

ONTrack

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2022

The latest news from UKTram and the LRSSB

Landmark year for light rail

With government funding for new and existing transport systems, and the publication of a bold strategy for the future of light rail in the UK, 2022 could prove to be a seminal year for the sector.

Growing calls for further action to tackle climate change and the emergence of innovative new technology will also boost the case for a mode of transport that has already proved its value to key cities across the UK.

In 2022, UKTram will remain at the forefront of what promises to be a landmark year for the sector, and UKTram is well placed to lead light rail into a new era.

Although Covid-19 has undoubtedly had a major impact on our tramways and similar transit systems, and we still face a significant challenge in rebuilding patronage to pre-pandemic levels, there is a sense of growing optimism for the future of the sector.

The recent announcement of £830 million to develop an integrated transport system in West Yorkshire – plans which include options for light rapid transit – and a further £100 million for the renewal of Sheffield Supertram, show that our calls for fresh investment in light

rail are being listened to by government.

Over the coming months the UK's light rail sector also expects to celebrate the opening of tram extensions in the West Midlands and work continues in Edinburgh with the Trams to Newhaven project.

Clearly fresh challenges lie ahead as the country emerges from the pandemic. However, 2022 also presents numerous opportunities to enhance the reputation of tramways as a safe, reliable and environmentally friendly mode of public transport with a proven track record of driving regeneration and economic growth.

James Hammett
UKTram Managing Director



You can read more about
UKTram's plans for 2022
[CLICK HERE](#)

Sector praised for Covid response

Senior figures from across the light rail sector have been provided with direct access to a top civil servant from the Department for Transport (DfT) recently at a meeting organised by UKTram.

Erum Mussa, Deputy Head of Local Passenger Transport (whose remit includes responsibility for light rail) joined members of the organisation's Executive Group for their first meeting of 2022, and praised UKTram and its members for providing valuable data on the impact of restrictions on services during the coronavirus pandemic.

She also updated the group on organisational restructuring at the DfT and its future priorities, while stressing the importance of integrated transport networks.

James Hammett, UKTram Managing Director, explained: "The meeting provided the ideal opportunity for our members to engage with the DfT directly, and it was particularly encouraging to hear a senior official say she was keen to engage in an ongoing dialogue with the Executive by regularly attending future meetings.

"This will further strengthen the already close working relationship UKTram has with government, and reflects growing recognition of the important role tramways and similar rapid transit systems have in helping it meet its environmental and levelling-up commitments.

Held online due to recent Covid guidelines, the meeting also received updates from UKTram, its working groups and the Centre of Excellence and you can read more [here](#).



Working with government

Members of UKTram's Owners and Authorities Group have heard how UKTram is continuing to work closely with the Department for Transport on the sector's post-pandemic recovery.

During a recent meeting they heard UKTram was supporting the view that further financial support for tramways and similar transit systems was needed as they rebuild patronage following the lifting of Covid restrictions and you can read more [here](#).

New Chair for Operations Group

A highly experienced light rail professional has been elected as the new chair of an influential sector working group.

Steve Mabey, of Manchester Metrolink, follows in the footsteps of his father Mike, who retired in October, as chair of the UKTram Operations Group. Having been with Metrolink for 10 years, Steve has spent the last four as Head of Network Operations.

Steve has outlined what he saw as the group's potential needs and how he would identify and communicate elements to be included in coming workstreams.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

Setting new standards for tram driver trainers

Following an extensive sector-wide consultation process, a new set of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for tram driver trainers has been published.

Now available to download from the UK Standards database, they are founded on a comprehensive analysis of the main functions of the role, and the skills needed to fulfil them.

Steve Duckering, the organisation's Operations Manager, explained that late last year light rail professionals were asked for feedback on a document setting out 16 draft standards, and a 'map' highlighting the core responsibilities of tram driver trainers.

The excellent response helped to shape the resulting NOS that have now been approved by Scottish Qualification Authority, the organisation responsible for signing off the standards.

