

Light Rail Engineers Group Meeting Minutes

Meeting held using Microsoft Teams
Tuesday 12th May 2020

Present:

Craig O'Brien (COB) - UKTram	Dan Hill (DH) - UKTram
Ian Middlemiss (IM) – Blackpool Trams – Chair	Ian Raxton (IR) - ORR
Cathal Dwane (CD) - Siemens	James Hammett(JH) - UKTram
Ian Hale (IH) – London Trams	Lindsey Smith (LS) – British Steel
Lee Joyce (LJ) - SYPTE	Michael Doughty (MD) – Manchester Metrolink
Colin Kerr (CK) – Edinburgh Trams	Graham Thornton (GT) - Manchester Metrolink
Eberechi Weli (EW) – Absolute Risk Tech	Lorraine George (LG) – UKTram
Neil Cundy (NC) – Nottingham Trams	Andy Cowie (AC) – Isle of Man
Matthew Fellows (MF) - Midland Metro	Glin Stanford (GL) – Sheffield Supertram
Ray Perkins (RP) – Whitmore	Lindsey Murpy (LM) UKTram
Ian Ambrose (IA) – Network Rail	

Apologies for absence:

Mike Crabtree (MC) - Crich
Mike Szender (MS) – Isle of Man
Steve Firth (SF) Independent

Ciaran.MacSamhrain (CS) - Tii

ITEM	NOTE	ACTION
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1. WELCOME

1.1 IM welcomed attendees to the Teams Meeting which was held due to the current COVID 19 situation. IM went out to apologise for the change to the agenda as he thought it was best to just focus on the current COVID situation and the impact this had had on the industry.

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 All attendees introduced themselves around the table and IM advised of apologies received (listed above).

3. REVIEW OF LAST MEETING

3.1 Review of Previous Meeting Notes

The notes from the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

3:2 Review of Previous Meeting Actions

Item 4 – IM advised that he spoke to JH in regards to the LRSSB standards review process. He advised that the LRSSB have produced a new standards policy with timelines. **Action Closed**

Item 4: COB to send a scope out of the group's deliverables and asked the group for their feedback. – **Action Closed**

4.

UKTRAM UPDATE

4.1 Update on UKTram – DH/LG

JH informed the group that the majority of UKTram's time had been spent on COVID-19, but advised that it was still business as usual. The team are all available if you require any assistance with anything.

JH also advised that the DfT had announced a funding package for the light rail industry. Although no figures had been announced, it was a positive move forward. UKTram continue to have discussion with the DfT in regards to on-going funding and a recovery plan for all systems.

UKtram issued a Covid -19 Controls Guidance Index and are currently drawing up an Industry specific recovery document, which will have a common approach across all systems.

JH raised that the next steps now were to evaluate what resources we can provide for recovery and going forward. He went on to say that UKTram were reviewing their business plan, which will now include the impact of COVID 19, all the work we have been doing to support systems and our plans for supporting the recovery.

5. LREG – WORKING GROUPS

COB advised the group on UKTram's deliverables and LREG's on-going objectives and deliverable. COB report will be sent along with the minutes

6. ORR/RAIB/USAN'S/SANDILANDS

- 6.1** ORR – IR advised that all staff are now working from home, with visits only taking place if an incident occurs. He went on to advise that they are focusing on track workers and will be looking for your competences and advised that you may get a visit in the future in regards to this matter. He went on say that they had not published any documents of guidance and are using this time to update their current guidance process.

In regards to Sandilands, IR advised that the inquest that was due in September had been suspended and it could be a further 12 months before it is completed.

- 6.2** RAIB/USAN – Please find a copy of the report attached to the minutes. CK advised that his RAIB tracker was ready to use and that Mark Ashmore was looking to add this to the TAIR database.

- 6.3** No update

7. SYSTEM UPDATE

IM reminded the group to forward their system updates to LG two weeks before the meeting so that they can be shared within the group prior to the meeting.

Blackpool – IM

IM advised that Blackpool Trams were closed with only four staff currently working. Maintenance is still being carried out on the overhead line.

Network Rail – IA

Reduced train service operating over whole network. Maintenance and renewals continuing as programmed with appropriate COVID-19 measures in place. All major projects continuing as programmed including development of tram train schemes. Much work undertaken using Teams for meetings and working from home. Light rail support team in Technical Authority being progressed

Nottingham - NC

Rolling Stock

Issues with material supply due to factory shut downs in supply chain. Mid-life refresh on Incentro suspended

Infrastructure

Felling some trees made unsafe in February storms.

