

## Future funding vital for long-term recovery

As we approach the further lifting of coronavirus restrictions, planned for May 17, UKTram has stepped up calls for fresh investment in light rail to help boost wider economic recovery.

Through recent lockdowns, networks in England and Scotland have proved invaluable for many people who needed to travel and will have an important role to play post-pandemic.

Throughout the crisis, our organisation has maintained a constant dialogue with both the UK and devolved governments, providing them with up-to-date intelligence on the sector's response and the impact it has had on operations and revenue.

These constructive talks, together with the co-ordinated efforts of operators and other organisations, have helped to secure more than £200 million in funding to help maintain essential services.

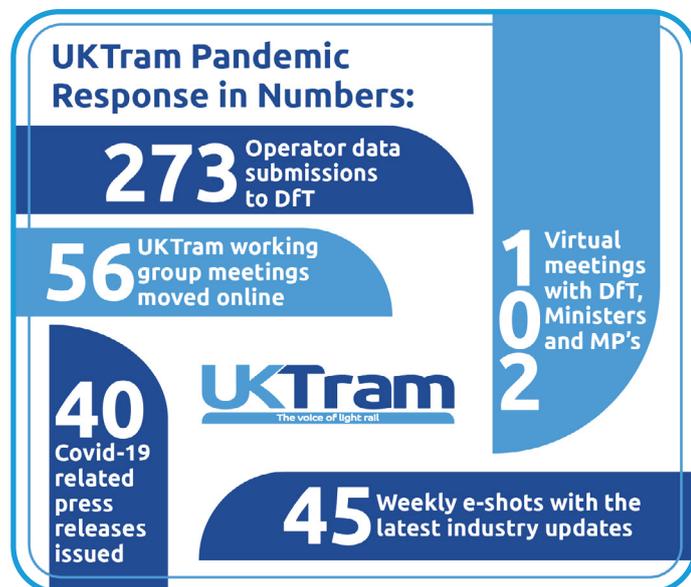
As well as its involvement in more than 100 'virtual' meetings with the DFT, Ministers and MPs to press the case for financial support, UKTram has also been at the forefront of sharing best practice amongst operators and sharing the latest advice and information.

As this newsletter 'goes to press' we've also joined an unprecedented coalition of organisations representing shops, offices, restaurants, venues, public transport providers and trades unions in writing to the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, urging him to encourage people back on to trams, buses, and trains as restrictions are lifted. For more information on this, you can read the full story [here](#).

Clearly, the value of light rail to the cities served by existing networks has been demonstrated during a period of national crisis, as was highlighted during a recent meeting of our Owners and Authorities Group (which you can read all about [here](#)), and our thoughts are now moving towards pressing home the case for future investment as the UK looks towards a 'green' recovery.

As you will see in this latest issue of the newsletter, the impact of the pandemic has also been a major topic of conversation during many of our other working group meetings, but we continue to make significant progress on a number of other major projects – including strengthening cross-sector partnerships both in the UK and internationally.

**James Hammett**  
UKTram Managing Director



## HR professionals respond to easing of restrictions

Mental health support for employees has been put in the spotlight by HR professionals as networks plan for post-pandemic recovery.

As more people return to the nation's tramways following the easing of restrictions, the ongoing impact of Covid-19 again proved the hot topic of conversation at the most recent meeting of the UKTram HR Group.

New ways of working as operators ramp up service levels were also discussed, as well as regular staff testing, the vaccine rollout and managing the return of colleagues who have been on furlough or shielding for health reasons.

Recruitment was also a key issue, with a number of operators looking to replace those who have left over the last 12 months and you can read a full report of the meeting [here](#).



## Setting new standards for engineers

A project aimed at further driving professionalism across the light rail sector has reached a major milestone with the publication of new National Occupational Standards (NOS) for roles in tram and tramway engineering.

Now available free of charge to organisations operating in the sector, the standards can be used as a resource in a wide range of HR and training functions, including the development of in-house training schemes, vocational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Craig O'Brien, Engineering Manager at UKTram, explained: "Over the past 12 months, drawing on the experience of members and experts from across the sector, we've carried out a thorough review of existing engineering roles and the key competencies required.

"As a result, we've now established these new NOS that are structured to reflect the common functions and activities undertaken by individuals engaged in those roles."