The Tram Driver Trainer NOS are part of a wider joint project by UKTram and the Light Rail Safety and Standards Board that aims to set out the

skills, knowledge and understanding required to undertake a particular task or job role to a nationally recognised level of competence.

Available to all organisations in the sector free of charge, as well as establishing best practice, they can be used as a valuable resource within HR, acting as a guide to training, developing apprenticeship programmes, benchmarking and recruitment.



PERMIT+ goes live following successful trials

The first online 'Authority to Work' system designed specifically for the light rail sector is now up and running in Edinburgh.

Developed by UKTram in partnership with Edinburgh Trams and software firm Metrotech, PERMIT+ aims to speed up and simplify a critical safety process.

It features an innovative website portal and associated mobile app and is now available to all light rail operators following extensive trials by the operator, carried out alongside its existing paper-based system.

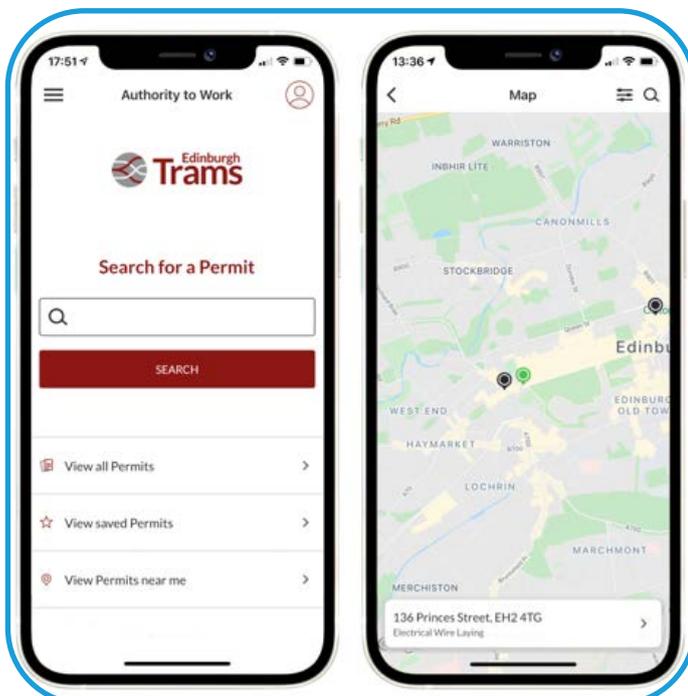
Among its many benefits, PERMIT+ also enables process-driven functionality, including structured risk mitigation checks for engineers and an audit trail of actions, as well as secure communications.

The associated app enables on-site searches for engineers, giving them easy access to details of the works, while applicants can carry their permit on a phone or other mobile device.

The ground-breaking new system enables operators to view the status of applications from the initial enquiry through to completion of the work and is set to revolutionise a previously time-consuming process.

Jamie Swift, UKTram Marketing and Commercial Manager, said the successful development of PERMIT+ clearly demonstrates how UKTram is working with members to develop innovative solutions to the challenges faced by the sector.

You can read more about this story here and further details about PERMIT+ are available by emailing jamie.swift@uktram.org.



LRSSB leads on project to manage safety verification

A new initiative aimed at developing a cross-sector approach to verification and compliance with regulations has been launched by the Light Rail Safety and Standards Board.

The organisation is working with transport infrastructure consultancy, Anturas, to develop a new software tool to help guide light rail safety professionals through the safety verification process.

Applying elements of Railways and Other Guided Transport (ROGS) Regulations that relate to light rail, it will help describe the process to identify and control risks arising from the introduction of new or altered vehicles and infrastructure.

Carl Williams, LRSSB Chief Executive, explained: "Although hazard identification, assessment and verification is always considered, and is vitally important for tramway safety, we believe the sector would benefit from a process that describes more adequately the steps required, together with the timing and engagement of an Independent Competent Person, if required."

