

Submission of the A660 Joint Council to Scrutiny Board (City Development)

By : Vice Chairman Bill McKinnon

Date : Tuesday 8th November 2016

Subject : Transport for Leeds - Supertram, NGT and Beyond

1. Response to Report of Director of City Development and WYCA dated 7 September 2016

- a. Paragraph 2.1 states that Alistair Darling refused to fund Supertram on the grounds of affordability. The National Audit Office report into the failure of the Supertram scheme published in 2006 states at page 13:

"The promoters presented the Department with the results of their work which they began in February. The promoters proposed to defer construction of the 7km southern stretch to Tingley and revised the allocation of risk to bring costs down. They benchmarked costs against other UK light rail schemes, concluding that costs in Leeds were higher because of higher land prices and because Supertram had more on-street running than other schemes and passed through environmentally- sensitive areas."

The promoters were in effect admitting that a contributing factor to the high cost of Supertram was the cost of the land they'd purchased along the A660.

- b. Paragraph 3.3.3 states, *"The Benefits of NGT were documented in the Business Case which was scrutinised in detail and approved by the DfT"* And paragraph 3.3.5 states *"It is clear from this analysis that the Leeds economy would have received a significant and positive economic benefit from NGT."* But the DfT said that its conclusions were based on assumptions made by the promoters which if incorrect, would invalidate the conclusions. The inspector examined the assumptions and found them to be unsound.
- c. One of NGT's stated objectives was to *"Reduce transport emissions of CO2 and other greenhouse gases."* But the scheme would have increased such emissions. The failure to meet this important objective concerned the inspector. But paragraph 3.3.8 tries to belittle the inspector's concern and the failure of the scheme to meet an important objective by saying that the scheme would have had only *"minor adverse impacts on air quality."*
- d. NGT would have passed through ten conservation areas. The promoters consistently downplayed the damage that would be caused to these areas, even to the extent of photoshopping leaves onto trees and adding blue skies with fluffy white clouds to make the "after" images look better than the "before" images. This downplaying of the damage continues in the report presented to you on the 7th September, which suggests at paragraphs 3.3.9, 3.3.10 and 3.3.11 that the damage was blown out of proportion by *"a relatively small but significant vocal local opposition"* and a gullible inspector.
- e. Regarding the *"relatively small but significant vocal opposition"* to the scheme. The DfT received 1,880 formal objections to the scheme. An online poll of over 7,000 Yorkshire Evening Post readers found that over 70% considered the scheme would be bad for Leeds, and a survey of almost 2,000 Yorkshire Evening Post readers found that just 24% supported the scheme. In addition, the scheme was opposed by the Federation of Small Businesses. With regards to bodies such as Leeds University which supported the scheme, the inspector said that their support was for general transport improvements and did not constitute support for any specific scheme.
- f. Paragraph 3.5.8 states, *"Whilst the DfT process of scrutiny was rigorous in respect of the business case, it is less clear how the process related to overall scheme deliverability, or the reasons why the Planning Inspector was able to have formed an 'expert' view on the business*

case without the detailed technical background.” The inspector didn’t claim to have formed an ‘expert’ view. Like any judge, he listened to the experts on both sides, and concluded from what he heard that the expert evidence provided by the promoters was unreliable.

- g. Paragraph 3.5.8 also states, *“There appeared to be a disconnect between the Inspector and the DfT on the assessment of scheme benefits. This is despite the extensive technical rigour and scrutiny that had been applied by DfT and others through the course of the scheme’s development.”* As already stated, the DfT made clear that its decision to give provisional support for the scheme was based on assumptions made by the promoters in their business case. These assumptions were shown at the inquiry to be very likely incorrect.
- h. Paragraph 3.5.8 blames the DfT for the promoters' decision to drop the eastern leg of the project. But the decision to drop it was the promoters. And the DfT advice to drop the eastern leg was based on data supplied by the promoters.
- i. Paragraph 3.5.8 states that the inquiry process needs to be quicker. But the reason this inquiry was so long was because there was so much that was wrong with the promoters’ business case. This was borne out by the inspector’s conclusions, which form an 80 page list of criticisms of the scheme.
- j. Paragraph 4.1.1 claims that there was extensive consultation on the trolleybus scheme from 2008 onwards. And yet the decision to pursue the trolleybus scheme was made by Metro in November 2006 under the chairmanship of Bradford trolleybus enthusiast Stanley King. This was long before any consultation. And at no stage in the consultation process were people asked if they wanted a trolleybus.

The NGT information leaflets released in the Autumn and Winter of 2012 and Spring 2013 stated *“modern trolleybus systems are an increasingly common sight in European and North American cities.”* In fact, trolleybus numbers in North America decreased from 1,926 in the year 2000, to 1,312 in 2012, a drop of 32% in 12 years. In Europe, numbers decreased from 6,375 in 2000, to 4,828 in 2012, a drop of 24% in 12 years. Despite the misinformation given to the public, it’s clear that the results of the consultation were negative as Metro refused to publish them or include them with their application to the DfT for a Transport and Works Act Order. Instead, Metro included with its application, quotes from bodies such as the Civic Trust, which supported the application.

- k. The report of the Director of City Development and WYCA dated 7 September 2016 seeks to shift blame for the failure of Supertram and NGT away from the promoters and onto Alistair Darling, the inspector and objectors.

2. Reasons for the failure of Supertram and NGT

- a. Supertram failed because it was too expensive. A contributory factor to the scheme’s high cost was the cost of all the land that had been purchased along the A660. The National Audit Office report published in 2006 reveals that the promoters gave this as a reason for the scheme’s high cost.
- b. NGT failed for the following reasons (and others) given by the Secretary of State for Transport on 12 May 2016:
 - 1. The scheme would deliver improvements to a relatively small part of Leeds and could result in poorer public transport services in other parts of the city.
 - 2. There is little evidence to show that the scheme would serve the most deprived areas of Leeds.

