

The latest news from UKTram and the LRSSB

## Successful summit highlights plans for sector growth

UKTram's mission to support the growth of light rail in the UK remains on track to deliver a major boost for the sector and the travelling public.

Working in partnership with key stakeholders, the organisation is arguing the case for further investment in tramways and similar transit systems, while looking at ways to remove the barriers to future expansion.

Sector leaders attending the recent UKTram Light Rail Summit in Birmingham also heard how it is taking the lead on a host of initiatives aimed at improving the already excellent performance of existing networks by sharing best practice.

Speaking after the event, James Hammett, UKTram Managing Director, explained: "It's clear that the sector is really coming together to address the challenges faced by the sector, not least increasing patronage in the face of evolving travel patterns following the Covid-19 pandemic and increasing workforce diversity.

"Through our functional working groups, which include representatives from all the UK's major light rail systems, we are making real progress on identifying measures that can make a substantial difference to the customer experience."

In a keynote presentation during the summit, Mr Hammett highlighted the

progress the organisation has made against targets set out in its current business plan, and how its acclaimed strategy for the future of light rail has continued to evolve in line with emerging trends and the economic climate.

The summit also included presentations by the LRSSB and an update on the further development of a 'route map' for proposers of future schemes by Colin Robey of the UKTram Centre of Excellence. Sonya Byers from Women in Transport spoke on the need to support and encourage women to pursue careers in the transport industry.

Other topics of discussion included the emergence of artificial intelligence in the sector and new technology for rail monitoring, while Trevor Stocker, Head of Operations at Nottingham Trams, outlined initiatives to build relationships with local schools. Sophie Allison, Interim Managing Director of West Midlands Metro provided an insight on the recent opening of an extension to Wolverhampton Station.

"Once again, the summit provided the ideal opportunity for the light rail community to come together for top-level discussions on a range of topics that will shape the future of the sector in the years ahead," Mr Hammett added.



James Hammett delivers a keynote speech at the summit



Trevor Stocker, Head of Operations at Nottingham Trams



Sonya Byers, CEO, Women in Transport

## Anniversary puts safety gains in the spotlight

Just five years after its formation, the organisation responsible for UK light rail safety has delivered massive benefits for the sector and the hundreds of thousands of passengers who rely on it every day.

As the Light Rail Safety and Standards Board approaches an important milestone, Chief Executive Carl Williams has highlighted an impressive record of success.

"The organisation certainly hit the ground running, and as we prepare to celebrate our fifth anniversary, it's remarkable to see how much has been achieved over a relatively short period of time," he said.

"By working in collaboration with colleagues from across the sector, our growing team has successfully completed a series of vital projects that are already delivering measurable results, reducing the risk of serious accidents and improving operational efficiency.



"Thanks to this centralised approach, it's also estimated that the LRSSB has saved the sector around £20 million when compared to the cost of individual networks taking on similar work themselves."

Recent initiatives successfully completed by the LRSSB include a fundamental upgrade to a sector-wide Tram Accident and Incident Reporting (TAIR) system, and the development of a comprehensive risk management and mitigation framework featuring enhanced modelling.

"In addition to reducing the total collective risks of a fatal incident, an important indicator of overall sector

safety, this work continues to identify both the most common hazards faced by the sector and emerging challenges," Mr Williams commented.

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# Westminster meeting with Minister

Recent talks with the government minister responsible for light rail have seen UKTram highlight challenges faced by the sector while enabling it to press home the case for future growth.

During a meeting in Westminster, Richard Holden MP received an update on the work of the organisation representing the sector as part of wide-ranging discussions with James Hammett, UKTram's Managing Director, and Interim Chair, Lindsay Murphy.

The Transport Minister also provided an insight into the government's view that increased regional devolution provided a real opportunity for more UK cities to embrace light rail.

James Hammett, explained: "As well as listening to our concerns about rising energy costs and other challenges faced by existing networks, the minister expressed his belief that devolution would enable metropolitan and regional authorities to make their own decisions on local transport issues.

"During the meeting we were also able to update him on the work of our Centre of Excellence and he was very enthusiastic about the support it provides for proposers of future schemes."

Other topics discussed included the impact of anti-social behaviour on light rail networks, the measures operators are taking to tackle it and the help they need from other agencies such as the police.



## Praise for heritage tramways

The light rail heritage sector has been praised for its willingness to engage with regulators on enhancing safety processes and risk management.



Dr Lindsey Smith, HM Inspector of Railways at the Office of Rail and Road, has visited a number of historic tramways recently, and said she has been impressed by their willingness to drive further safety improvements.

During a recent meeting of the UKTram Heritage Committee, Dr Smith also said she was looking forward to a much closer working relationship with them following the recent launch of the ORR's Heritage Inspection Plan.

Committee Chair, Mike Crabtree, commented: "The safety and wellbeing of visitors, volunteers and employees has always been an overriding priority for operators, who are also custodians of our rich tramway heritage.

"The plan outlined by Dr Smith provides a significant boost for our renewed focus on safety as we strive to align our processes with the wider light rail sector."

