
Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 10 May 2019

Subject: **DfT ‘Call for Evidence’ on Light Rail and other rapid transit solutions**

Director: Alan Reiss, Director of Policy, Strategy and Communication

Author(s): Tom Gifford

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The Department for Transport has commenced a ‘call for evidence’ around Light rail and other rapid transit solutions in cities and towns. The DfT ‘Call for Evidence’ focuses on the various forms of ‘light rail’, including Trams, Tram-Trains¹, Very Light Rail² and systems often seen in airports such as Personal Rapid Transit/Automated Transit systems; examples are provided in in the DfT ‘call for evidence’ document³.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the context and discuss the high level principles of a West Yorkshire Combined Authority response ahead of the 19 May deadline.

¹ For example, Sheffield Tram-Train

² Such as in Stourbridge, West Midlands <http://www.parrypeoplemovers.com/>

³

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/776601/light-rail-and-other-rapid-transit-solutions-a-call-for-evidence.pdf

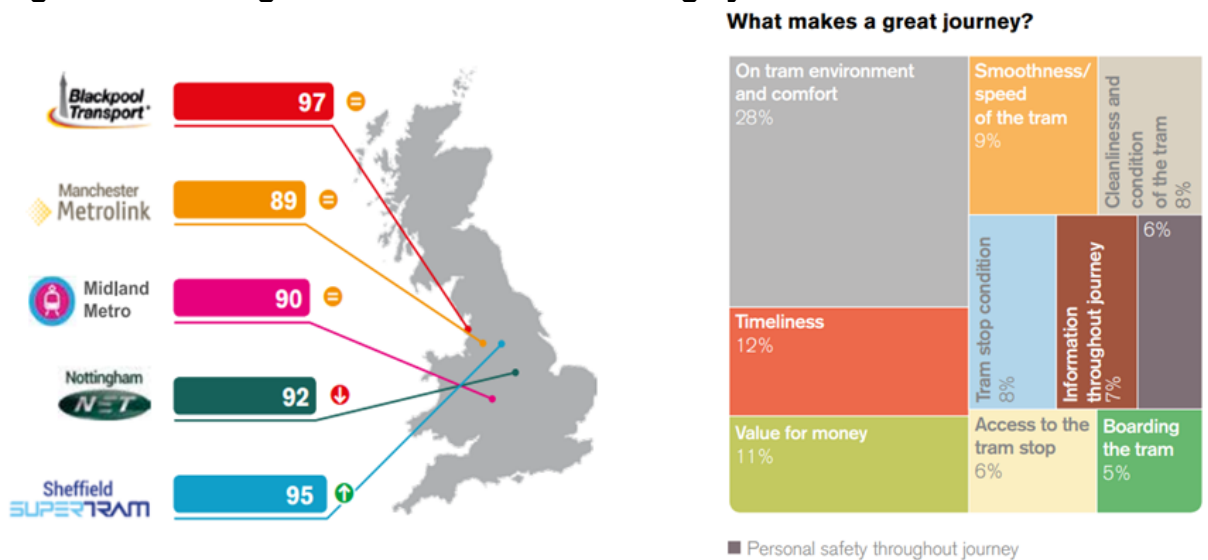
2. Information

- 2.1 In recent years, the Department for Transport has provided funding to extend existing light rail systems in operation in a number of Cities, such as Nottingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Blackpool, Birmingham and Croydon.
- 2.2 The industry, through UK Tram has been working to reduce the costs of systems for the future, with many of the systems now being delivered on time and within agreed budgets.
- 2.3 The 21st century is seeing rapid shifts in how mobility is provided, with the adoption of broader and more sustainable approaches, such as cycling and car sharing. Social and economic trends are also changing people's behaviour and attitudes. The digital revolution, emphasis on smart cities and places, and a greater emphasis on sustainability and environmentally friendly ways of travel, create new transport challenges and opportunities. Transport is changing and over the medium to long term we will be seeing radical changes to mobility services offered in our towns and cities.
- 2.4 The DfT Consultation paper sets out that light rail (and other forms of rapid transit system) continues to play a very useful role in many communities, and has the potential to play a still greater role in future. There are 11 modern Mass Transit systems in the British Isles, which are served a combination of various Mass Transit vehicles:
- Edinburgh Trams
 - Luas Dublin
 - London Tramlink
 - West Midlands Metro
 - Sheffield Supertram / Tram-Train
 - Manchester Metrolink
 - London Docklands Light Railway (DLR)
 - Tyne And Wear Metro
 - Glasgow SPT Subway
 - Blackpool Tramway
 - Nottingham Trams ('NET')
- 2.5 Together, these systems have seen significant capital investments and expansion, with billions cumulatively invested by Government and the private sectors in their technologies over the last 5 years alone. Every single one of these systems are planning and / or currently constructing further network expansions, as it set out in the Appendix 1. Some are looking to Transforming Cities Fund to fund the extensions, other are using private finance.
- 2.6 Department for Transport statistics illustrate that patronage continues to grow across each of these systems. The past decade has seen total passenger journeys increase by around 45%, to a record 275 million passengers in 2016/17. The Nottingham and Edinburgh systems are seeing 10% year on year patronage growth – as is the case with heavy rail, demand for mass transit is

growing. The Belfast Glider guided bendy bus project has also had a positive reception since opening last year.