3. The scheme would harm the built and natural environment as a result of the introduction of over-head wires, additional street clutter, and the loss of trees and green spaces.
4. The scheme would not significantly improve access to jobs because of the fewer stops provided, the limited locations it would serve and the relatively poor integration with other public transport.
5. Because the trolley vehicles would share significant sections of the route with other traffic, they could be vulnerable to congestion and other delays making journey times less reliable than predicted by the applicants.
6. The likely high proportion of people having to stand in peak times would be a deterrent to passengers.
7. Surveys indicate a strong preference for new double-decker buses over articulated vehicles or trolleybuses.
8. The scheme would do little to make the route more attractive for cyclists and would result in insufficient improvements in pedestrian facilities and safety to encourage walking.
9. The scheme would not be fully integrated with other public transport as trolley vehicles would not use the same stops as buses and would not access the bus station.
10. By taking patronage from existing buses the scheme would compromise the commercial sustainability and efficient use of the existing bus service.
11. The method used by the applicants to make patronage forecasts for the scheme based on the Stated Preference survey results does not inspire confidence.
12. The demand for the proposed park and ride sites has been over-estimated.
13. The over-head wiring cannot be regarded as a positive feature that could influence investment decisions in the area by its appearance of permanence.
14. The applicants have not properly taken into account evidence that other forms of technology are progressing or that trolley vehicle technology has not been widely adopted in recent years.
15. The promoters have given insufficient weight to the environmental harm caused by over-head wiring compared with other modes of propulsion.
16. The applicants have not fully examined whether there are more suitable corridors for a rapid transit system to meet the scheme's objectives.
17. The policy support for the scheme at national and local level has to be weighed against the harm which the scheme would cause to heritage assets, green space and biodiversity which contravene other national and local policies.
18. The impact of the scheme in operation on overall air quality including carbon emissions would be negative due to the impact on other traffic and the use of grid electricity.
19. The over-head line equipment would be more extensive than for trams and is likely to have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of buildings and their setting
20. The viability of some businesses is likely to be harmed by implementation of the scheme.
21. There would be a reduction in the overall area of open space as a result of the scheme, some of which is difficult to justify against the likely benefits of the scheme.
22. The need to separate trolleybus stops from other bus stops would make it less convenient for people to use public transport
23. Because the scheme is predicted to take much of its patronage from existing bus services, it could result in a reduction in bus services in the corridor and elsewhere.
24. If bus operators competed with the trolleybus, this could threaten the viability of the scheme.
25. Congestion would not be improved by the scheme, with some junctions having greater queue lengths and an increase in the overall distance travelled annually by cars.

26. The reduction of parking and other traffic restrictions along the corridor could affect the viability of businesses.
27. Parts of the route would be shared with pedestrians which would result in either trolley vehicles not being able to travel at their design speeds or else a risk to pedestrian safety.
28. Cycling facilities were not a priority in designing the scheme and some design standards have been compromised in favour of motor vehicles and trolley vehicles, putting the safety of cyclists at risk.
29. The A660 corridor is not particularly suitable for articulated vehicles.
30. The scale of standing by passengers on the trolley vehicles would be a safety concern.
31. There would be significant adverse impacts on heritage assets and the loss of mature trees and open space along the route.
32. The loss of trees, green space and the impact on the historic environment would not be adequately mitigated.
33. Any beneficial impacts on the character and appearance of areas to the south of the route would not compensate for the severe harm to the character and appearance of conservation areas and listed buildings in the north.
34. The Business Case should have included a monetised estimate for construction phase impacts, which are likely to be significant.
35. The assumed journey times are optimistic and there is insufficient evidence to substantiate them.
36. Insufficient detail has been given to verify the applicants' cost estimates and to provide assurance that they are unlikely to be exceeded.
37. There is a realistic possibility that the scheme would not attract the necessary funding to maintain it, even with the commitment that has been made to fund its construction should the Order be made.
38. On the basis of the evidence submitted to the inquiry, there is a significant degree of uncertainty about whether the scheme would be operationally viable.
39. There may be cheaper options requiring less compulsory purchase of land that would be more effective in addressing the aims and objectives of the scheme.

3. Beyond

- a. Air quality in Leeds is acknowledged to be amongst the worst in the UK. It's essential therefore that any schemes undertaken in the future, provide significant improvements to air quality.
- b. Any future schemes should be either environmentally neutral or improve the quality of our built and natural environment.
- c. Any future schemes should adhere to the principles of the Hierarchy of Road Users.
- d. For the above reasons, the A660 Joint Council is opposed to the proposals for the A660 put forward by Professor Peter Bonsall on behalf of the North West Leeds Transport Forum. In addition:
- e. Transport professional Alan Beswick has stated in a report (see Appendix A) that since 90% of the traffic passing through junctions along the A660 is car traffic, Professor Bonsall's proposal to ban right turns at junctions would actually benefit cars far more than it would benefit buses. His report states, *"This is the sort of scheme that does almost exactly the opposite of what it might be thought to be designed to do – to make buses more attractive."* Mr Beswick's report also states, *"Helping cars go faster doesn't help public transport – on the contrary, it will just encourage more traffic to use the A660. (until the point at which the extra traffic wipes out the time benefits that the scheme initially brings).*

- f. Transport academic Andrew Tomlinson of Leeds University's Institute of Transport Studies has stated in his report (see Appendix B):

"This NWLTF proposal attempts to address the congestion at Hyde Park Corner by banning right turns across the junction. However, the proposal does nothing to increase the attractiveness of bus trips relative to car trips, nor does it reduce the road capacity available for car trips through the junction. Indeed the proposal increases capacity for both cars and buses equally, and in all probability given there is a suppressed demand for road trips into Leeds might contribute to making the overall situation worse, by attracting more cars to this junction and consuming the new capacity released by the changes.

"The proposal for Hyde Park Corner is presented by NWLTF as a "modest but nonetheless valuable improvement" (page 2). However, as identified in this document, there are a number of technical issues related to this plan which mean that it is likely to be more difficult and more contentious to implement than is implied in the proposal document. A new section of road would need to be built, other sections widened or narrowed and further junction signalisation would be required."

Mr Tomlinson demonstrates in his report that by banning right turns at Hyde Park Corner, high volumes of traffic would be diverted away from the main roads onto much smaller roads and also onto the new road that the professor proposes building across Woodhouse Moor.

- g. Professor Bonsall's proposals to build a new road across Woodhouse Moor, a cycle path along Woodhouse Ridge, setting back the wall along Headingley Lane, and building a Headingley Bypass for cyclists, are at odds with several of the findings of the trolleybus inspector (see Appendix C)

4. Postscript

The Scrutiny Board may also wish to consider investigating the Electrobus scheme. This was a trolleybus scheme pursued by Metro between 1980 and 1990. Initially it was intended to bring back trolleybuses just to Bradford. But when the government refused to fund the scheme, Metro included Leeds in the scheme, in the hope that by so doing, the scheme would seem more attractive to the government. When the government finally refused to fund the scheme, Metro decided to go ahead with the scheme by itself. But then, when a private bus operator announced that it would be running a diesel bus service along the proposed trolleybus route, Metro dropped the scheme. This was tacit recognition by Metro that trolleybuses can't compete with diesel buses. Metro has destroyed all its records of the Electrobus scheme. This may explain why they put forward NGT on a route where there was already a well-established bus service provided by private bus operators. Their NGT business case unrealistically assumed that these private bus operators wouldn't try to compete with the trolleybus.

APPENDIX A

Comments on NWLTF's Alternative Transport Strategy Discussion Document in Relation to the Headingley Neighbourhood Plan Transport Options Note

CONTEXT

- 1.1 Having previously provided advice on traffic and transport issues to Headingley Network's Transport Group and to the Ash Road Area Residents Association (ARARA)¹ I was asked for an opinion on the draft Headingley Transport Options (HTO) note being prepared for the Headingley Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 Having reviewed that document it appeared that some of the ideas in the North West Leeds Transport Forum (NWLTF) Alternative Transport Strategy Discussion Document were proving very influential. To my mind these created a disconnect between the very locally-specific neighbourhood proposals and the more strategic proposals focused on the A660 corridor. I have been asked by Bill McKinnon of the A660 Joint Council to set out my observations in the form of this short note.
- 1.3 *I should make it clear that I am not commenting on whether the NWLTF proposals are better or worse than the Trolleybus scheme that they have been developed as an alternative to, but on whether these proposals are appropriate for the Headingley Neighbourhood Plan.*

HEADINGLEY TRANSPORT OPTIONS (HTO) EMERGING IDEAS NOTE

- 1.4 It is worth beginning with a quick observation about the objectives, goals and general approach set out in the HTO note, repeated here

General Objective: *To promote access, economic vitality and environmental standards in the Headingley neighbourhood and so enhance the quality of life of its residents and users*

Goals: *To reduce accident risk, noise, pollution and other unwanted effects of traffic and to make it easier to travel to, from, within **and through** Headingley.*

General Approach: *To encourage, wherever possible, the use of public transport and active modes (walking and cycling) rather than cars*
- 1.5 These are all very sensible. Having said that, I have highlighted the 'and through Headingley' statement in the goals as I would suggest it is worth considering whether that is an essential part of a Neighbourhood Plan, particularly where the general objective is to enhance the quality of life for residents of the neighbourhood. It is however consistent with the ideas that emerge from the NWLTF which as I will show below are focused on improving the position for traffic passing *through* Headingley, but with some consequential adverse impacts on the neighbourhood.
- 1.6 I was initially a little confused when I looked at the Headingley Transport Options note for the HNP. There are many good ideas contained within it that would seem to be exactly the sorts of things a Neighbourhood Plan should be looking at. It is simply a shopping list of ideas but this is quite appropriate for the moment, the document is exactly what it says it is – 'emerging ideas and options' that would require further work in order to develop a strategy.
- 1.7 But amongst these good ideas there is an underlying theme that I found quite surprising. On further investigation I realised that this came from the work by the NWLTF.

¹ I am a director of one of the UK's largest independent transport planning consultancies and have been resident in Headingley for over 35 years.

