



27 June 2013

PRESS RELEASE

Leeds Civic Trust Backs Leeds Trolleybus Scheme

Leeds Civic Trust has given its backing to the Leeds NGT project being promoted by Metro and Leeds City Council.

Overview

Dr Kevin Grady, Director of Leeds Civic Trust, said:

‘The Trust has spent many hours examining the proposals and has discussed them in great detail with Metro and Leeds City Council officers. We believe that it is in the best interests of the city as a whole that the scheme is implemented. It is important to the future of Leeds that it has a modern transport system and NGT on the Holt Park to Stourton route is the first of what should become a series of rapid transit routes in the city.’

Cutting in journey times

‘We are satisfied that the system will deliver the significant reductions in journey times that the transport engineers predict, notably at peak periods. Some time savings could be achieved by introducing an Oyster card system to the existing bus services but critical to the additional time saved by NGT is the cumulative impact of dozens of modifications to the highways along the route which enable the trolleybuses to by-pass traffic jams and give them priority at key junctions.’

‘These highway modifications, including the segregated running behind the Arndale Centre in Headingley, enable the trolleybus to achieve a reliable shorter journey time even in peak periods. It is this above all which will encourage people to use it. The latest plans have a neutral impact on the speed of other traffic but even if other traffic increases over time as more housing is built in outer Leeds, the trolleybus journey times will be unaffected and make it increasingly attractive.’

Wider Benefits

‘While residents will rightly want to be reassured about the impact of the scheme on their immediate locality, it is vital that the wider benefits of the scheme are appreciated:

- The scheme will provide a vital transport link from the city centre to the Royal Armouries and New Dock thereby helping to revitalise the City Centre Waterfront and the brownfield sites in City Centre South. The link to Hunslet District Centre and Belle Isle will help boost the regeneration of these areas.

Park and Ride

The Park and Ride scheme operating from the large car parks at Stourton and Lawnswood will help reduce traffic congestion in the city centre.

Leeds Civic Trust Leeds Heritage and Design Centre 17-19 Wharf Street Leeds LS2 8EQ
T: (0113) 243 9594 F: (0113) 24 8355 E: office@leedscivitrust.org.uk W: www.leedscivitrust.org.uk

Impact on cyclists

‘At the Plans Panel NGT Review meeting we were to have it confirmed that there has been close and on-going consultation with cycling organisations and there is improved provision for cyclists along almost all of the NGT route with either advisory cycle lanes or trolleybus lands wide enough to accommodate cyclists. There were no objections from cyclists at the Plans Panel meeting and the officers provided reassuring answers to all the questions raised about cycling by councillors.’

University Section Highly Imaginative

Dr Grady praised the highly imaginative approach of making almost the whole of the Woodhouse Lane between the city centre and the two universities public transport only: ‘This an exciting proposal which with great enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment.’

Environmental Impact

Impact on Conservation Areas

‘The Trust is pleased to see that the NGT team has made strenuous efforts to limit the environmental impact of the scheme on the Conservation Areas through which it passes. For example, the east side of Headingley Lane is virtually untouched, whilst the walls which will be set back on the west side are to be rebuilt in stone to a high standard with wider pavements.’

Tree Loss

‘We regret the loss of trees in some locations but there is to be a great deal of tree planting which in time will more than compensate for these losses, and the designers have gone to great lengths to attempt to minimise tree loss and save particularly fine mature trees.’

Impact of trolleybus overhead wires, poles and equipment

‘It is inevitable that the overhead wires and poles required by the trolleybus will have an unwelcome adverse visual impact. Overall the Trust feels this is at present an unavoidable consequence of the other benefits that NGT will bring. We hope that in the longer term the trolleybus can be replaced by battery-powered vehicles and the poles and wires removed’.

Scope for further improvements to the scheme

‘The latest version of the scheme (Design Freeze 7) is still a draft design. There are still opportunities to modify and improve the design, and modifications can still be agreed as it goes through the public inquiry stage and before construction begins.’

‘We are pleased to see that some of the improvements suggested by the Trust and local residents groups have already been adopted in the latest design, and that the NGT team are clearly very willing to make further changes requested by the public provided they do not seriously affect the effectiveness of the system.’

‘The making available of the landscape plans of the scheme in the near future will enable the public to more easily understand the impact of the scheme and facilitate further input into improving the design.’

For further details contact:

Dr Kevin Grady, The Director, Leeds Civic Trust.
Telephone 0113 243 9594