Projects/Renewals/Extensions

Planning for track replacements June/July

CROYDON – IH

Rolling Stock

All improvement works on Sandilands initiatives have stopped under 'safe stop' Reduced operating service requires fewer service trams, 23 instead of 30.

Projects/Renewals/Extensions

Most projects have stopped currently following the lockdown apart from those almost completed, the most significant of which was completing the renewal of Oaks Road substation which was completed and brought back on line.

It is clear that the agreed renewals funding for 2020-21 will be subject to further scrutiny due to budget limitations going forwards.

Innovations/Trials/Equipment

The Positive Prevention of Overspeed System was brought into service shortly before lockdown commenced with a limited number of trams (4) entering service with the system fully enabled. Further rollout is currently halted.

Personnel

Staff working practises have been modified to comply with government guidelines including maintaining social distancing where possible and issuing PPE as appropriate. Infrastructure maintenance teams are travelling straight to site from home minimising the use of shared depot facilities. Other staff are working from home wherever possible.

Sheffield

Rolling Stock

Class 399 - Ongoing issues which were going to be resolved by the manufacturer have been put on hold due to resourcing issues caused by Covid-19. A number of support brackets need to be replaced with stronger versions as fatigue failures were occurring. Modelling by the manufacturer found that some brackets were not able to take stresses that the vehicle is subjected to on the network.

Infrastructure

Rail breaks - Four further rail breaks have occurred on the system since the last report to LREG. Four breaks were removed, and four rail breaks remained in the system (ones adjacent to the heat affected zone of an aluminothermic weld in rail installed during 2013/14/15 rail replacement works) which are due to be removed by VolkerRail starting on the 14th of May 2020.

One rail break (on City Road) propagated from a single break into a double break within 24 hours of detection, this was removed urgently (with the route closed on the following Monday) by VolkerRail due to the risk of a section of rail head becoming free from the polymer holding it in place.

A fire occurred in a line side isolator box, while still under investigation this appears to be caused by the failure of a crimped connection causing the OHLE feed to short onto the side of the cabinet causing the paint finish to burn. The earthing to the cabinet functioned correctly causing the feed supply to trip (and trip correctly as OCC attempted to reinstate the breakers as per operating procedure).

Innovations/Trials/Equipment

Digital Rail Measurement Trolley - Covid-19 has delayed the delivery of the Graw TEP2.2 Dual head Digital Rail Measurement trolley which is now due for delivery/user training at the end of June.

Personnel (Recruitment/Training/Competency)

SYLTE is reviewing the resourcing of the Tram Team, no updates available.

EDINBURGH

Rolling Stock

We are considering what solution to implement for auto-braking requirement in Rec 3 of the Sandilands report. Options being considered are: SIMOVE Modified version of CAF 'LeadMind' platform

Infrastructure

We are progressing obsolescence of our Comms/SCADA/Timetabling systems with a view to have these addressed ahead of passenger service for the new infrastructure.

Projects/Renewals/Extensions

Trams to Newhaven (ETYN) The ETYN project construction has halted due to COVID-19 but Design continues to be developed.

DISC

The ET has engaged in a collaboration with International Human Factors Ltd to develop the DISC solution to pro-actively monitor and react to users carrying out safety critical tasks. Development is underway and we expect to have a solution to test early next year. There will be independent testing done by UKTram through Ian Rowe Associates.

Absolute Risk Technology – EW

ART are still open for business and are currently working from home

CRICH

National Tramway Museum

The National Tramway Museum opened for the 2020 season on March 14th and closed on March 19th in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

ROLLING STOCK

Commissioning of tramcars for the 2020 season has commenced, 6 tramcars have been commissioned and operated in public service.

Although further tramcars are in the commissioning process this work has now been put on hold.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The relaying of the section of double track from Bandstand/car park to Cliffside has been completed, using rail the Museum purchased from the aborted Liverpool Supertram System

PROJECTS

All projects have been put on hold

The Cafe/Hospitality building project is being re-evaluated

PERSONNEL

All employed staff at the Museum have been furloughed, except for General Manager, Financial Controller and a site faculties person.