"Whilst ROGS lay out steps to be considered there is also some level of uncertainty on when, how and by whom some responsibilities are carried out."

Although it is still in its early stages, the project is expected to provide a clearer and more appropriate process that can easily be adopted by organisations across the sector.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

← Latest guidance published

The LRSSB has further expanded its online reference library to include an updated version of its guidance for Managing the Wheel-Rail Interface for light rail systems and on managing rail breaks.

Previous guidance on the Wheel-Rail Interface was originally commissioned and published in 2008 by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and the updates aim to ensure continual improvement, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Both documents can be downloaded [here](#)

This guidance is split into sections reflecting the life cycle of Light Rail schemes from initial specification to eventual operation. Topics include wheel-rail interface specification, the setting of standards, inspection and monitoring, maintenance, operational management, and a checklist for any system changes.

Extensive research has gone into the new guidance on managing rail breaks, and the organisation has since welcomed comments from light rail owners, operators and maintainers to make sure every possible aspect has been covered.



Its publication provides the industry with standardised approaches to managing the effects when these breaks do occur and you can read more [here](#).

Other documents published so far in 2022 include a guide to driver selection and recruitment which can be found [here](#).

Detailed guidance on how to make tramways and similar urban transit systems as safe as possible for cyclists was also published in December and you can read the full story [here](#).

University links set to boost innovation

A proposed new partnership between the organisation responsible for light rail safety and a well-respected University has the potential to drive innovation across the sector.

A recent meeting between academics and researchers from the University of Huddersfield's Institute of Railway Research and representatives from the LRSSB established a wealth of opportunities for future collaboration.

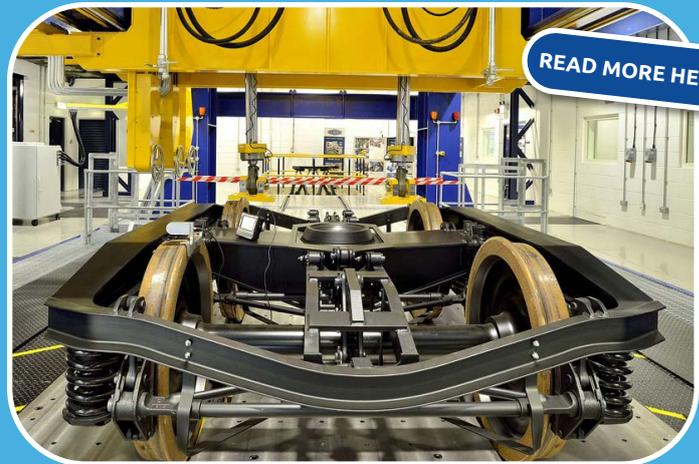
From risk modelling and data analysis to research into vehicle and track dynamics and smart maintenance, the meeting – and a series of workshops that followed – covered a broad spectrum of topics with potential for closer partnership working with both the LRSSB and UKTram.

Carl Williams, LRSSB Chief Executive, explained: "It's clear that there is a lot of overlap between the work of the IRR and the aim of the LRSSB to use innovative technology and authoritative research to enhance light rail safety.

"Initial meetings have provided us with a fascinating insight into the expertise offered by the university and, together with UKTram, we hope to establish closer links with the IRR over the coming months."

Dr Peter Hughes, Principal Research Fellow at the IRR, says he was impressed with the work already done by the LRSSB on establishing updated sector-wide safety guidance and a risk management framework that includes a comprehensive Tram Accident and Incident Reporting database.

His views were shared by the University's Professor of Railway Systems, Dr Adam Bevan, who said the IRR could provide valuable input to future projects, drawing on its extensive experience of working with the wider rail sector.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

Risk framework

An ambitious project to create a fully integrated risk management framework for light rail has been put under the spotlight in a leading trade publication.

Developed by the LRSSB, the framework incorporates a series of interconnected projects and is already making a significant contribution to safety across the sector.