APPENDIX A

NWLTF PROPOSALS

- 1.8 The NWLTF Alternative Transport Strategy Discussion Document is a preliminary draft which has been offered up by the NWLTF as a discussion document about alternatives to the A660 Trolley Bus scheme (Part A of the document) and as part of a broader discussion on the transport strategy for Leeds City Region (Part B).
- 1.9 I am only commenting on Part A, the A660 proposals, and only in so far as they have been drawn into the Headingley Transport Options note.
- 1.10 There is a general implied intent within the NWLTF report to develop measures that support buses, by amongst other things reducing delays to them on the A660. While this may be the intent it doesn't reflect the fact that the majority of measures proposed are essentially a series of traffic management options designed to reduce delays at junctions, particularly at traffic light controlled junctions. Most of these aim to reduce 'conflicting' movements. Conflicting movements are usually where cars are turning right across the general flow of traffic. Reducing these conflicts generally means that you can increase the straight-ahead flow through a junction.
- 1.11 In removing these conflicting movements you may reduce delays to buses at these junctions but what you primarily achieve is a reduction in delays to cars going straight ahead through the junction.
- 1.12 As cars will make up 90%+ of the vehicles on the A660 it would be disingenuous to claim that such schemes are designed to benefit buses. What they really do is make it easier and faster for cars to get through the junctions. Helping cars go faster doesn't help public transport – on the contrary it will just encourage more traffic to use the A660, (until the point at which the extra traffic wipes out the time 'benefits' that the scheme initially brings).
- 1.13 Furthermore to get rid of these conflicting movements there are several proposals in Part A of the NWLTF report which in the context of a Neighbourhood Plan are highly inappropriate.
- 1.14 The proposal (Option 3 in their report) to reduce the conflicting movements at the North Lane/A660 junction is a good example of this as the scheme requires changes to Bennett Road and St Michaels Road in order to make it work (essentially to provide an alternative route for the traffic that would be banned from turning at the North Lane/A660 junction).
- 1.15 The suggestion that the traffic barrier at Bennett Road (which was closed as a rat run by Leeds City Council in the late 1980) be removed will 'import' passing traffic onto a road which is currently local access only. This idea would seriously worsen conditions for pedestrians on the Otley Road (by Boots) and on North Lane (by the Community Centre) as well as for people using HEART and of course the residents of Bennett Road.
- 1.16 The North Lane/A660 junction scheme also proposes making it easier for eastbound traffic from Kirkstall Lane/North Lane to route via St Michael's Road and past the War Memorial. It is hard to think of a less appropriate road in Headingley to be encouraging more traffic to use it. In fact the proposal to make the western end of St Michael's Road one way eastbound not only encourages more traffic to use this narrow residential street but will also speed up the traffic on the one way section.
- 1.17 Elsewhere the Shaw Lane/A660 junction proposals (Option 12) would add more traffic to Headingley Mount. This road has already borne the brunt of additional traffic as the unavoidable consequence of the Ash Road area-wide traffic calming - to add more traffic onto it in order to improve the flow of traffic down the A660 is arguably adding insult to injury.
- 1.18 This is where it gets difficult to support many of the ideas in the context of a Neighbourhood Plan since, as I've shown above, most of these schemes will result in traffic being diverted onto neighbourhood streets.

APPENDIX A

- 1.19 There are some good ideas within the NWLTF Alternative Transport Strategy in the context of the debate that it is seeking to influence (which is movement along the A660 corridor) but it is dominated by traffic management solutions that are all about maximising the flow of *vehicles* and not *people*.
- 1.20 If you want an example of this then have a look at the suggestion in Option 6 that the bus stop on Cardigan Road near North Lane should be moved out of the main carriageway and into a new bus lay-by to reduce the queues that sometimes back-up behind it. What does this achieve? Firstly it makes the car journey a little quicker. Secondly it makes the bus journey a little slower as the bus then has to look for a break in the traffic to pull out into the road after people have boarded or alighted.
- 1.21 The changes may only be modest but the net result is that public transport has become slightly less attractive, both in absolute terms, and more so in relative terms. Or looked at another way – the 50 to 80 people that will typically be on a bus in the morning rush hour are disadvantaged to allow maybe 10 car drivers who get caught behind a loading bus a few seconds advantage.
- 1.22 This is the sort of scheme that does almost exactly the opposite of what it might be thought to be designed to do - to make buses more attractive. There are plenty more examples. The Hyde Park Corner ideas (Option 17) for instance could have some potentially beneficial impacts in terms of the pedestrian environment outside the Crescent shops but these are almost incidental to the main outcome which is to reduce delays to through traffic (predominantly cars) on the A660.

IN SUMMARY

- 1.23 If the aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is to enhance the environment, vitality and liveability of the area for Headingley residents and businesses then one might take the view that the focus of the transport options should be on the streetscape and the environment for pedestrians and cyclists on their local streets. On the A660 arguably the Neighbourhood Plan focus should be on mitigating its adverse impact on the environment for the shopping and leisure facilities in the centre of Headingley. The best way to do that is likely to be by not increasing highway capacity, in any shape or form, and instead supporting measures that make it easier and safer to walk and to cycle and easier and more attractive to use the bus - more attractive fares, simpler, ticketing, better information and additional bus priority where feasible (but not by simply increasing the capacity for all traffic).

Comments on North West Leeds Transport Forum Discussion Document Proposals for Hyde Park Corner

Context

- 1.1 I was approached by Bill McKinnon to give a view on the proposals outlined in North West Leeds Transport Forum's (NWLTF) discussion document, dated July 2015, for the junction at Hyde Park Corner (section 5 , page 5 of the discussion document).
- 1.2 Living in Huddersfield, and commuting daily to Leeds by train, I have no interest to declare in any of the proposals or schemes that have previously been proposed or are currently being considered with regards to the A660 Headingley Lane corridor. I have reviewed the proposals in the NWLTF discussion document from the position of an impartial observer.
- 1.3 I have both undergraduate and Masters level qualifications in Computer Science and worked for almost twenty years as a software engineer, during which time I established my own software business developing process control and data analysis applications. I subsequently retrained as a transport planner, gaining an MSc from The University of Leeds in 2008. I worked for a short time as a consultant at Arup in Leeds, and have also worked for Kirklees Highways service, though not directly in the transportation section. I recently completed a PhD in transportation related discipline, and now work for The University of Leeds.