You can read more on the recent Heritage Committee meeting, and the work it is doing on safety with the LRSSB, [here](#).

## COMPAS demonstration for operators

A demonstration of the latest obstacle detection and avoidance technology has been staged for light rail professionals during a recent visit to Blackpool's Starr Gate Depot.

Members of the UKTram Operations Group were given an insight into Alstom's Collision and Overspeed Monitoring and Prevention Assistance System (COMPAS), as highlighted in a video that can be viewed [here](#).

During a meeting, hosted by Blackpool Transport Services Ltd, members of the group also benefitted from a presentation by CIRAS on the benefits of confidential reporting for employees and an update on the organisation's new 'available for all' app that allows them to report their health and safety concerns.



## New Chair of Engineering Group sets out priorities

Establishing a continuous dialogue with engineering experts from across light rail is among the top priorities for the new chair of a key sector working group.



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Marilena Papadopoulou, Renewals Manager at Edinburgh Trams, has set out her ambitions for UKTram's Light Rail Engineering Group as it sets out to build on its achievements to date.

"I strongly believe that we can learn from each other, and that's why it is vital we continue to engage with colleagues from across the sector to share best practice," said Marilena.

"By working together, engineers can find effective solutions to common issues experienced by UK networks, helping to improve operational performance and reduce costs.

"An example of this collaborative approach to problem solving was a Best Practice Day earlier this year on preparing for adverse weather. This looked at ways the sector is responding to increasingly unpredictable climate conditions."

Marilena was elected chair of the group over the summer and brings a wealth of experience to the role.

## Supporting transport SMEs

A pioneering initiative aimed at driving innovation and economic growth by supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the transport industry has won the backing of UKTram.

James Hammett has joined the project review board of the Clean Futures programme, which plans to leverage £8 million to stimulate investment of over £30 million in new products for the transition to Net Zero.

The two-year Clean Futures programme is a collaboration between Coventry University, Connected Places Catapult, the Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation, and a host of other organisations from across the public and private sectors. Further information about the project is available [here](#).



# Safe launch of new tram route

The organisation responsible for driving light rail safety has praised the work of the Edinburgh Trams team following the successful launch of passenger services on a new route.

Members of the LRSSB team worked closely with the operator to assess its readiness for the first trams to Newhaven.

It found that the operational team was well prepared for the launch, with all the relevant safety management system processes and risk assessments correctly reviewed, assessed and updated.

Carl Williams, LRSSB Chief Executive, commented: "The Edinburgh Trams team worked exceptionally hard to ensure services on the new line meet the very highest safety standards, and they should be proud of their achievements.

"Our Operational Readiness Review also found that the use of virtual reality

technology has provided a comprehensive and inclusive tool for describing and tracking progress against a wider master programme. This approach provided a 'proven' process that has been used successfully on other network expansion projects."

The £200 million Trams to Newhaven project included the creation of eight new tram stops, 2.9 miles of embedded twin track and two new substations with their associated switchgear and transformer rectifiers supplying the 750v line voltage.

Lea Harrison, Edinburgh Trams Managing Director, commented: "We invited the LRSSB to carry out the review, and were delighted it found we had met all the expected safety standards and excelled in many areas.

"This ensured the launch of the new route was as safe as it was successful."



## Report published on sand trap research

Working in partnership with academics and colleagues from across the sector, the LRSSB is driving cutting-edge research into ways to limit damage and reduce the risk of injury should a tram fail to stop on reaching the end of the line.

Fortunately, such incidents are extremely rare, but 'over-runs' have been reported on networks around the world, and the LRSSB has identified the issue as a potential risk for UK tramways.

In response, the LRSSB is collaborating with the Institute of Railway Research, based at the University of Huddersfield, on a project to assess the effectiveness of sand traps in addition to traditional buffet stops at track termini.

Craig O'Brien, Head of Engineering Safety and Innovation at the LRSSB, commented: "The first phase of the project has involved the IRR collating information from operators on sand trap systems and other alternatives currently in use.

"A comprehensive draft report has now been produced that lays the foundations for future research, including recommendations for advanced modelling to assess the effectiveness of sand drags under different scenarios.

The LRSSB now plans to canvass feedback from all those who took part, and the wider sector, before deciding on the next steps for the project.



## Meeting with stakeholders

A Westminster event over the summer provided the ideal opportunity for the LRSSB to step up its engagement with key stakeholders.

At the invitation of Labour MP Jo Stevens, LRSSB Chief Executive, Carl Williams, attended a recent Parliamentary Reception organised by the rail driver's union ASLEF.

As well as hearing from the union's General Secretary Mick Whelan on a campaign to improve the design of cabs, the event enabled the LRSSB strengthen links with an organisation representing many tram drivers.

"Working on the front line, drivers have a vital role to play in helping us to further improve light rail safety and increasing our engagement with operational staff has been identified as a priority in our most recent business plan," Mr Williams said.



Carl is pictured here with Finn Brennan (left), ASLEF District Organiser, and Steve Duckering (centre), Operations Manager at UKTram.

