not instant but grow. When a first tram goes into a city it is all blood sweat and tears but once it is in and running there is call for a second and this is what is happening elsewhere. You will find, as with Eccles, that values are going up. You made the point of someone losing the value of property but we are not charging them extra for the subsequent facilities. If this were done through a betterment tax, then I would accept that there should be compensation in the initial stages. At the moment there will be winners and losers.

Stuart Kerr (Vossloh Kiepe): I would just like to make a comment on a personal basis. My Dad lives in Manchester, in Sale, and since the introduction of the tram his life is much better than it was before His access to the city centre is expanded and he uses it and finds it a very good facility. You ask why do we have to suffer, well it is because an earlier generation decided to get rid of trams in Manchester. Manchester had a tram system that was nearly 300 miles in length and there were a thousand trams running through the city. Manchester was built on trams. So all of us are having to pay to put back what was ripped out and it belongs to Manchester and it is what created Manchester and what made Manchester great and it will be what makes Manchester great again if we have the courage and the bravery to go through the pains. And there will be pains there are always pains and we have to grit our teeth and come together for the good of the community. Not just the local community; we also have a duty to the rest of the world to reduce our carbon footprint. Not to say "not me, I am going to continue to use my car because that is the only other solution I have" and creating problems for the rest of the world. We have to have something of a social conscience. Understand that this was part of Manchester; this is part of Manchester this is what belongs in Manchester. It is its history and its future.

Trevor Baxter: Did your Dad use the line from Sale when it was a railway?

Stuart Kerr: No. because there were not enough trains and did not run when he needed them. Getting on the tram is much easier because they are always there.

Trevor Baxter: I think you will find that it was cotton made Manchester great.

John Leech: I do not think anyone would defend the old rail service on the Altrincham line. I use to live in Altrincham and it was dire.

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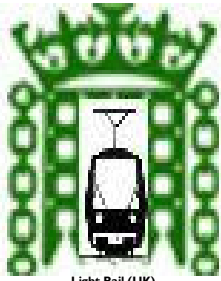
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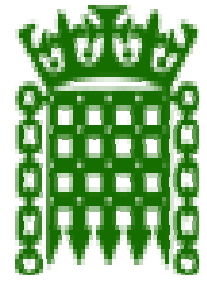


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Alec Shelbrooke MP: Mr Baxter does not realise how lucky he is. In Leeds we have been hammering on the door to get trams and have had to settle for trolleybuses with the NGT system. At least we can, hopefully, use the trolleybus infrastructure for trams later on. We have a worse transport system than we had in the 1950s. We have major industrial sites with access only by bus and car. There is no rail access to a large part of the city. Bus services are being cut back. When a tram infrastructure is put in it is some guarantee of a continuing service. We look on Manchester with envious eyes

Trevor Baxter: Be careful what you wish for.

Pino DeRosa (Bridgeway Consulting): I live in Wilford in Nottingham, 60 metres away from line 2 of the Nottingham tram extension and I work in Beeston about 300 metres away from line 3. The disruption affects me every day of the week but it is a legacy issue and I think it is the right thing for the city for my children and for their children. It is worth the disruption to get away from car dependency.

Trevor Baxter: Is there a train to Beeston, why not use that?

Pino DeRosa: It is a frequency issue.

Tony Mercado (Alstom): The tram line in Beeston goes to places that the railway line does not. It goes to places where people want to go.

Ian Souter: Heavy rail has got major constraints with track capacity and commuter services are seen as restricting the more profitable long-distance services. This applies in many cities throughout Britain. There are exceptions like the Bury line which was built as a commuter line but its stock was life-expired, the stock was replaced by the Metrolink trams but they did not have to rebuild the track, there was enough life for 10 to 15 years. This would have had to be replaced if they had retained heavy rail. Oldham and Rochdale was a diesel line and the government is very concerned about the railways' diesel stock. We have by far the largest amount of suburban diesel stock in Europe; nobody else does it like we do and the fear is that with this lot is coming up for renewal what are we going to do about it? Surely we are not going to replace like for like. So it is electrification and it is far cheaper to electrify using light rail for that kind of service than it is to use heavy rail.