General Comments

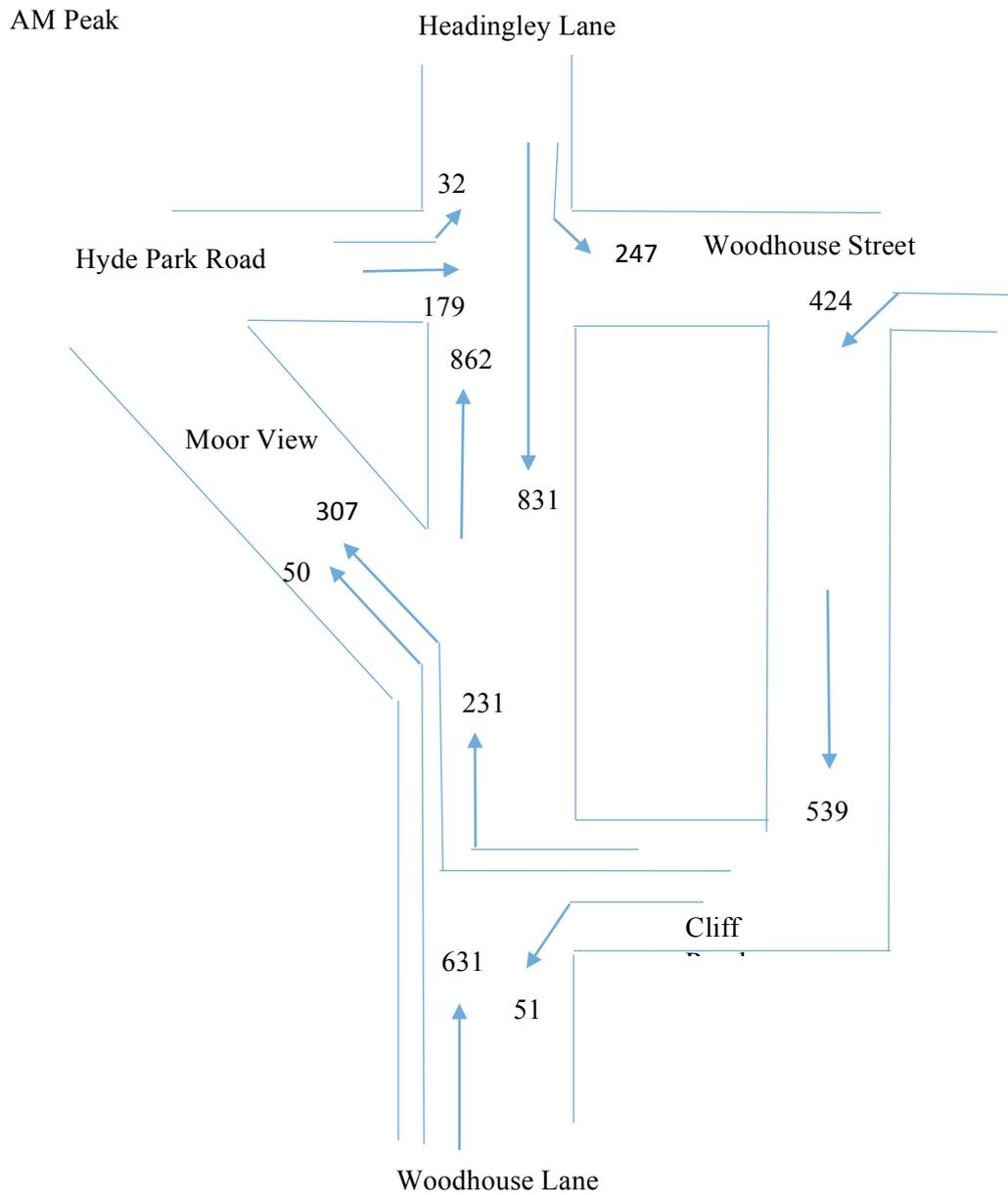
- 2.1 The main objective for all the proposals that have been considered for the A660 Headingley Lane corridor is to influence the individual trip making behaviour by making public transport more attractive relative to car, through:
 - increasing the speed of the public transport or decreasing the speed of car trips,
 - removing capacity for private traffic from the network so as to reduce the total number of trips that are possible
 - macro-economic measures through the use of fares subsidies or through vehicle usage charging regimes or by controlling the cost of city centre parking.
- 2.2 The problem inherent in attempting these types of policy intervention along the A660 Headingley Lane corridor and through Hyde Park Corner is that none of these measures (apart from the macro-economic ones) can be effective. The inbound route towards Hyde Park Corner from Headingley is predominately single carriageway with no possibility for converting road-space into bus lanes and hence no easy way of removing capacity for private vehicles. Similarly there is no vacant land around the corridor on which to add a new segregated busway. Furthermore there are no obvious alternative routes into the city from Headingley onto which buses could be rerouted. In short, barring major redevelopment along the length of this radial route, cars and buses will continue to share the single carriageway, meaning that the prevailing speed for buses and cars along this stretch of road will remain largely equivalent. Therefore the only way to attain a time advantage for bus trips is through attention to the junctions along the route, including Hyde Park Corner.