## Updated risk models for networks

Plans to help drive nationwide safety improvements through better understanding of tramway operation and maintenance risks, have been boosted by completion of updated models for all major UK systems.

Over the past few months, members of the LRSSB team have been working with networks to refresh their own analysis of risk while contributing to a thorough assessment of common safety issues across the sector.

Laura Reardon, LRSSB Head of Safety Risk Management, explained: "While the UK's light rail networks already have impressive safety records, it is vital that they fully understand potential risks to help them make informed plans for continual improvement in their risk profiles.

"As part of the LRSSB's wider risk framework, this modelling is supported by the work done to upgrade the sector's Tram Accident and Incident Reporting system (TAIR), while model review workshops benefitted from standardised 'Bowtie' risk assessments to identify potential precursors to hazardous events and control measures.

"In turn, the individual network profiles have been combined to provide an overview for the entire sector and then compared to the models' results from 2021.

"Although it continues to evolve, the model already highlights progress that has been made on improving tramway safety, with a significant reduction in the sector's estimated total risk having been achieved."

The LRSSB will use the combined sector risk profile to support collaboration on shared safety issues and focus national strategies.

## Breakthrough in driver fatigue detection



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A wearable device that's been designed to detect the onset of fatigue in tram drivers has delivered remarkable results in independent testing commissioned by UKTram.

The organisation representing the light rail sector reports that the cutting-edge technology, developed by Integrated Human Factors, has an accuracy rate of greater than 98%.

Following extensive trials, prototype FOCUS+ devices have demonstrated their potential to reduce the risk of accidents by alerting control room operators of possible driver fatigue.

James Hammett, Managing Director of UK Tram, expressed his confidence in the technology.

"The independent testing report confirms the potential of FOCUS+," he said. "In the future, it could play a key role in fatigue management system guidance, ensuring the well-being and safety of network employees and their passengers."

Trials of the device have emerged from an initial Driver Innovation Safety Challenge (DISC), which involved City of Edinburgh Council, Transport for Edinburgh, Edinburgh Trams, and the Scotland Can Do Fund, working in partnership with UKTram and IHF Limited.

## Flying the flag for light rail in the UK

Lindsay Murphy, UKTram's Interim Chair, has been flying the flag for the nation's light rail sector at the high-profile UITP Global Public Transport Summit in Barcelona earlier this year,

On her return she said: "The event provided the ideal opportunity to promote the great work of our team and members of both UKTram, and the LRSSB, in the development of best practice, standards and guidance, as well as the progress it's made in the promotion and evaluation of new systems with the Department for Transport."

The event itself had a strong focus on sustainability and also included discussions on providing a whole customer journey experience, including examples of on-demand networks delivering 'first and last mile' public transport that provide real connectivity and a fully viable alternatives to private car use.

"I remain wholly convinced that the most sustainable mode of public transport in the urban environment is light rail, and this is most effective when considered within the wider transport network," Lindsay said.

## Magazine highlights TAIR success

A landmark project to upgrade a vital reporting system that's already delivering a major boost to light rail safety has been put under the spotlight in a respected trade magazine.

The latest edition of Rail Director includes a detailed report on the months of hard work by the LRSSB and partners from across the sector that led to the successful launch of an enhanced Tram Accident and Incident Reporting (TAIR) system.

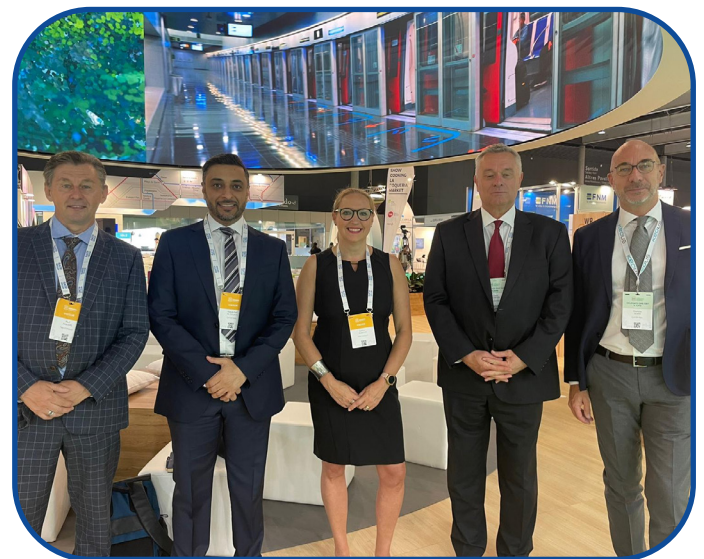
It also outlines the benefits of the system that is now helping to drive the development of improved sector-wide and network-level models as part of the LRSSB's wider risk management and mitigation framework.

An online edition of the magazine has also been published, and you can read the feature in full [here](#).



"To round off a fantastic week, on my return to the UK, I was able to travel all the way from Edinburgh Airport to my home by tram thanks to the new line to Newhaven. My sincere congratulations to everyone involved in this project, which is a testament to the power of collaboration and community involvement," she added.

Lindsay is pictured here with other delegates at the conference.



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