The feature in the most recent issue of Tramways and Urban Transit is now available to view online [here](#) and provides a comprehensive account of the LRSSB's work to date on an initiative that encompasses all aspects of incident reporting, risk modelling and the development of best practice.

Written by Carl Williams, Chief Executive of the LRSSB, it also outlines how the project draws on the experience of safety professionals and is supported by specialist consultants and external agencies, including the Office of Rail and Road.

Highway Code

Light rail operators are being urged to review their risk assessments following changes to the Highway Code that come into force on January 29th.

The LRSSB is carrying out a full review of the changes before issuing its updated sector-wide guidance, where necessary.

However, it says individual networks also need to look closely at the revisions.

Carl Williams, LRSSB Chief Executive, explained: "The updated Code contains amendments that may have implications for some tramway operations, particularly in relation to their interaction with other road users.

"We are currently reviewing all our guidance documents to ensure they reflect any changes relevant to the sector but, in the meantime, operators should also check their own risk assessments in light of the changes and amend them if required."

Further details of the changes to the Highway Code can be found [here](#).

New reference manual shares OLE best practice

Following peer review by an expert panel of UK tramways engineers, key guidance on the maintenance of vital tramway infrastructure has been published by the LRSSB.

The Overhead Line Equipment Maintenance and Reference Manual is now available to download from the LRSSB's growing reference library and builds on previous guidance on best practice from manufacturers and existing UK Light Rail systems.

The new manual offers a general description of assets and maintenance and provides comprehensive information on preventative, systematic, condition-based and corrective maintenance, plus definitions of designated maintenance levels and guidance on frequency of inspections.

Safety considerations for technical workers are also featured in the manual, covering potential hazards, working in heat or at height, risk assessments and protective clothing.

There are also fully-illustrated appendices covering the main specialist tools and visual inspection components, and tables listing terminology



Download the guide here

and abbreviations agreed by industry professionals. Ranges for contact wire heights and gradients and expected lifespan of OLE equipment are covered along with other valuable information.

Members News Round-up



Trams to Newhaven milestone

Work to connect Edinburgh's existing tram network to the Newhaven line has taken another significant step forward with the permanent closure of the York Place.

Currently, trams are running as far as the West End tram stop with alternative arrangements put in place to enable customers to complete their journey. In April, services will resume as far as a temporary terminus in St Andrew Square.

Lea Harrison, Edinburgh Trams Managing Director, commented: "The closure of York Place marks a major milestone in the Trams to Newhaven project, and shows that work to expand our popular tram network is gathering pace ahead of the planned launch of services on the new line in 2023."

When the line to Newhaven opens, a new stop at Picardy Place will replace the existing one at York Place, allowing easy access to St James Quarter, the Omni Centre and the top of Leith Walk and you can read the full story [here](#).

Safe spaces in Nottingham

Nottingham's tram network has embraced an initiative that provides a late-night safety refuge offering protection to vulnerable people who may need help on a night out.

The scheme is part of a wider strategy led by Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner Caroline Henry, who is working in conjunction with a range of partners to reduce crime and violence against women in the City's night-time economy.

Commissioner Henry secured over £250,000 from the Home Office's Safety of Women at Night (SWaN) Fund to deliver practical solutions to reduce the vulnerability of women in the area and you can read the full story [here](#).

Metro zonal fares

West Midlands Metro has announced plans to introduce a new, zone-based approach to their fares to provide greater fairness and flexibility for the thousands of people who rely on the network every day.

Sophie Allison, Metro Commercial Director, explained: "We are constantly looking at ways to make it easier to travel on the Metro while providing the best possible value to customers who tell us they want more flexibility – especially as travel habits and lifestyles have changed since the coronavirus pandemic.

The easy-to-understand Metro Ticket Zones will see the network divided into four, with customers only paying to travel in the areas of the network they actually need to use and you can read more [here](#).



To be included in future editions of our regular newsletter "ONTrack", the Members News section of our website UKTram.org and UKTram's weekly news round-up, send your press releases to jamie.swift@uktram.org.



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