APPENDIX B

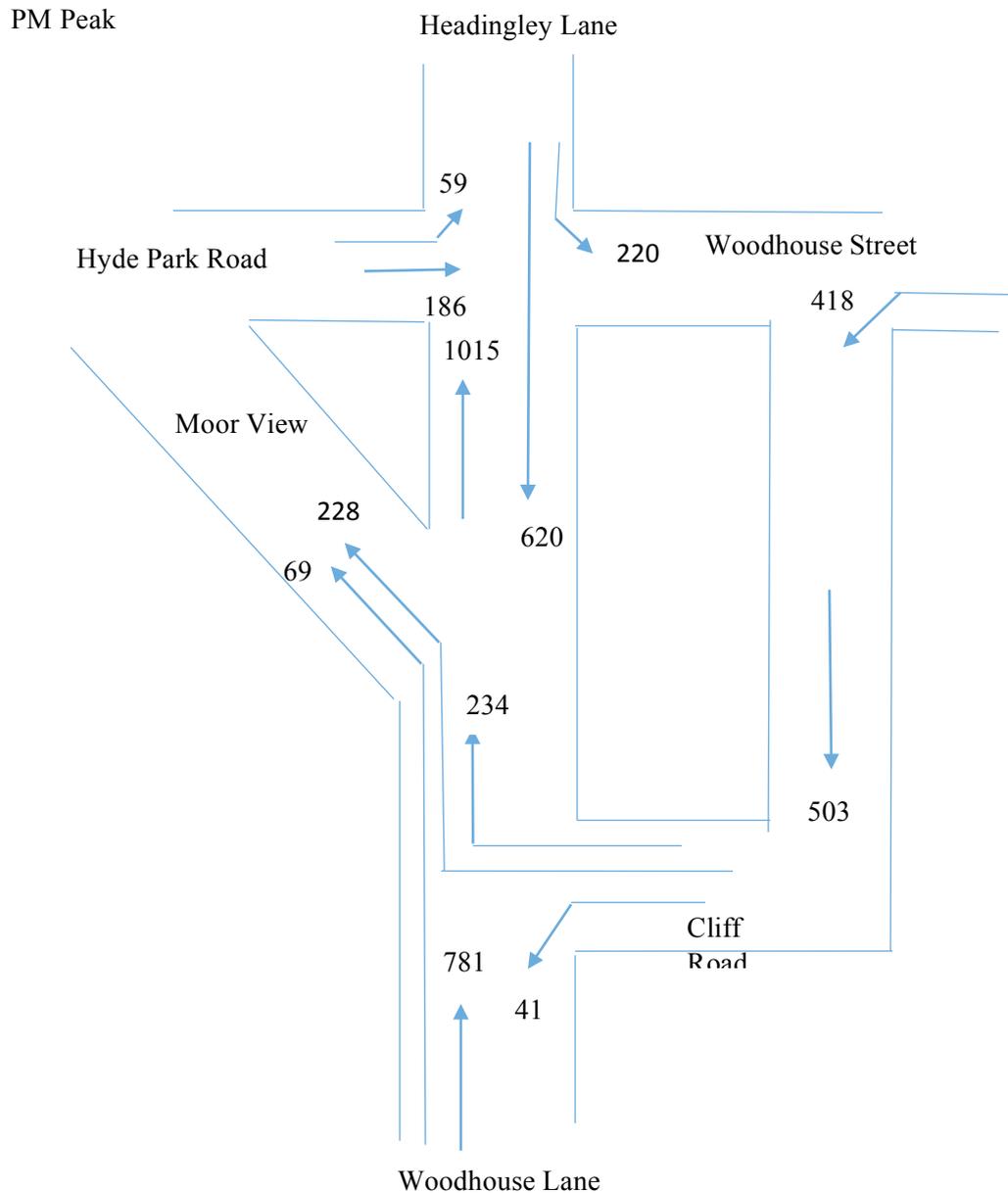
- 2.3 The current vehicle turning counts, taken from NGT planning document APP-6-3-3 (page 22, do nothing case) demonstrate the level of vehicle usage at this junction, with over 1,000 inbound PCUs (a private car = 1 PCU) approaching the junction from Headingley Lane in the AM peak. These movements are in conflict with 600 PCUs across the junction from both Hyde Park Road and Woodhouse Street.
- 2.4 Assuming an inbound bus service frequency of 2 minutes (30 buses per hour), this is equivalent to 60 PCUs (1 bus = 2 PCUs, NGT APP-6-3-1, page 2) meaning that on average for every one inbound bus there will be 16 inbound cars crossing the junction.
- 2.5 NWLTF's proposal for Hyde Park Corner involves a ban on right turns at this junction. Since there is no segregation of cars and buses along Headingley Lane or on the approaches to the junction this will affect cars and buses equally.
- 2.6 The effect of banning right turns will increase the capacity for traffic passing through the junction, and whilst this will certainly improve bus trip times, the same increase will also be experienced by private vehicles using the junction. Far from discouraging private cars from using this corridor, given that there is suppressed peak time demand for trips into Leeds, it is likely that the capacity increase attained through the ban on right turns will encourage more inbound commuters to use Headingley Lane.

Detailed Comments on the proposal for Hyde Park Corner

- 3.1 The current vehicle turning counts, taken from NGT planning document APP-6-3-3 (page 22, do nothing case) can be used to demonstrate the effect of the NWLTF's proposal for Hyde Park Corner.
- 3.2 The reassigned turning counts after the implementation of the NWLTF proposal in the AM peak are shown below:



3.3 The reassigned turning counts after the implementation of the NWLTF proposal in the PM peak are shown below:



3.4 The creation of a one-way link from Woodhouse Lane to Hyde Park Road is more than simply “remodelling Moor View” as implied in the discussion document. The original alignment of Moor View appears to have been tight to the buildings fronting onto Woodhouse Lane and the creation of this link would require a new access to be built across an existing car park, the removal of some trees and the likely demolition of at least one building (old toilet block?). It would also change the character of Moor View, which faces directly onto the park, from quiet backwater cul-de-sac to through route with 357 AM/297 PM peak-time PCUs.

