

## North West Leeds Transport Forum (NWLTF)

### **Role and Objectives**

NWLTF is an open-minded organisation seeking to add to the voice of local resident and community associations in North West Leeds. It provides a non-political forum for developing, reviewing, and critically appraising transport proposals and plans relevant to neighbourhoods in North West Leeds.

NWLTF supports the implementation of environmentally sustainable transport schemes and proposals which add to the quality of life and are consistent with our city's ambition to be an economically successful, environmentally attractive and socially inclusive city of international repute.

NWLTF recognizes the particular importance of walking and cycling and the need to promote high quality public transport but accepts that some journeys will need to be made in private vehicles.

NWLTF accepts that our area has to cope with a substantial amount of through traffic but insists that the deleterious impacts on residents, businesses and the wider environment should be minimized as far as possible and that, in devising solutions, due account be taken of the needs and opinions of local residents, schools, businesses and community organisations and that the unique character of the area should be respected.

In accordance with these objectives, NWLTF will seek to contribute to transport policy debates and to promote effective dialogue with elected representatives. It insists on full and effective public consultation between residents, local council and transport providers at all stages in the development of schemes and projects.

Whilst NWLTF is primarily focused on transport issues, it recognizes that decisions on land use and development can have huge implications for transport, and vice versa, and will sometimes therefore wish to comment on matters relating to land use and planning.

### **Membership**

Applications for membership are welcomed from other local community groups within North West Leeds who share our aspirations (as set out above and as reflected in our policy documents) and have no particular political affiliation.

The list of member organisations will be reviewed from time to time.

The following organisations are currently members of NWLTF: West Park Residents Association, Foxhills Residents Association, Weetwood Residents Association, Drummond and Church Wood Residents Association, Far Headingley Village Society, Beckett's Park Residents Association, Friends of Beckett Park, Turnways and Laurel Bank Residents Association, and North Hyde Park Neighbourhood Association.

## **Modus Operandi**

Each member organisation is represented in the Forum by a designated individual. The Forum is represented by co-chairs who are appointed or replaced by the representatives of member organisations as and when appropriate. The designated representative of a member organisation may be replaced at the discretion of the co-chairs in consultation with existing representatives.

Representatives are expected to explain the work of the Forum to their organisations and to reflect the views of their organisations to the Forum.

The business of the Forum is carried out by working groups drawn from the representatives of the member organisations together with co-opted members who bring specific expertise and professional experience to the working group. Additional input may be sought from professional advisors, representatives of businesses and other organisations in North West Leeds and, when appropriate, via wider consultation with residents in the area.

Meetings are conducted in an informal and respectful discursive atmosphere and generally proceed on the basis of an agreed consensus. Minutes of these meetings will be taken by a secretary appointed for that purpose. If and when a vote is required, each member organisation will have one vote and, in the event of a tie, the co-chairs will have a casting vote (in addition to any votes they may have as representatives of member organisations).

The Forum will, from time to time, produce documents for public circulation (e.g. via the NWLTF website). The designated representatives of all the member organisations will be given the opportunity to comment on these documents prior to their publication or significant amendment.

## **Updated description of NWLTF Activities (dated October 2019)**

The main stimulus for the inauguration of the Forum was the widespread local concern, in late 2012, that a major scheme (the NGT Trolleybus) was to be introduced along the A660 without, in the opinion of many local residents, adequate consultation or consideration of local impacts.

Although other local groups were already actively opposing the trolleybus scheme, the founders of the Forum believed that, rather than simply oppose the scheme, it was important to promote a constructive debate about what was needed and to examine whether or not the proposed scheme would be beneficial.

Advice from professional experts suggested that aspects of the scheme were fundamentally flawed and, following a series of public meetings and a survey of local opinion, the Forum concluded that it should try to persuade the Council to withdraw or radically amend its proposals. Meetings were held with relevant officials and senior councilors, letters were sent to the Press and a deputation was made to the full Council. But all this was to no avail and the Forum concluded that it would have to take its objection to the scheme to the Public Inquiry.

This was a major undertaking involving many hundreds of hours of work by Forum members and their advisors. NWLTF's evidence to the Inquiry was to be the most detailed analysis and critique of the proposal presented at the Inquiry and, together with its technical cross-examination of the proposer's expert witnesses, played a major role in persuading the Inspector that the scheme should be abandoned. Our advisors were later invited to give evidence to the Council's Scrutiny Committee when it sought to examine what had gone wrong in its pursuit of the trolleybus scheme.

In the months following the Inquiry, NWLTF produced a document outlining other, more appropriate, public transport initiatives in Leeds and lobbied for the money which was to have been contributed by the Department for Transport (DfT) to the Trolleybus scheme to be made available to fund such initiatives.

NWLTF was pleased when, after considering all the evidence, the Inquiry Inspector recommended that the Trolleybus Scheme should not be implemented and the Secretary of State agreed that the £175m DfT contribution to that scheme should instead be spent on more modest schemes designed to improve public transport in Leeds.

In the light of this, NWLTF developed detailed proposals for alternative solutions to the problems affecting the A660 and, more particularly, to allow buses to avoid congestion and queues along the route. These proposals were further developed and amended following a series of public meetings and then submitted to the council for their consideration.

NWLTF has contributed detailed comments on the Council's own proposals for schemes along the A660 and is continuing to press for urgent action to be taken to solve the problems which are so evident in the corridor. As part of this effort, it is monitoring developments and, where appropriate, making representations to support proposals which would have a positive impact and oppose those which would have a negative impact or which might compromise potential solutions.

NWLTF has noted and commented on proposals to expand Leeds Bradford Airport and to construct a new road and rail station to serve it. Another proposal which came to the attention of Forum members was to alter the flight paths over North West Leeds – potentially leading to increased noise over West Park, St Chads, Headingley, Woodhouse and the City Centre. NWLTF submitted objections to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on the grounds that the Airport's consultation on their proposals had been inadequate and felt vindicated when the CAA cited inadequacies in the consultation as the reason for their decision to refuse permission for the changes.

October 2019