The Museum is closed to employees, all member/volunteers and the public

Isle of Man

Rolling Stock

Manx Electric Railway (MER) Trams - the season restarted well before soon being curtailed as a result of the Covid-19 issues. Engineering attention has been focussed on the rebuild of the first of the historic Brill Bogies and the introduction of improved maintenance documentation.

Snaefell Mountain Railway (SMR) Trams - the start of the season on the mountain had not commenced before lock-down. Developments are ongoing to improve the overall braking performance, with new pad materials being trialled. The plans for the 125 year anniversary have been impacted with the return to traffic of SMR#5 delayed.

SMR Rebuild Trams - the steelwork and traction equipment for the rebuild of Trams 3&6 are now on Island. Meetings with the Railway Inspector and the appointed Independent Safety Assessor have gone well.

DBHT Trams. The rebuild of Horse Tram #32 had been slowed due to a lessening of need.

Engineering Fleet. The re-commissioned Jacksons tamper has been a real benefit during the winter renewals. Refurbishment of the DBHT traversers continues for the soon to be re-opened tram shed.

IMR Steam Railway. The season opened shortly before closure due to Covid-19. The first and second of five new boilers from SVR have been completed. Loco and coach rebuilds in the IoM workshops and UK contractors continue. Asbestos stripping from stored locos is now progressing.

General. Due to the expected loss of passenger traffic for much of the year, efforts are being expended to complete major projects and repairs whilst staff and facilities are available, bringing forward 'winter projects' where possible.

Infrastructure

MER re-lays. 700m Completed at Port Jack, Groudle. Work at Baldrine halted due to Covid. Restarted 24th April.

SMR re-lays. 720m of track renewal at the Summit of Snaefell was hampered by bad weather over the winter and halted due to Covid restrictions. Now restarted and on course for completion in May.

OHL re-wires. 3km of line on MER renewed. 43 poles changed this winter works period, incl Snaefell

Approx. 135 poles painted

Steam Railway - Approx 750m of track renewed south of Douglas Station to link up two bridges.

Projects/Renewals/Extensions

DBHT Tram Shed - nearing hand-over and completion. Work halted due to Covid restrictions but now restarted and on course for June completion.

DBHT promenade scheme. Work halted due to Covid restrictions but now restarted

MER sub-station at Bellvue replaced and commissioned successfully. Substation at BallaGorry planned to be replaced to bring about a complete renewal of all the distribution substations.

Refurbishment of the MER Tram shed at Derby Castle is underway. This historic building was also the first power station in the Isle of Man and dates from 1893.

Nunnery Bridge refurbishment project completed to restore the first Rail bridge south of Douglas station.

Innovations/Trials/Equipment

Office staff are working from distributed offices to maintain social distancing or are working remotely from home.

Equipment supplies are proving to be more difficult in the current climate, but the majority of suppliers are able to offer some degree of service. Innovations on-going are mainly limited for SMR Trams 3&6 including three-phase traction drives, air braking and coupler energy absorption.

Plans for remote fault monitoring of loco DE21 are currently on-hold pending other priorities.

The sale of land where coach bodies is stored is proceeding, hence there is a need to bring 6 bogies back into service (as either fit for future coach rebuilds or as runners).

Personnel (Recruitment/Training/Competency)

Recruitment has been suspended for the duration as it is practically impossible to conduct interviews in the current climate.

Workshop Staff (government employees) have been re-deployed to other areas during the lockdown, such as Bus Garage work, sorting office of the Post Office. Staff training in the use of hydraulic re-railing equipment has been completed (some equipment have still yet to be delivered however due to current restrictions).

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

IM and COB asked the group whether they would be interested in holding every two weeks during this period of lockdown. LROC, HOS, and the Owners group have been holding similar meetings with success as it gives you a chance to hear about each other updates or raise any current issues. The group agreed to these meetings

CK raised the question on whether systems were using face masks or face coverings, with Edinburgh looking to use a type of "snood" face covering. The group advised that they were following the guidance from PHE but it was changing all the time. JH advised that the LRSSB were looking on writing up some guidance on this subject.

IR raised a concern in regards to staff using hand sanitiser contacting alcohol and either lighting a cigarette or touching an electrical source and setting themselves on fire. The group advised that they were aware of the problem.

COB advised that he had recently attending a meeting at TfGM and highlighted that if you would like a member of UKTram to attend one of your system's meeting, UKTram would be happy to attend and support.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

15th & 16th September – Manchester

24th & 25th November - Blackpool

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