3.5 The cumulative effect of banning right turns at Hyde Park Corner junction implies a considerable increase in right turning traffic from Cliff Road onto Woodhouse Lane (+538 AM/+462 PM peak-time PCUs). As this is a priority junction, the traffic would be

required to cross the southbound Woodhouse Lane flow (831 AM/620 PM PCUs) and find free space within the northbound Woodhouse Lane flow (681 AM /850 PM PCUs). Whilst some gaps in the southbound flow might be created by both the phasing of the traffic signals at Hyde Park Corner and the proposed pedestrian crossing on Woodhouse Lane between Cliff Road and Moor View, gaps in the northbound flow would be more difficult to achieve. Furthermore the proposed pedestrian crossing on Woodhouse Lane between Cliff Road and Moor View would disrupt and block the traffic turning right from Cliff Road whenever the crossing was being used by pedestrians. This volume of traffic implies that the junction of Cliff Road and Woodhouse Lane would also need to be signalised.

- 3.6 “Moving the northbound bus stop to a site just north of Hyde Park Road” would require pedestrians to cross both Moor View (357 AM/297 PM PCUs) and Hyde Park Road (211 AM/245 PM PCUs) and whilst pedestrian crossing facilities are provided on Hyde Park Road no such facilities are planned for Moor View although vehicle flows will be greater.
- 3.7 The phasing of “a new pedestrian crossing just north of Victoria Road” would need to be coordinated with the traffic signals at Hyde Park Corner to provide a platoon of southbound vehicles across the junction and to prevent northbound vehicles from tailing back onto the junction.
- 3.8 The creation of a northbound bus lane “on Woodhouse Lane right up to Victoria Road” is problematic for two reasons. Firstly at the junction of Woodhouse Lane and Moor View left turning traffic (357 AM/297 PM PCUs) would be required to turn in front of any buses using the dedicated bus lane. This implies that a northbound bus lane between Cliff Road and Moor View is unlikely. Secondly, after Hyde Park Corner, the northbound carriageway is currently not wide enough (5.15m to the median) to accommodate two northbound lanes and would require the road to be widened and the footway and one lamp column to be moved with space being taken from the greenspace in front of the advertising hoarding on Headingley Lane.
- 3.9 “Creating a stretch of southbound bus lane on the A660 from Woodhouse Street to Cliff Road” would provide little advantage to buses given that vehicles flowing into this section would be fed from a single mixed lane of buses and cars, and that because after Cliff Road the carriageway would revert again to two mixed lanes. The bus lane would however provide a slight advantage to the car flow in that this would not be disrupted when buses stopped at the southbound bus stop on Woodhouse Lane prior to Cliff Road.
- 3.10 The phasing of the traffic signals at Hyde Park Corner suggests a dedicated N to S and S to N stage followed by a late starting left turn stage onto Woodhouse Street. However, the length of the two narrow lanes at the head of the A660 (south) is limited to 43 metres, with capacity for approximately 6-8 cars in each lane. Given that around 25% of all vehicles will be turning left (23% AM/ 26% PM) the duration of the ahead only stage might need to be limited to prevent left turning vehicles queuing back into the single lane section. The short duration of the first stage may prevent a pedestrian phase being included on the Woodhouse Street leg of the junction. Currently the two lanes approaching the junction on Headingley Lane are relatively narrow at 2.75 metres, meaning that it will be difficult and potentially dangerous for both cars and cyclists to share the same lane (particularly for straight ahead traffic).

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- 3.11 The scheme “would give pedestrians more opportunity to cross the A660 (without having to pause on the central reservation) and Hyde Park Road and Woodhouse Street”. The selective banning of turning movements at junctions allows pedestrians to be given greater priority, as in this proposal.
- 3.12 The scheme would “allow for much wider pavements”. This is certainly true on Woodhouse Street, although to an extent the same effect could be achieved by simply banning left turns from Woodhouse Street into Woodhouse Lane, with these trips diverted down Cliff Road. This would allow the triangular island at the corner of Woodhouse Street and Woodhouse Lane to be reconnected to the main footway. However, in other places the footway space could come under pressure, particularly on Moor View and on the A660 between Hyde Park Corner and Victoria Road where an additional bus lane is proposed.
- 3.13 The scheme would “reduce delays for buses”. In a footnote the document acknowledges that delays would be reduced for all vehicles, suggesting that none of the changes proposed for this junction would make public transport more attractive relative to cars, both modes would be affected equally, meaning the overall effect of the proposal for this junction is likely to increase the demand for car trips given the additional capacity released by the changes. The document does acknowledge that bus priority measures elsewhere on the network would ensure that this unfortunate situation would not occur, but a discussion of these changes are outside the scope of this commentary.

Summary

- 4.1 The road geometry and available space at and around Hyde Park Corner means it is not possible to easily segregate car and bus flows, making a workable solution to the issues encountered by users of this junction very difficult to find.
- 4.2 This NWLTF proposal attempts to address the congestion at Hyde Park Corner by banning right turns across the junction. However, the proposal does nothing to increase the attractiveness of bus trips relative to car trips, nor does it reduce the road capacity available for car trips through the junction. Indeed the proposal increases capacity for both cars and buses equally, and in all probability given there is a suppressed demand for road trips into Leeds might contribute to making the overall situation worse, by attracting more cars to this junction and consuming the new capacity released by the changes.
- 4.3 The proposal for Hyde Park Corner is presented by NWLTF as a “modest but nonetheless valuable improvement” (page 2). However, as identified in this document, there are a number of technical issues related to this plan which mean that it is likely to be more difficult and more contentious to implement than is implied in the proposal document. A new section of road would need to be built, other sections widened or narrowed and further junction signalisation would be required.
- 4.4 Overall this proposal represents a classical engineering led approach to a traffic problem. However, it does nothing to alter the balance of capacity allocated between cars and buses, and hence it would be unlikely to solve the long standing traffic issues present at this junction.

