



Environment Not Trams Newsletter

TRAM TIMETABLE SLIPS AGAIN ...

August 2003

- ✉ Consultation Update
- ✉ Investigator Reports on Derailment
- ✉ Don't Touch it with a Bargepole!
- ✉ New Website

Consultation Update

We reported in our last newsletter that the next round of 'consultation' on the proposed tram routes had been postponed again and would take place during August.

Well the latest news is that the timetable has slipped yet again. NET now say they should be posting the glossy brochures through our doors sometime during September.

Last week NET announced their intention to build the park and ride site that is to be situated at the Clifton end of the Clifton via Wilford route on green belt land.

The reasons stated for this are that it is cheaper and quicker. Once again, little thought for the environmental consequences.

Investigator Reports on Derailment

Her Majesty's Railways Inspectorate have now completed their investigation into the NET tram derailment.

The tram was travelling along an isolated stretch of track at a relatively slow speed in clear, dry weather. There were no distractions from passengers or other traffic. Despite these ideal conditions, not only the trainee

driver but also the instructor failed to register a trackside signal telling them that the points were not in the correct position.

Have NET learned nothing from the experience of their railway colleagues? With a newly built system, why is there no automated method of bringing the tram safely to a halt in these circumstances?

Meanwhile, the accidents continue. Following the tragic death last month of a pedestrian struck by a tram, Croydon residents are being urged in an advertising campaign by Transport for London to watch their step when walking near tram lines.

Don't Touch it with a Bargepole!

Carillion, the company in charge of construction of NET's Line One recently issued a shock profits warning that sent its shares tumbling 15 per cent and wiped £40m off the firm's value.

It is reported that trials on the tram over the last few weeks have revealed difficulties with 'systems integration' and the layout of the track. The system was meant to open at the beginning of November, but Carillion now warns it could be a 'couple of months' late. Hundreds of extra staff are being drafted in to the project to solve the problems.

City analysts were left wondering exactly where the company's planning and monitoring techniques had gone wrong after it gave warning that costs on the project had mushroomed.

In a statement, the firm's chief executive said "Quite frankly, today we wouldn't touch this project with a bargepole. That's because the light rail sector doesn't fit our criteria for selectivity and risk management."

Carillion is not the first to be caught out with these schemes. Amey ran into serious trouble with its Croydon Tramway scheme and Midland Metro, a tram service connecting Birmingham with Wolverhampton, is also losing money fast: £11m in 2001. Contractor John Laing and National Express are struggling to push it towards profitability.

Why does it matter to us if these private firms have financial problems? Well it could do if they get much worse. Our County Councillor Martin Brandon-Bravo is seeking, so far without success, a clear assurance that the County Council and its taxpayers would not be expected to pick up the bill.

New Website

Don't forget to take a look at our new website:

www.environmentnottrams.co.uk

Why not add the site to your 'favourites' and check back from time to time to pick up the latest news.

Netballs

'The financial arrangements for the project are a matter for the normal political process and not specifically the general public.'

(We just pay the bills)