The full story can be found on the UKTram website [here](#).



# ← Operators rise to Covid challenges

The second Covid-19 'lockdown' and a nationwide peak in infections earlier in the year presented fresh challenges for light rail operators. Members of the Light Rail Operations Group recently reported that it proved difficult to manage employee availability, even with reduced service frequency.



Anti-social behaviour was also reported as a growing concern across the country, although it was hoped that this will start to reduce with the reopening of schools and the return of more customers to the networks, especially in the evenings.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

## Driving Authority to Work Solution

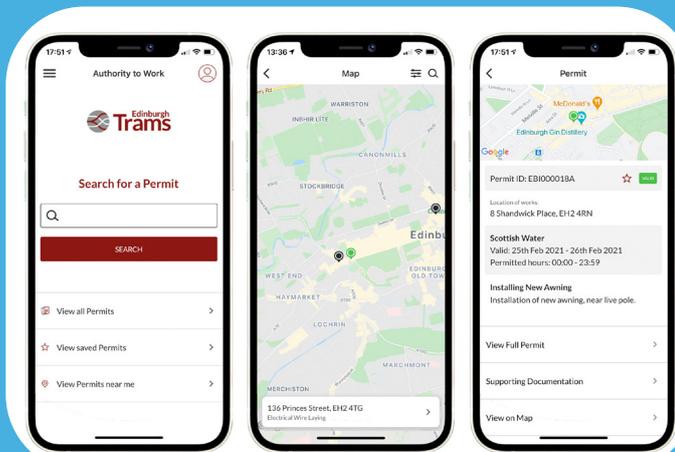
An innovative online system to speed up and simplify the process of applying for permission to work near a tramway is set to enter the final stages of development.

Funded by UKTram, the Authority to Work (ATW) website portal and an associated app are being developed in partnership with Derby-based company Codemakers following preliminary work carried out by Edinburgh Trams.

Ahead of network expansion to Newhaven, the operator had been looking at a web-based system to streamline the process and joined forces with the light rail sector's representative organisation to develop a comprehensive solution, Permit+.

By using Permit+ applicants can enter details of their works, safety mitigations and any relevant documents such as plans, risk assessments and method statements.

The innovative project represents another fantastic example of the sector working in partnership to develop a system that will help the sector better manage resources while maintaining the highest safety standards and you can read all about it [here](#).



# Marketeers plan for the future

Planning for a return of customers following the gradual lifting of coronavirus restrictions is well underway say light rail marketing and customer service professionals.

However, drawing up detailed plans remains difficult due to uncertainties surrounding the levels of restrictions that will still be in place over the summer months, and potential long-term changes in travel patterns.

During the latest online meeting of the UKTram Marketing, Communications and Customer Services Group, discussed a range of different approaches.

Jamie Swift, Marketing and Commercial Manager at UKTram, explained: "It really is a chicken and egg scenario, until we start to see customers returning in numbers it's difficult to see how they are using trams and to put into place marketing initiatives to further boost patronage.

"That said, it's clear that promoting trams as a Covid-safe form of transport will be vital, with additional cleaning inside trams and at stops among the key messages." Providing more flexible ticketing options will also be a priority as work patterns change and you can read the full story [here](#).



## Forging closer national and international partnerships

UKTram has further strengthened its international links by becoming a full member of an organisation promoting and supporting public transport across the world.

By upgrading its membership of the UITP, the International Association of Public Transport, the organisation representing the light rail sector in the UK will now be able to help drive future global initiatives by joining a series of working groups.

James Hammett, UKTram Managing Director, explained: "As an associate member we've already played an active role in the work of the Association and its efforts to promote modern, efficient, and sustainable public transport around the world.

"The UITP also offers a fantastic platform for sharing best practice and UKTram members are sure to benefit from the experience of colleagues from overseas as we step up our engagement with the organisation."

Closer to home, we've also been forging even closer ties with the wider transport industry after becoming a full member of a highly respected UK organisation.

As an official 'knowledge partner' and member of the Chartered Institute of Highways & Transport (CIHT), UKTram plans to step up its engagement with colleagues from other organisations and identify areas for collaboration and you can read the full story [here](#).



## Get in touch!

  
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