

West Park Residents Association Friday 17th October 2014

My name is Doug Kemp, I am the chair of West Park Residents' Association. I submit the following on behalf of the West Park Residents Association (WPRA).

The following comments summarise the issues raised by WPRA (OBJ 1720) in its :

Statement of Case (RED-OBJ-1720)

Proof of Evidence (OBJ1720)

Response to the promoters' rebuttal

And are made on behalf of the members of WPRA. WPRA in addition, supports the analysis and submissions made by the North West Leeds Transport Forum.

As regards my personal background - I hold degrees to Masters level from the University of Leeds in Economics and Statistics. Prior to my retirement from Leeds Metropolitan University I was a Principal Lecturer in Information Technology and a Member of the British Institute of Management, Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

WPRA has for over 20 years sought to serve the interests of local residents, including those who live on Otley Old Road.

The pattern of development of West Park began in the 1890s. The fashionable "Arts and Crafts" style homesteads of Edwardian West Park were built at this time, and constitute the West Park Conservation Area

Otley Road (A660) abuts the West Park area and is the local traffic artery. It provides direct access to residential properties, shops and other outlets with active frontages. Many of adjoining residential are enclaves with NO alternative access, other than the A660.

It is a well used radial route to the city centre which creates difficulties for pedestrian and vehicle movement across it. However, it is totally different from the other more heavily trafficked radial routes into Leeds, the A660 stands in stark contrast to the A65, A64, A58 or the A61 – the A660 carries less traffic, offers more public transport services and does not have the wider road widths or dual carriageways of other routes..

Along the A660, the Victorian and Edwardian houses, boundary walls and established trees give character, ambience and charm to the residential areas, adding to the attractiveness of Leeds as a whole. The A660 has been constrained by its surroundings.

1. Heritage, Environmental and Life in West Park

1.1 The trolleybus proposals plan for significant tree loss in the West Park area especially at the Lawnswood roundabout section, all to the detriment of the area's character. This mature tree loss is echoed along the A660 and compounded by tree lopping required for the overhead cabling – although there is no information available from NGT as to the extent of any lopping which might be required.

1.2 Mitigation for tree losses by the planting of young small trees in other locations (eg. Along Otley Old Road) is hardly appropriate since the character of both locations is fundamentally altered (details given in APP-10-3 pages 11,12,15).page 11,12 show extent of new tree planting in an area with open vistas, out of character whilst Lawnswood area loses trees and hence character

1.3 The A660 will also be blighted by increased street clutter. This arises from:

- separate trolleybus stops
- Additional roadside gantries required to support OLE for the trolleybus. There is no information on the extent to which OLE poles and light columns can be combined.

1.4 A significant major adverse impact comes from the overhead cabling or wirescape. This will be especially evident at the West Park roundabout, where extra overhead cabling and supports will be needed to cope with the road curvature around the roundabout (APP-10-3 page 16)page 16 shows roundabout area and the extent to which the wirescape will stretch over the roadway and forecourts .

1.5 The engineering diagrams identify two forecourts in front of shop/business premises at West Park as providing "Opportunity to upgrade surfacing to local neighbourhood centre". Yet NGT does not propose to do anything, indeed during cross examination it was implied that these areas were outside the remit of the NGT proposals, despite being within the project "red lines" and affected by OLE and wirescape (APP-10-3 page 16). One forecourt is included within the RED lines, with building fixings planned – these are forecourts used by restaurants and cafes which will be affected by these proposed changes This is typical of the design and planning associated with the scheme, namely to ignore issues associated with the adjacent streets and areas, concentrating solely on the A660. The plans ignore the affect of the development on the areas surrounding the A660, this was highlighted by another speaker last week re:parking and traffic on Burton Crescent

1.6 In West Park, another issue concerns the loss of shadow lanes or traffic pockets for right turning traffic. This will tend to isolate communities, increase congestion and also increase accident risk (TWAO doc A-11 TD/012) commented on the traffic into/out of the Village hotel and sports complex, and also Arncliffe road heavily traffced by onstreet university parking.

1.7 Another specific issue concerns the outbound bus stop which was planned to be moved from outside the West Park shops to beyond Spen Road and the mini-roundabout (approximately 100 metres); A move which ignores the bus route for #97 which uses Spen Road and resulting in either no stop being available for #97 (TWAO doc A-11 TD/012). This

design fault has been pointed out to NGT, although their solution raises another local parking problem. This is seen as symptomatic of a lack of local knowledge being applied in the design process. **Pointed out the moves and the extent to solving one problem (no bus stop) then led to another (loss of parking)**

2 Public Transport issues

2.1 Existing bus stops along the northern route have been relocated or removed; invariably these have increased the walking distance for public transport users. In the case of the inbound bus stop at West Park (opposite Welburn Grove) it has been moved by 110m and now requires the crossing of a busy hotel complex entrance. It is also now 170m from the pedestrian crossing location **(TWAO doc A-11 TD/012)**. **Referred also to REB-1 OBJ1720 para 2.2.2 as an example of a incorrect and stupid rebuttal – passenger must use NGT or walk to nother bus stop at Lawnswood rather than cross the Village entrance**

2.2 Changes to stops are specifically to the disadvantage of local elderly or disabled transport users, or families with young children. The promoters' response to the NWLTF Proof **(paragraph 2.9 (1) of REB-1 OBJ/1719)** makes reference to “additional seating between stops to break up walking journeys”. An admission that there is a potential disadvantage to elderly or infirm trolleybus users (There are no reference to this intermediate seating on plans or in the scheme costings). **Inspector checked out the NWLTF reference**

2.3 The insistence of separate stops for the trolleybus introduces confusion and inflexibility into travel planning. The cross examination of Mr Turner of First West Yorkshire indicated that existing bus stops in the city already cope with the envisaged combined numbers of buses and trolleybuses at a single stop.