Trevor Baxter: I do not know the cost involved but I would disagree. The money for Metrolink could have been used for heavy rail. You said we could not justify a Picc-Vic tunnel but we are now going to get a second cross-city line.

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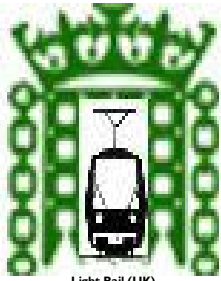
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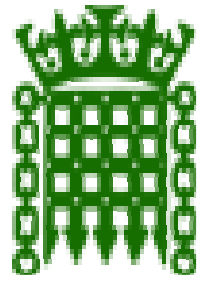


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Ian Souter: You need it. It is cheaper.

Trevor Baxter: Manchester is a small city centre

Andrew Braddock: Manchester is a hugely developing area that has a great future but its future depends on connectivity which will not come from a disparate collection of heavy rail lines.

Stephen Joseph: What would you like to have now, apart from apologies from everyone concerned and compensation and what do you think the solutions are to congestion? You would like buses and heavy rail improved but would that have solved the congestion problem?

Trevor Baxter: The congestion problem will always be there

Stephen Joseph: So you are saying there is nothing to be done about it?

Trevor Baxter: There is not. Are you telling me that Metrolink is going to eradicate all congestion?

Stephen Joseph: No, I am not. I am asking you what you think would solve it.

Trevor Baxter: I have no answer to that. I do know that putting down light rail lines will not. TGM's figures show that there are more cars in the Audenshaw area than there were in 2009.

John Leech: I think we shall have to move on. Can I thank Trevor? I think that we, as supporters of light rail should always be prepared to listen to what its opponents have to say so that we can learn lessons for the future in terms of planning and constructing future projects.

Andrew Braddock (Director General, UK Tram. Chairman, Light Rail Transit Association)

The full text of Andrew's presentation can be found on this website at:

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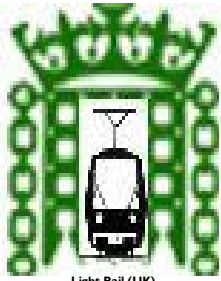
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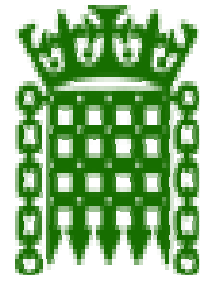


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Question Session

John Leech: Why is it that, if the economic benefits are so obvious, so many cities do not have tram schemes?

Andrew Braddock: In the UK because we have very poor governance we have the most incredibly complicated system, although in some respects this does not matter as it is the Treasury that controls everything. I think it is a miracle that in Manchester the big bang is happening. One of the great supporters of that was the Manchester Evening News and that was because the local press, I think although Trevor is going to disagree, understood that this would be a good thing for the city and particularly the future of the city and so they lobbied for it and without that lobbying the Treasury might never have released the money. But our problem in the UK is that we do not have sensibly structured local government. Who would want to be a local politician? You have no power, what can you do? Not a great deal. You can get it in the neck because it has not worked the way it should have done in Droylsden or anywhere else but it is not an easy job to do. I think we have to learn from countries like France. It is a great disappointment to me that last year, when we let the people vote on whether to have mayors in twelve cities, only two decided in favour. You have got to have mayors. In London I think Boris is a showman and not a particularly good mayor but at least he is a leader. He has massive authority, not a great deal of power, to beat the government up and get things done. We need that first and foremost. We need to look at the way local government functions. It needs to be much more on a regional basis not just individual cities. The Leeds problem is that it is West Yorkshire not just Leeds but Bradford, Wakefield Dewsbury. South Yorkshire is the same. They should be big city regions. There is some hope in the plans the government has now made for City Deals and I think the cities are going to be treated more responsibly but in the end there is going to have to be something like local employment tax, like versement transport to fund public transport at the local level. It is no good relying on the Treasury, it is too remote and it never wants to spend any money

John Leech: Is there not a real challenge for local authorities to take on board the fact that the government does want to invest in large infrastructure projects and there are not any light rail projects at the moment on the table that they could throw money at. So while there is an acceptance that the government needs to kick-start the economy by investing in infrastructure that infrastructure is generally heavy rail or other projects.

