

DEPUTATION FOUR – WEST PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your Deputation.

MR D KEMP: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, my name is Doug Kemp from West Park. My colleagues are Martyn Thomas from Weetwood, Tony Green from North Hyde Park, Paula and Ian Liptrot from Belle Isle.

This deputation is speaking on behalf of the A660 Joint Council, which draws its membership from over twelve organisations representing residents, business groups, and individuals from South and North Leeds, all of whom share a common interest and grave misgivings over the proposed NGT trolleybus scheme.

Fundamentally it is felt that the Council is being drawn into spending money on a transport scheme which is conceptually wrong, conceptually flawed. The trolleybus is the wrong transport medium on the wrong route. Sadly, NGT owes most of its concept and planning to the original 1992 Supertram scheme. However, in the last 20 years much has changed: changes in thinking about the environment and transport strategies, in transport technology, not to mention the development needs and plans of Leeds itself.

Indeed NGT does not address planned regeneration schemes in the South and East of the city, nor does it address inner city traffic movements. In essence, the scheme is not fit for purpose and is not value for money.

Leeds has been starved of Government funding for its transport infrastructure, and yes, it would benefit from a modern transport network, but it has to be one which is both appropriate and sensitive to the needs of the city, both now and in the future. Spending money on the wrong system is wrong.

For instance, why does NGT focus on the A660? It is the least important route in terms of traffic in and out of the city. It already has the highest bus frequency and the highest bus usage of all the radial routes whilst, if you look for South Leeds, NGT plans to take the trolleybus route through a pedestrian precinct, the grounds of a primary school and across Bell Isle Circus – one of the few bits of green area in South Leeds.

Does this sound like a scheme likely to attract overwhelming public support? No. No wonder increasing numbers of residents across the whole of Leeds think that NGT is madness.

What does NGT offer is a quality transport experience whereby the majority of passengers have to stand; luxury stops to enjoy while waiting for a less frequent service than currently available, having walked further because of fewer trolleybus stops (an ideal scenario for the disabled and elderly). It is likely to lead to the decimation of existing bus services, with the prospect of the total loss of some outer bus services. It will bring changes to the road architecture which disadvantage

cyclists and pedestrians, and it will leave you with the same or worse congestion with traffic hold-ups leaving pollution levels unaffected from what they are now.

NGT does not even transfer significant numbers of car users on to the trolleybus; it merely moves bus users on to another type of bus.

Are you as Councillors certain this is the right system? Just look at the guided bus systems on the Scott Hall and York roads - ugly, outdated and less and less used.

There is a real danger that Leeds in 2020 could be saddled with an inflexible overhead cable-based single transport line, installed at great expense and incredibly expensive to extend into any meaningful network.

It does not have to be a trolleybus system. There are other options - options which are better, cheaper, more effective and future-proof.

NGT is a system that the people of Leeds do not want. They see it as being based on obsolete technology, a transport system which would be out of date before it begins to operate.

The Leeds Vision talks of "spending money wisely", which is important, obviously, for Yorkshire and it is also important to recognise that although £173.5m of Government funding is being made available, the remainder, which is at least £76.5m, has to come from Local Authority sources.

These are significant amounts of money. Does it really make sense to blindly charge forward without taking stock of all the fundamental issues involved here? The feeling amongst people in South and North Leeds is that NGT does not offer the city of Leeds value for money. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour? (*A vote was taken*) Thank you.
CARRIED.

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon.