

NGT - The Leeds Trolleybus Scheme: Public Inquiry Update

After 72 days of the Public Inquiry, over 1,100 official documents, the testimony and cross examination of 16 witnesses for Leeds City Council / Metro, **their own evidence and testimony shows the following:**

PUBLIC TRANSPORT WOULD BE WORSE:

- A reduced service frequency at any given stop.
- An increase in many door-to-door journey times (including those to the Merrion Centre, St Johns Centre, Victoria Quarter, Victoria Gate, Bus Station & Leeds Market).
- A reduction in public transport capacity along the A660 (measured as seats per hour). Only 40 of the 160 passengers on each trolleybus would have a seat. At the busiest times there would be up to 7 passengers standing per square metre on each trolleybus.
- Service frequencies in some parts of Leeds would fall to below the Council's own accessibility standard, with risks to other services (eg in Cookridge, Tinsill, Adel).
- Many bus stops would be moved – resulting in increased walking distances.

OTHER ASPECTS OF TRAVEL WOULD BE WORSE

- Increases in: car miles travelled; fuel consumption; road accident casualties; and in emissions contributing to climate change.
- Reduced use of active modes (cycling and walking).
- Narrower pavements for pedestrians; banned turns and road closures for vehicles.
- As a result of re-routed traffic, journeys in Leeds would, on average, take longer if NGT is built than if it isn't.

THE PROJECT HAS SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL RISK

- The revenue predictions have not been tested against serious and sustained competition from the bus companies
- The consultant's passenger preference studies showed that people would prefer to travel by bus rather than by trolleybus, but the business plan assumed the exact opposite!
- The predicted demand for park and ride is based on the assumption that people would use P&R even if it added an hour to their journey time!
- There is a very significant risk that revenues would not cover the operating costs and interest on the debt that Leeds would need to take on.

SO WHAT WOULD NGT BRING TO LEEDS?

- An operationally inflexible public transport system using out of date vehicle technology which would be difficult and costly to extend to other parts of Leeds.
- A 14km single line route with limited connectivity which doesn't serve Leeds' most deprived communities, the main areas identified for development in the city, or the airport.
- Increased costs to the local economy and a direct threat to the viability of local businesses (the consultants' prediction of 4000 extra jobs was the result of a flawed and incomplete modelling exercise which ignored their own prediction that overall transport costs would increase!).
- Loss of over 400 mature trees, unsightly overhead wires and damage to the historic environment.
- An unpopular and potential white-elephant scheme which would require the Council to cover any financial losses. It could prove costly to the city, its reputation and ambitions, whilst squeezing other council budgets and damaging other council services.