Andrew Mark Tomlinson, 26th September 2015

NWLTF PROPOSALS IN RELATION TO THE INSPECTOR'S REPORT

NWLTF proposal for a Headingley Bypass for cyclists

- 1 This was also a feature of the trolleybus scheme. The inspector said, *"The proposed design would do very little to make the route more attractive for cyclists, on what is claimed to be the most widely used route by cyclists into Leeds city centre."*

NWLTF proposal to move the wall back along Headingley Lane to widen the road

- 2 The inspector said, *"harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the conservation areas due to the . . . widening of carriageways."*
- 3 The inspector also said, *"quality of life" would be "harmed" by "widening of the roads."*
- 4 The heritage inspector said, *"A number of the LBC applications refer to the 'relocation' and re-instatement' of a listed building. In my judgment, if a listed building is taken down and rebuilt, even if all the original material is re-used, there will be substantial harm to the heritage asset and its setting will have been significantly altered. In such cases, the impact, according to the methodology employed by the ES Heritage chapter, is likely to result in a high level of harm."*
- 5 The heritage inspector also said, *"I would consider the impact to be 'moderate adverse' in respect of the setting of the listed building and 'significant adverse' in respect of the loss of significance of the curtilage listed wall. It is recommended that LBC should only be granted if the public benefits of the NGT Scheme are shown to outweigh this harm."*
- 6 NWLTF state that the advantage of a wider road is that it would enable a bus lane to be provided. The heritage inspector said, *"The mitigation proposed is said to be 'Enhanced opportunities for bus lanes and increased road safety for cyclists. Further opportunities to mitigate against loss in other areas of NGT' and that this would result in a 'slight adverse' impact. This, to me, does not directly address the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the conservation area in this location and I consider that this would remain as a 'moderate adverse' impact. It is recommended that CAC should only be granted if the public benefits of the NGT Scheme are found to outweigh this harm."*

NWLTF proposal for a cycle path along Woodhouse Ridge

- 7 The inspector said, *"The scheme conflicts with those UDP policies that seek to protect green spaces, heritage assets, the character and appearance of conservation areas and biodiversity."*

NWLTF proposal for a new road across Woodhouse Moor linking Woodhouse Lane to Hyde Park Road.

- 8 The proposal provides no mitigation for the effect of the new road on the park or the consequent loss of the car park. The inspector said, *"The mitigation measures that have been proposed to compensate for the loss of open space, particularly at Woodhouse Moor and Belle Isle Circus, would not replace the areas that would be taken by the scheme or address the impact of the trolley vehicles on the remaining open space."*
- 9 The inspector said, *"The assessment in the Environment Statement of the effect of the scheme on the character and appearance of Woodhouse Moor does not appear to take account of its location within a conservation area."*

NWLTF proposal to ban right turns all along the route and close roads in order to improve traffic flow

- 10 According to the inspector, *"With regard to closing, diverting or altering the layout of the streets, as detailed in Schedules 3, 4 and 5 to the draft Order, I am satisfied that alternatives would not be required. The closure of Weetwood Lane is the most controversial. This, and other alterations, diversions and closures, could adversely affect the route and timetable of bus services that cross or join the NGT corridor, as well as residents and school children due to dwellings, residential homes and schools being on side roads that could experience increased traffic as a result of 'rat running'. They would also lead to access to properties being made more difficult with longer and more complicated journeys, including those near to the junction of Otley Old Road with Otley Road from where right turns would be restricted."*
- 11 One of the reasons given by the inspector for recommending rejection of the trolleybus was, *"There would also be some parts of the route where the safety and convenience of other road users, including bus users, cyclists and pedestrians, would be likely to be compromised, and I am concerned that the modelling that has been used is not able to accurately forecast the full extent of any likely harm."*
- 12 Another reason the inspector gave was that *"some of the proposed junction designs and road layouts would result in them being more complicated for cyclists and pedestrians to negotiate."*
- 13 Another reason the inspector gave was, *"There would be inconvenience caused by the need for a significant volume of local traffic to take longer routes to reach their destination due to the banning of turns and the closure of roads."*
- 14 The inspector also said, *"The impact of the scheme on overall air quality, including carbon emissions, would be negative, due to the impact on other traffic."*

NWLTF proposal for a park and ride at Bodington

- 15 The inspector said, *"I am not convinced that the predicted use of the park and ride sites has been accurately modelled. This is because its use is difficult to model, given the past use of other park and ride sites, the capacity of the parking that would be provided, and the attractiveness of the sites to motorists. It would also be dependent upon the cost of the fares, which has not been set, and the amount and cost of city centre parking, which are difficult to control."*
- 16 The inspector also said, *"The estimated demand for the proposed park and ride sites has been derived from existing rail park and ride sites at Pudsey and Garforth. As such, the demand for the sites appears to have been overestimated."*

NWLTF proposal for more pedestrian crossings

- 17 The inspector said, *"The promoters have suggested that the scheme would benefit pedestrians by providing a greater number of formal signalised crossings across the route than at present and would make improvements to some footways. However, the additional pedestrian crossings would be necessary to control pedestrians crossing the trolleybus route in order to give priority to the trolleybuses. Delays to pedestrians, especially children, at these signals could frustrate them, leading to them crossing at other locations and resulting in a risk to their safety."*