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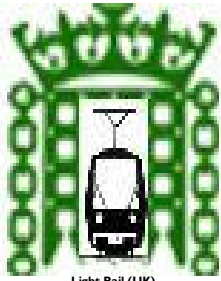
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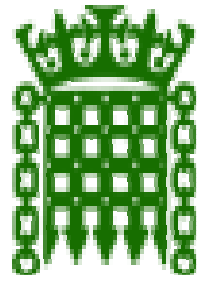


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Trams – Catalysts for Jobs, Renewal & Regeneration

Andrew Braddock: I think this is what Stephen is going to be talking about. We have to look very seriously at things like TramTrain and ask where are the places that have got reasonably useable heavy rail facilities but which lack good connections with city or even town centres and that gap would be filled by investment in TramTrain. The hope is that the localism agenda and the creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships will drive things forward in a more meaningful way but sooner or later they hit a brick wall. We have a great plan for Derby for a tramway system but we have to go cap in hand to the Treasury at the moment because that is the way the Treasury likes things to be done.

Nicholas Falk (URBED): I wonder if you could say a little bit more about the link between housing and transport, because it seems to me that we have missed a trick in Britain by our tendency to use old railway lines and not put routes to the more densely populated areas or use the railway lines to open up housing. In Croydon they did that at Addington, whereas the line from West Croydon has neglected opportunities, like Mitcham Junction, which ought to be a growth point. If we had more development along the routes we would have much more viable tramways

Andrew Braddock: The higher the density the better it will always be for public transport. For example, there is a single tram stop in East Berlin which has a population in its catchment area equal to the population of Bedford (114,000). We are not going to get that sort of density in the UK but in some way societal changes are playing in our favour. Increasingly people are living singly so there is a greater demand for smaller and therefore more compact and denser housing but we need to be planning on a proper land-use basis. Probably the best example of this is the suburb of Vauban in Freiburg you cannot have a car there but you do not need a car. It is a wonderful place to live, pretty high density but lots of green space and people love it. Everybody wants to live in Vauban. We can maybe create that kind of situation in the UK but we are going to have to take some big moves back to where we used to be on land-use planning and say we are going to build a core piece of infrastructure, not roads as in Milton Keynes, but a tram network in this new town or regenerated old town and then populate it with housing schemes. But Mrs Thatcher did away with the idea that planning was a good thing because it was a "socialist" idea

Susan Evans (Alstom): I have recently been with a number of international funders and one of the things which they are focussing on is Smart Cities and the Smart City Index. Manchester appears because of its smart transportation and smart transportation is a large part of the index. I wonder if this group is looking at how trams integrate with that. It is going to be a huge economic driver because smart investment wants to go to smart cities. Is this being looked at in the UK?

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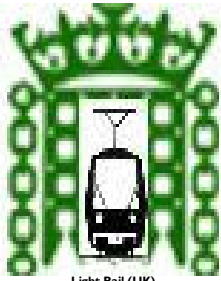
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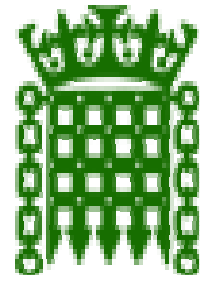


