

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

To be presented by Doug Kemp and others

on behalf of

The WEST PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (WPRA)

at

The Public Inquiry into the

Leeds Trolley vehicle System Order

West Park Residents Association (WPRA), represents the community adjacent to and on the route of the proposed trolleybus route for North West Leeds. This covers the area from Otley Old Road, through Lawnswood and down to Central Park.

WPRA consider that it would be wholly wrong and unsafe to grant the TWAO given the many deficiencies in the scheme in terms of its design and fitness for purpose.

These deficiencies can be seen in plans for West Park, and which apply equally to other areas such as Weetwood and Far Headingley. **Even more significant is the extent to which particular issues are indicative of flaws in the design and reasoning for the whole scheme.**

1. Impact on the West Park community

The fundamental flaw in the scheme is forcing through a transport solution which is inappropriate to the character and role of the A660.

- **It neglects and undervalues a primary role of the A660 in serving the local needs of residents, access to and customer parking for local businesses, the safety needs of school children and other pedestrians.**
- **It fails to maintain, let alone improve, access to public transport services for local residents and commuters, a key aspect of Core documents C-4-2 .**
- **Overall the design process for NGT appears to have been limited to only considering through traffic on the A660 road, although this approach and the supposed benefits are also open to question.**

These issues can easily be seen on the road plan A-05-312694/TD/012 and A-05-312694/TD/011 hereafter referred to as TD/012 and TD/011 (Revision P4).

The following comments illustrate the extent to which the design of the overall scheme lacks the local knowledge and hence does not meet the needs of adjoining communities in terms of traffic flows, access, local business viability, heritage issues and local residents.

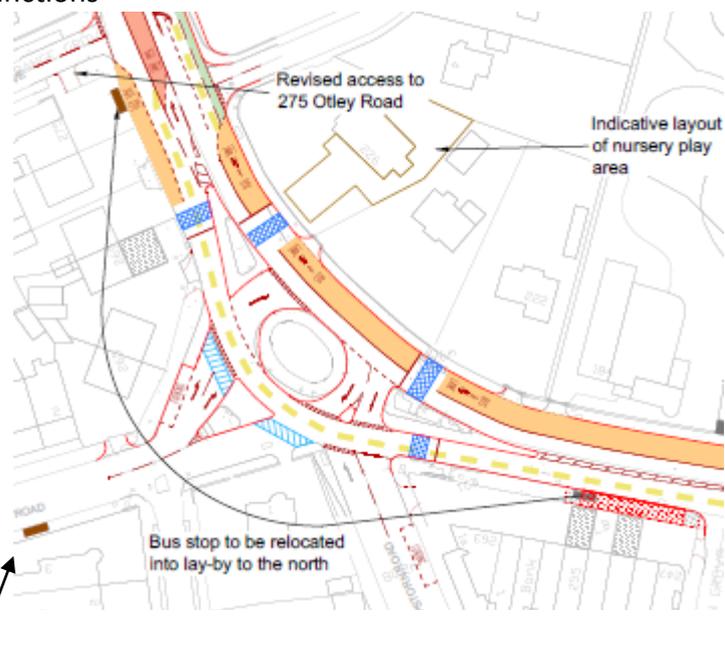
2. Impact of the re-location of bus stops

The outbound bus stop has been moved from outside the West Park shops to beyond the mini-roundabout (approximately 100 metres). (Reference: A-05-312694/TD/012).

- Moves stop away from main local population/user centre
- Now requires bus users to cross 3 junctions

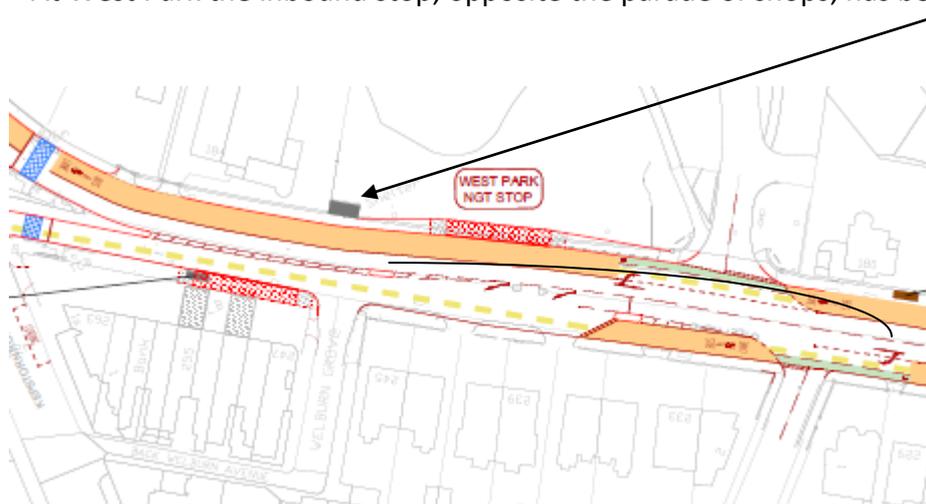
- Original plans failed to recognise that the #97 bus route turns off at the roundabout onto Spen Road.

Consequence is that bus passengers have no stop at a busy usage point for the #97 service - passengers would be forced to use an earlier stop (approximately 500 metres away from the old bus stop, BUT which has now been re-located even further away.



- Further to consultation a new stop has been placed on Spen Road, reducing existing parking facilities for the shops (again lack of local knowledge in developing plans)

At West Park the inbound stop, opposite the parade of shops, has been deleted.



- Passengers now faced with significant extra walking distance

- Passengers now required to cross a busy entrance road to The Village hotel and leisure centre, with cars swinging in across a bus lane
- Significant distance from pedestrian crossing facility
- Net loss of an inbound bus stop

Similar changes with outbound bus stop:

- Relocation of bus stop away from passenger usage points at Ancaster Road AND Churchwood Avenue with greater inconvenience/walking distance for passengers.
- Now requires passengers to cross a junction
- Net effect, an outbound bus stop has been deleted.



These local proposed changes are reflected in other parts of the northern trolleybus route, and demonstrate that there is a loss of public transport provision:

- **There are fundamental design flaws, reflecting inadequate local knowledge in the design process.**
- **Trolley bus stops do not compensate for the loss and relocation of bus stops.**
- **Stop removal or relocation invariably has increased walking distances for users.**
- **These changes disadvantage everyone, but especially elderly or disabled residents and those with young children.**

3. Impact on local business

West Park is home to a group of local businesses which add to both the local facilities and the general ambience of West Park. These include a laundrette, hairdressing salons, cafes, restaurants, estate agents, a fashion shop, a publisher and a funeral director.

The health and ultimate survival of these businesses depend on ease of access, together with adequate parking facilities, for the local and non-local customer base.

These local businesses are situated either side of the West Park roundabout, with parking facilities on some of the forecourts, the egress from Spen Road, Spen Road itself and Kepstorn Road:

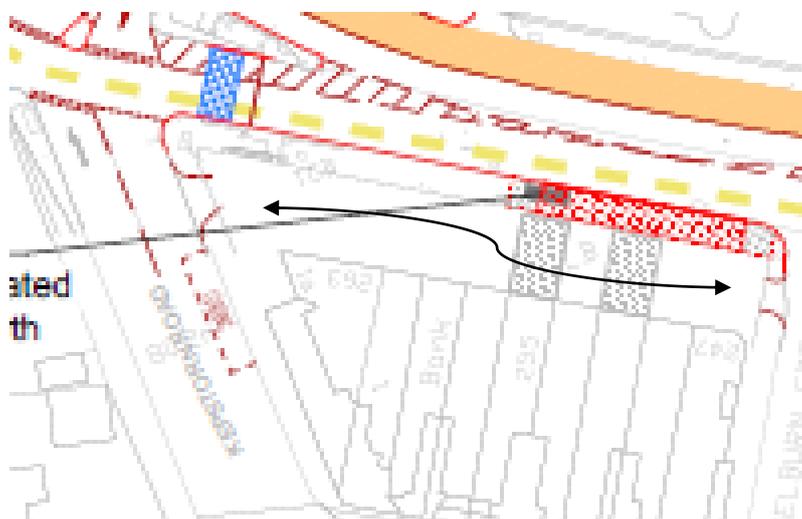
Shop frontages stretch from here to Spen Road



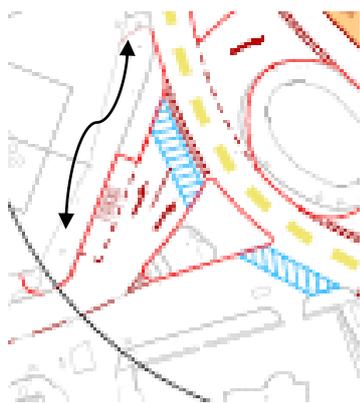
Shop frontages & forecourts

The proposals establish a traffic clearway across the shop frontages, discouraging parking for passing trade and customers in general and restricting loading for businesses.

Customer parking is further diminished by the removal of parking spaces at the end of Kepstorn Road. The plans envisage an entrance onto the forecourt (for what reason?), and a new loading bay, both leading to the loss of existing parking spaces



The businesses further outbound, across Spen Road have also lost customer parking spaces.



The original plans lost spaces immediately outside the laundrette, this has been partly compensated for, however places have still been lost to provide two exit lanes from what is a minor, narrow local road.

Further along spaces on the A660 have now been lost to a relocated bus stop

These changes will lead to loss of customers, given that the laundrette, estate agent and take-away shops are essentially stop-and-drop or stop-and-shop businesses. The laundrette in particular requires dropping off bundles of washing.



The loss of parking facilities threatens the economic viability of local businesses and is reminiscent of the loss of local businesses caused by the Sheffield tram in the 1990's.

Similar issues apply to businesses located in Far Headingley and Hyde Park.

Overall the scheme sees business value as vested in large city centre enterprises, ignoring the importance of local community businesses both in terms of their economic contribution and their role in the health of local out-of-city communities. Ultimately, damage to the character and amenities of north-west Leeds diminishes the overall attractiveness of Leeds as a whole, and its attractiveness to large businesses.

4. Impact on community safety

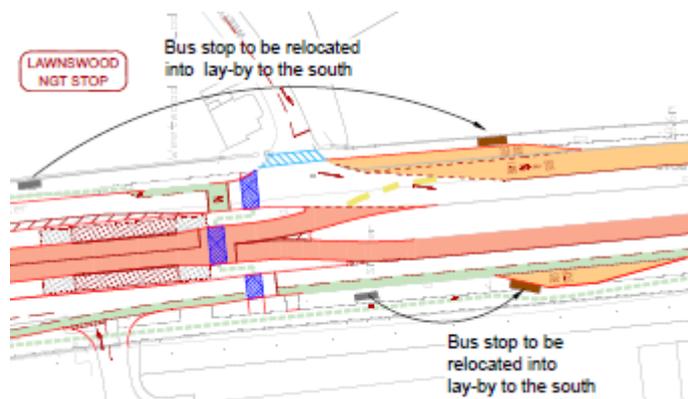
West Park is home to St Chad's Primary school and Lawnswood School, with associated parental/child foot and car traffic.

St Chad's is situated on Arncliffe road, seemingly distant from the A660. However, the proposals by concentrating solely on a narrow band around the A660, ignore the likely new traffic rat-runs resulting from both the construction and operational phase of the scheme, and which will affect these school traffic movements/ safety despite the distance from the A660.

Many pupils of Lawnswood School use the footpaths leading from Headingley to Lawnswood and the public transport stops opposite the school entrance on the A660.

Current proposals will reduce the existing pavements widths to only 2 metres for much of the West Park section of the A660 (Reference: A-05-312694/TD/011 and 012). This is a considerable safety issue, which contravenes guidance provided by the Department for Transport (Manual of Streets section 6.3.22).

In addition the small size of the traffic island outside the school entrance on the A660 and the mix of carriageways and stops adjacent to Lawnswood School represent safety issues. At present only half the children need to cross a carriageway to reach public transport; with the new system all of them will have to do so, except only for the relative few wanting a Northbound bus. Overall the plans do not reflect sufficient design and attention being given to the safety of school-children.



The siting of the trolley stops adjacent to Lawnswood School in the centre of the carriageway gives rise to safety issues; children waiting at the trolley stop seeing a bus approaching will be tempted to rush across the carriageway to get to the bus stop (and vice versa).

The un-segregated footways in the vicinity of the Lawnswood School are inherently unsafe with the high pedestrian footfall. We note that the NGT runtime analysis (see annexe 9-11 to Document C-1-13) shows that the NGT will be running at 48kph along this stretch of road).



Given that school children will be the prime users, it seems inappropriate to have the main pathway in front of the school shared between cyclists and pedestrians. The northern NGT route affects 17 primary schools, 3 secondary, 2 colleges, and 2 universities with three large campuses. The students and school children are more affected by pavement widths, given that they are more likely to move around in groups.

Accident statistics for 2008-14 from Clarendon Road to Otley Old Road show that 51% of the total number of casualties involve pedestrians or cyclists, of which 18% are the under 20s . Any changes which disadvantage these two groups must surely be avoided.

Overall there is a safety issue for schoolchildren and other pedestrians from the narrowing of footpaths from Churchwood Avenue / Glen Road northwards to the Lawnswood roundabout.

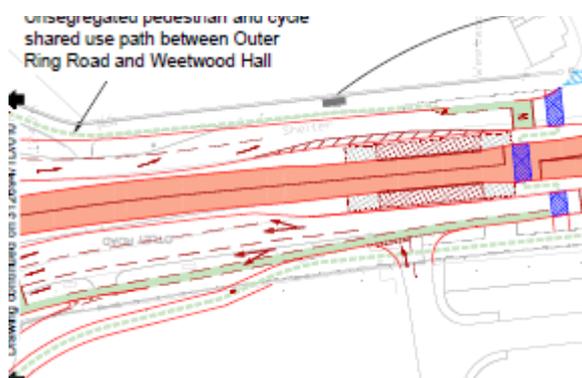
5. Impact on traffic movements

The Lawnswood roundabout has been redesigned to allow for central access by the trolleybus and according to the information provided by TWAO documents will just about cope with the existing traffic flow.

However this does not appear to take account of current plans announced by Leeds City Council for ELOR (East Leeds Orbital Road) and for improvements in capacity at the Horsforth and other roundabouts to the west. The resultant additional traffic flow around the outer ring road is likely to overload the capacity of the roundabout and result in increased traffic queues.

At the Lawnswood roundabout, the southern inbound exit has been re-designed with a severely shortened “merging lane”.

This raises the possibility of queues developing across the roundabout, especially given the proximity of the



entrance to Weetwood Hall (southbound) (Ref: A-05 drawing 312694/TD/011) – a definite road safety issue.

For the outbound evening peak period the proposed carriageway reduction which removes one lane of general traffic, is likely to result in significant queuing, with queues likely to stretch well beyond the West Park parade of shops. In addition to increased pollution, this will encourage rat-running on the narrow Spen Road residential road.



The un-segregated cycle/pedestrian shared use path around the western corner of the Ring Road West Park/Otley Road is unsafe. Vision along the path will be restricted due to the hedging and boundary constructions of the two residential properties at that location. Any less than a prudent cyclist using this facility could well be in collision with unsuspecting

pedestrians using that footway. (Ref: A-05 drawing 312694/TD/010)

6. The impact on Public Transport

Currently West Park and other communities served by the A660 enjoy a frequent bus service, albeit subject to delays during the morning and evening peaks. The NGT plans do not offer evidence of any improvement to the existing service because:

- Bus stops are less accessible or have been removed.
- Having two sets of stops in a non-integrated transport system will introduce confusion.
- The bus frequency is expected to be halved, and the very survival of outer services is in doubt. The trolleybus provision does not compensate for these factors.
- Projected travel times by trolleybus are only marginally better than bus, and even then rely on questionable modelling assumptions.
- The latest plans show bus services having greater access to priority lanes so improving bus journey times and eroding any differences for trolleybus timings.
- Part of the time savings come from having on-board conductors and an oyster card-type ticketing system, yet both measures could be applied to buses and do not depend on having a trolleybus system.
- With buses and trolleybuses sharing priority lanes, it's likely that the latter will be affected by bus boarding delays, especially given the absence of lay-bys on the inbound A660 route.