- 2.7 In addition, passenger satisfaction with these existing mass transit systems is much higher than with bus based alternatives. Department for Transport / Transport Focus research highlights that customer satisfaction for mass transit systems is well ahead of other forms of public transport including on bus. *“Overall tram passenger satisfaction remains high at 91 per cent. The key factor that drives the passenger’s view of either a satisfactory, or that much-valued great journey, is the comfort and environment of the vehicle.”*⁴

Figure 2: Passenger Satisfaction with existing systems⁵



- 2.8 The DfT is seeking views regarding how light rail, or similar rapid transit systems, could be incorporated into the transport networks in our towns and cities in the future, and how they will help to complement and integrate new modes and trends. These include autonomous vehicles, car sharing, bike sharing and initiatives that offer ‘Mobility as a Service’, in addition to rail, buses, cycling and walking.
- 2.9 The Call for Evidence invites responses on how we can help harness the opportunities for building on the popularity of light rail, with the hope of introducing these systems into our cities and towns.
- 2.10 It is proposed that the West Yorkshire response to the DfT ‘Call for Evidence’ focuses around our current position as set out in the 9 November 2018 report to Transport Committee titled “Planning for Growth: the emerging City Region Connectivity Strategy” and the ‘Clean Growth Strategy’ which sets the ambition to become a zero carbon economy by 2036

⁴ <http://d3cez36w5wymxj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/20110417/TPS-autumn-2017-key-findings-report-V2.pdf>

⁵ <http://d3cez36w5wymxj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/20110417/TPS-autumn-2017-key-findings-report-V2.pdf>

2.11 The Transport Committee report summarised how transforming connectivity in the communities of greatest economic need will help to raise productivity, living standards, and improve air quality, thereby helping to deliver Inclusive Growth, through enhancing access to colleges/universities, future housing and employment sites, supporting wider regeneration and providing the capacity to meet future demand. The report also opened a conversation around the potential role of future advanced mass transit technologies to help (as part of integrated public transport offer) achieve these aims.

2.12 Our response to the Call for Evidence will focus around this previously reported position to Transport Committee, which is essence that:

- The Leeds City Region economy is forecast to grow rapidly in the coming years, creating thousands of new jobs and significant numbers of additional trips to our urban centres
- Whilst we are already investing now to create a transport network fit for the future, our existing local transport system will be unable to cater for the additional demands placed on it by this jobs growth. Investment in local transport is needed to ensure we are 'HS2 and NPR ready' – so that the benefits of HS2 and NPR can be distributed across the entire region
- Different modes of transport serve different needs and provide different levels of capacity. Technologies have moved forwards significantly in the last decade. For example, new battery technologies, hydrogen propulsion and autonomous innovations are changing advance mass transit vehicle technologies, which also improve air quality. There are a range of pros and cons for each individual vehicle technology option.
- Based on the forecast levels of demand, our future transport network is likely to require some form of mass transit system including Park and Ride, which is capable of transporting larger numbers of people than bus, bikes and cars can accommodate. The mass transit vehicles would be just one element of integrated future pipeline; the system would need to be integrated within the wider public transport offer, for example through bus services feeding the mass transit services. Bus will continue to have a very important role in the transport network.
- The 9 November 2018 report to Transport Committee set the background to this and identified the key 'places to connect' for the four corridors examined so far have been identified. The Transport Committee report identified that some of these services have the potential to require entirely new infrastructure and whilst complementary to the existing transport system, offer the opportunity to reimagine how other modes such as bus and rail can integrate with it. Together these new services would form the first tranche of the 'City Region Transit Network' to open in parallel with HS2 opening in 2033.
- This is only the start of the conversation around future technologies. Through the conversation with stakeholders and the public as well as through the development of the business cases, other modes such Bus Rapid Transit or Tram-Train will continue to be assessed and may be more suitable for example, where there lower levels of capacity are

required or where there is direct interface with the heavy rail network respectively.

- However, lessons learnt from elsewhere suggest that there are also significant challenges associated with delivering mass transit. These include for example, the scale of costs involved, integration with bus within the deregulated market, engineering / deliverability challenges, as well as ensuring value for money for both users and investors. Funding and financing is a major challenge both for development and construction - early identification of the funding strategy is essential. Whilst the cost of implementing mass transit can be high, the scale of benefits which it delivers are also high. Other cities in the UK and beyond are demonstrating mass transit does offer high value for money and can also open up new funding opportunities.
- The analytical and evidence based approach applied here is focused on connecting communities in greatest economic need/opportunity. This is the logical and evidenced based next step in the City Region's plans for transport investment.
- There is much evidence that almost all of the UK schemes have built up a strong positive image since opening. There is also evidence that the improved image has, in turn, contributed to attracting inward investment as well as business and in some areas tourist visitors. While the improvement to a city's image is clear, identifying what economic benefits have been delivered is very difficult. This is because investment in mass transit is usually one of a package of measures aimed at tackling economic decline and because it is impossible to know what would have happened without the intervention.

2.13 A detailed response to the twenty questions raised through the 'Call for Evidence' needs to be submitted to the DfT by 19 May 2019. A draft consultation response is being developed to the detailed questions and will be circulated for comment to Portfolio Holders and Transport Committee members ahead of the publication.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 None as a result of this report.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 None as a result of this report.

5. Staffing Implications

5.1 None as a result of this report.

6. External Consultees

6.1 None as a result this report.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 That Transport Committee notes the 'call for evidence' and endorses the principles of the West Yorkshire response to the 'call for evidence'.

8. Background Documents

Light Rail (and other rapid transit solutions) A Call for Evidence on the opportunities available to introduce new Light Rail Systems or other rapid transit solutions into towns and cities in England.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/776601/light-rail-and-other-rapid-transit-solutions-a-call-for-evidence.pdf

9 November 2018: Transport Committee – “Planning For Growth: The Leeds City Region Connectivity Strategy”: Agenda Item 7 (plus appendices):

<https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=138&MId=730&Ver=4>

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of Existing UK systems

Appendix 2: DFT 'call for evidence' detailed questions