



Environment Not Trams

Wilford, Clifton, Silverdale and Compton Acres Action Group

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Councillor

Dear Councillor

NET Phase Two

Now that the dust has settled after the recent elections, we would like to congratulate you on your «Re»election to Nottinghamshire County Council.

One issue which you will soon be asked to consider is NET Phase Two - whether further tram lines should be built from Beeston and Clifton into Nottingham city centre. We would ask you to reflect on the following points:

- ✍ NET Line One has signally failed in its aim to move people out of their cars and onto public transport. NET's own surveys show that the vast majority of users have simply transferred from bus to tram. And that, at least in part, is because their buses have been removed to reduce competition with the tram.
- ✍ The tram operating company, Nottingham Tram Consortium, have confirmed that they will not be publishing accounts, despite the fact that Line One is a publicly funded project. Although NTC is secretive about its financial situation, tram fares on Line One have increased twice during the first year of operation.
- ✍ The possible route extensions are the subject of great public controversy, and when raised in the affected areas during the recent elections were found to be electorally unpopular.
- ✍ The route from Clifton via Wilford to the city centre would cause immense environmental damage. This view is endorsed by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust who stated recently that the route would "destroy one of the longest wildlife corridors in the city and a crucial link into more rural habitats in Rushcliffe. The proposed route includes some of the most scarce and valuable habitats in the Borough."
- ✍ The vast majority of Nottinghamshire residents will derive no benefit from the routes at all, yet will be paying for them through the proportion of the capital cost that the County Council will have to pay as joint promoters with Nottingham City Council.



- ✍ The cost of Phase Two has spiralled in five years from £77 million to £320 million, which works out at £30 million per mile. Unlike Line One, which was entirely funded by central government, at least a quarter of the cost of Phase Two will have to be raised locally.
- ✍ Tram systems installed by several cities have already demonstrated themselves to be over-engineered in their attempts to make an old-fashioned solution meet modern needs. Computer software problems have led to major system dislocations - recently leaving thousands of passengers stranded for hours in Manchester and curtailing services in Nottingham. And each time the trams fail it is buses that are brought to the rescue.
- ✍ Truly modern alternatives such as fuel-cell or ethanol powered buses offer all the advantages of modern design, passenger comfort and, where desired, station-type access platforms, but with the added benefits of lower cost of infrastructure, lower cost of procurement, swifter implementation, initial and subsequent flexibility of routes, quieter vehicles, and easier and therefore cheaper maintenance and running costs.
- ✍ Reports by independent bodies such as the National Audit Office, conclude that trams have had little impact on reducing road congestion and pollution. Tram systems have been running at a loss and new schemes are expensive to implement and costs are rising. Tram systems are inflexible. They can certainly not meet the changing demographics and transport needs of all the people of Nottinghamshire during the 30 year period over which the cost of Phase Two will have to be repaid.

It is vital to the economic life of Nottinghamshire in the coming decades that transport infrastructure spending is undertaken wisely and cost-effectively. We therefore hope we can call upon your support to ensure that NET's staggeringly costly proposals for future tram lines, based on already out-dated thinking, are not allowed to rumble on simply through inertia.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Wheeler
Chair ENT