- Improved on-bus information and quicker boarding will be small compensation for the fact that most passengers on the trolleybus will have to stand. This will be a major drawback for all users, but especially the elderly and those with children.

Overall there is little firm evidence to support the proposition that bus users will move to the trolleybus on the scale argued in the business case which must be open to challenge as a result.

Overall the quality of public transport facilities would be reduced by the proposed scheme. It does not deliver an integrated scheme, but a less accessible and inferior travel experience.

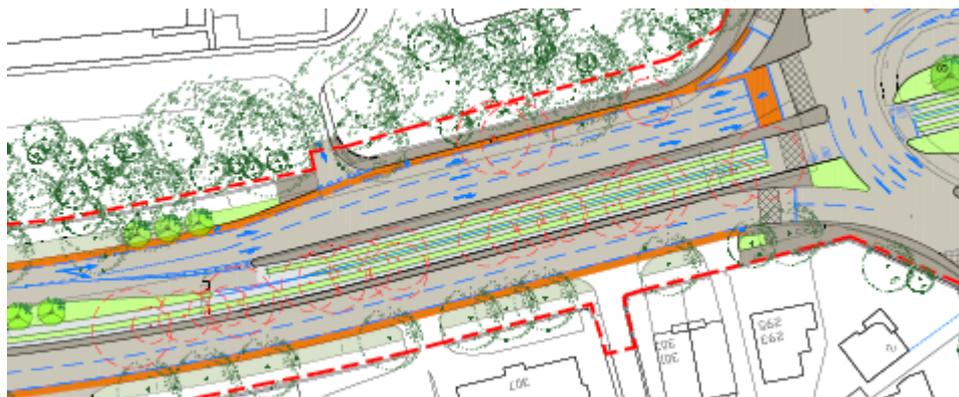
7. Impact on the Environment and conservation area

The northern section of the proposed trolleybus route runs exclusively through or adjoining Conservation Areas whose character and features are extensively documented through Conservation Area and Neighbourhood Design Statements. These documents have been prepared with the collaboration of local residents groups and the council through a consultation processes which has been absent from NGT planning.

An integral part of the character of these areas derives from relatively narrow roads, wide footways, green verges, and extensive borders of mature trees all along the A660. The trees and verges will be severely damaged, or lost by the proposed development.



For West Park, this will be especially noticeable with the removal of trees (marked in red-dashes) from the central reservation and verges on both sides of the Lawnswood roundabout.



Another significant factor affecting the character and ambience of the A660 is tree cut-back associated with electric cable clearance for a trolley bus system.



The Churchwood and Drummonds Residents Association commissioned a professional arboriculturalist to carry out a tree valuation report on the 21 trees that will be destroyed in their area

.(Document ref H-2) .The findings (using the professionally recognised CAVAT methodology) are that the trees lost in front of St Chad's Church approximate to the value of over £1/2m. This significant capital asset value loss combined with a degraded landscape and heritage environment is very troubling to local residents.

As the trees are similar in age and type along the rest of the A660 route, the value of capital asset loss to the city for all the trees on the route is estimated to be over

£14m. Separate figures are not available for the West Park / Lawnswood area but the lost value will be significant.

Although there are plans to replace the trees on a 3 to 1 basis with some larger replacement trees being planted, these new trees will take decades to have significant visual impact. Also no account seems to have been taken of the cost and importance of aftercare of the

replacement trees, and the costs of the successful maintenance of the newly planted trees will be considerable

The damage to conservation area character is compounded by increased street clutter and the overhead cabling and roadside gantries required by the trolleybus. The forecourt of the West Park parade of shops will be defaced with cables attached to buildings, and overhanging the sitting-out area used by two cafe-restaurants, something which is not likely to encourage customers. In addition forecourt space will be lost to a large trolleybus stop.

8. GENERAL ISSUES: The Consultation Process

In 2013, the first NGT Information sessions was called at the request of WPRA, and publicised and paid for by WPRA. Over 200 residents attended the Saturday morning session at St Andrews church hall. The lack of preparedness of the NGT was soon evident – no wall plans, books of plans suitable only for table-top usage, inability to answer most points being raised – all of which left residents angry, confused and wary of the whole scheme.