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Andrew Braddock: Yes. I always wonder exactly what people mean by smart. I have long been convinced that the tram is the best form of public transport known to man. We got rid of it but we brought it back because we had made a mistake. There are lots of fashions and fads such as pods and monorails but there is not a lot wrong with the modern tram, fully accessible to everyone, completely pollution free at the point of use and, if you have smart power generation, then that is virtually pollution-free as well. That is the past and the future and we need to build around that. Many people try to convince us that the smart future is one in which everyone works at home and there is no need to travel but you cannot change the human need for contact. I have worked from home since 2003 and my wife will tell you that I am almost never at home; I am desperate to be out meeting people and coming to events like this. I do not think we are going to change that with all the smartness in the world. The clever thing to do is to ensure connectivity, particularly in terms of information flow. Where public transport systems tend to let themselves down and Manchester is no exception, is on informing people, especially when things go wrong. That is the future of ensuring we have a smartness about what we do. You are in your single-person pad in a new residential area that is connected into a very good transport scheme and, as you boil your kettle for your morning cup of tea, on the screen it tells you that there is a Droylsden tram in four minutes' time, so you do not even have to think about it.

Dave Holladay (Transportation Management Solutions): I am involved with cycling as means of personal transport. You cannot have tram stops at the same density as bus stops and so then you start to need cycling as means of reaching the tram stop. I wonder if any work has been done looking at property sales and whether values are enhanced and whether the tram route is mentioned in the adverts. That tells you what is driving the market. The thing that worries me is that everybody wants to travel to work at the same time. Is there a methodology of penalties and/or incentives to persuade companies to vary locations or starting times to optimise system capacity?

Andrew Braddock: As I said earlier, we have lost sight of the importance of planning and proper planning would overcome some of these commuting problems. In Reading, by pure accident, there is a balance between the number of people commuting to London and those coming into Reading. That was not planned but if the location of workplaces was planned you would not need to worry about peak hour problems. Finally, on stop spacing, who was the person who said stops on a modern tramway had to be 700-800 metres apart? The most successful public transport is in Switzerland but it is not fast. It is frequent, reliable and has reasonable stop spacing's. Tram stop spacing's in Switzerland are the same as we would expect for buses in the UK. We do not need speed as much as 100% reliability and very high frequencies

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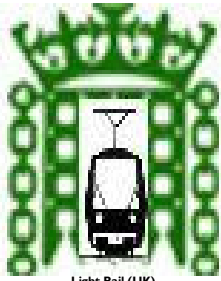
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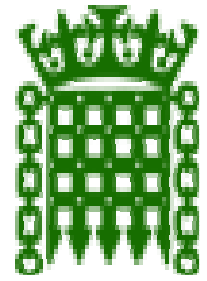


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Trams – Catalysts for Jobs, Renewal & Regeneration

Stephen Joseph (Chief Executive, Campaign for Better Transport)

The full text of Stephen's presentation can be found on this website at:

<http://www.applrguk.co.uk/files/lr%20applrg%20presentation%2019%20mar%202013%20stephen%20joseph.pdf>

Question Session

Ian Souter: One of the killers of the first generation tramcars was spread of population and we have had that built into the country now for three generations. How do you combat that?

Stephen Joseph: Through developments like that at Tailstock which I mentioned. The developer gets more houses because he is providing less car parking. However, there is a danger now with deregulation that you will get lots more business parks near motorway junctions or, as is happening in southeast Manchester, development round airports. We have a master plan checklist which shows how you can do development to avoid that.

Stuart Kerr: You said you have done a comparison of car-dependency in UK cities. Have you expanded that internationally to compare our competitiveness with our main economic competitors - France, Germany, Japan, and USA?

Stephen Joseph: We did a comparison of the four UK capital cities with European capitals. Broadly the UK cities are brought down by their much higher public transport fares but availability is also poorer in some cases. The spread of population is also a factor with Belfast doing particularly badly

Jon Reeds (Smart Growth UK): Is there much transport investment currently going on in the cities, Crossrail apart?

Stephen Joseph: I think there will be more with local control over local rail franchising. That is the evidence from London and Merseyside. Also South Wales with electrification of the Valleys. We are also looking to more smaller scale developments like Tavistock.

John Leech: Thank you Stephen. A big thank you to all three speakers. A further plug for our next meeting which is the Parliamentary Tea on 12th June, 4 to 6 at which we have the Minister speaking and taking questions.

The meeting closed at 16:00.

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