Having attended all the 6 events based around the proposed northern route, it was clear to any observer that support for the scheme was closer to 10% rather than the publicised 77%, and that people felt that their concerns were not being listened to and could not be addressed.

The most common feature of all these events was the inability of the NGT team to answer most of the points being raised, even being unable to give an estimate of the likely distance between roadside support gantries. A Frequently Asked Question section of the NGTMETRO website was used to provide retrospective (typically after a long delay) answers to many of the questions being raised. Discussions and responses were limited to the details of the plans (Design Freeze 6 [DF6]), with no information concerning the rationale for the scheme, or the basis underlying the plans being presented, or details of tree loss and other landscape methods.

For the West Park area, questions raised by WPRA and local residents, concerning DF6 did result in changes being made to plans, for instance the proposal to make Kepstorn Road one-way, which would have made access to the this part of West Park very difficult for West Park Residents Association Reference: TWA/13/APP/04/OBJ/1720Page 12 of 14

residents. However, there was no consultation about the one-way proposal in the first place, and this instance serves to emphasize the extent to which NGT plans embody a lack of knowledge or understanding of the issues affecting local communities adjacent to the A660.

The whole process has only involved “giving information” and NOT consultation NOR meaningful discussion, especially against any background of local understanding. The NGT scheme as currently proposed sees the A660 as a through road between the city centre and the ring road with little regard to the needs of communities established in North West Leeds and the character of the environment, notably the streetscape of the A660.

9. GENERAL ISSUES: Public Support for NGT

The NGT campaign has been founded on dubious statistics and misquoted public support. It has continually quoted the statistic that NGT enjoys 77% of public support for the scheme, a figure derived from a questionnaire circulated in 2009 for which the primary questions were as follows:

- What do you think of our proposals for the NGT scheme?
- What do you think of our proposals to use modern trolleybuses on the NGT network?
- What do you think of our proposals for Park & Ride sites at the end of the North and South routes?

It is important to recognise that the information available to the public only gave sparse generalised details of the scheme. The maps and brief details for the North and South routes, were given alongside a map and details for an East route to St James’ hospital and the City Centre loop route; Neither of the last two routes featuring as part of the current proposals.

The leaflet did make mention that NGT would “help tackle congestion and reduce pollution in Leeds”, and that “90% of the funding for NGT would come from Central Government and 10% would come from local sources. It also quotes generalised findings from an earlier survey in November 2008 such as “95% of people thought public transport in Leeds could be improved”, within any context a meaningless statistic.

The whole publicity documentation and questionnaire was slanted to encourage a supportive response, without providing information on the scheme or possible alternatives upon which the individual could make any meaningful or objective comment. The 2009 survey statistic of a 77% support figure is totally misleading and prejudicial. Other less quoted findings, detailing reasons for such support were:

- Reduced car use / congestion (NOT an outcome for the current scheme)
- A desire for more NGT routes and wider coverage across Leeds. (NOT provided by the current scheme)
- The need for low fares to encourage use. (UNCLEAR but UNLIKELY to be a feature of the current scheme).

Overall the collection of the survey information lacks objectivity and validity, whilst the use of the apparent findings to support the NGT case is misleading and inappropriate. This ambiguity and lack of substantial details has been characteristic of the whole publicity campaign and “consultation process” associated with the current NGT scheme.

Community associations in north-west Leeds recently combined to distribute a new questionnaire, worded to replicate the 2009 survey, to gauge the reaction of residents to the scheme now being proposed. Local resident associations distributed 3450 questionnaires eliciting 893 returns which showed that 95% of residents opposed the trolley bus scheme with only 3% supporting it.

The NGT trolley bus proposal has no public support.

10. Overall Issues

This Proof of Evidence has concentrated on particular issues as they affect West Park, however these are INDICATIVE of the wider issues which undermine the rationale and logic behind the trolleybus scheme.

Overall, WPRA consider that it would be wholly wrong and unsafe to grant the TWAO given the many deficiencies in the scheme.

The West Park Residents Association is affiliated to the North West Leeds Transport Forum (NWLTF), and supports the objection submitted by NWLTF (OBJ/1719) and the points raised in their submitted documents.