2.4 Separate stops means that users are faced with a reduced service frequency at all stops, assuming the NGT assumption of bus services being halved, meaning longer waiting times.

2.5 The trolleybus service will lack the service reach of existing bus services. In particular it offers no service to the Merrion Centre, St Johns, The Core, The Victoria Quarter, Harvey Nichols, Leeds market, the Bus Station – all popular destinations for bus users.

2.6 The trolley bus service does not have the flexibility offered by buses to extend or modify its service routes. Existing and planned housing developments at Bodington and Adel are not served by the proposed NGT route. **Pointed out that the trolleybus system has not the numbers or facility to cope with extra passenger capacity, whilst buses have the flexibility to give modified or extended route coverage, or provide more capacity at peak times or as demand grows.**

2.7 A specific safety issue concerns Lawnswood School. Results of a pedestrian survey are given in promoters' response to WPRA **(REB-1 OBJ1720)**, indicated an afternoon exodus of 156 pupils within a 15 minute time period, all crossing the Otley Road. If the proposal goes ahead, they would be crossing onto a relatively small central reservation for the trolleybus stop outside of the school gates. By any consideration this constitutes a safety issue **(TWAO doc A-11 TD/011)** . **Inspector looked at the engineering plans for this section (IN CROSS EXAMINATION CAMERON NOTED THAT EXTRA TEACHER SUPPORT REQUIRED AT THIS POINT)**

2.8 The NGT website quotes that “modern trolleybuses can carry up to 160 standing and seated passengers in comfort”. However it fails to mention that over 60% of passengers will probably have to stand (50 seated and 110 standing ? – no exact specifications as yet agreed according to NGT).

This is not an attractive transport feature / prospect for many traveller groups (eg. The elderly).

2.9 The modelling and business case has relied on Stated Preference work undertaken in 2008. This work specifically excluded older travellers. Mr Chadwick accepted in cross examination that older (concessionary) travellers make up 23% (approximately) of the patronage on light rail system in the UK. Remember this is a group for whom seating is an important issue, yet the Business case only considered the impact of a 20% drop in patronage and hence revenue. This seems an unduly optimistic stance to take.

Concern over the revenue estimates from the Business Case are heightened by the undertaking by Leeds City Council to under right operational costs. This together with the assumptions being made in the Business Case modelling, the competitive response of bus operators and the magnitude of possible revenue reductions are seen as a significant concern to local residents.

2.10 The NGT rationale of improving public transport lacks credibility. For West Park it would worsen the already frequent bus services to the city (#1 #6 #97), and existing services to Adel, Yeadon, Guisley, Holt Park, Tinsill and Cookridge, would face uncertain futures. Mr Turner of First West Yorkshire commented during his cross examination that the loss of revenue from the core section of routes such as #1,#6, #97 and #28 would affect not only these routes but the viability of other routes in West Yorkshire, with potentially greater calls on the support required through the “tendered services” provision funded by WYCA.

2.11 Overall NGT is NOT an *integrated* transport system; it is a separate transport system operating alongside the existing bus service. In essence it is another “bus” service to the confusion and detriment of public transport users.

3 Consultation and Public Support for NGT

3.1 The NGT campaign has been characterised by a lack of information as to why:

- The A660 is the route selected (appears to be based on % increase in time delay at peak time, not related to overall traffic volume, commuter trends, road geography/topography, environmental impact)
- Why a trolleybus is the preferred mode of transport (no criteria for judging between transport mode and route suitability)

3.2 The survey in 2008, was used to “gather feedback on the key attributes that people would like to see in a new public transport system for Leeds” (A-01-03 para 2.4).

This gave the analytical conclusion that “95% of people thought public transport in Leeds could be improved”, an incisive if meaningless statistic. Referred to para 2.13 commenting that results were collected across Leeds so issues such as “more frequent services” would not apply to the A660. Also commented that another later comment in para 2.18 “Requests for a tram instead of a bus based solution” only was made by 29 people (See Annex 4 of A-01-03), yet details from this survey used to support the trolleybus system?

3.3 Thereafter circulated information for a 2009 survey ” (A-01-03 para 2.20) focussed upon presenting the Promoters’ preferred Route, including eastern route to St James’s hospital and a city centre loop, with the trolleybus was presented as the preferred mode of transport. This gave rise to the oft-quoted statistic that NGT enjoys 77% of public support for the scheme. 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.

3.4 The leaflet ” (A-01-03 Annex 3) did make mention that NGT would “help tackle congestion and reduce pollution in Leeds”, whilst other less quoted findings from the survey, detailing reasons for 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).
- Concern about how NGT would integrate with existing bus services. (Current scheme does NOT integrate with existing bus services)

3.5 A series of drop-in information events were held in 2013. These were prejudiced against NGT since the general public had no basis or information to understand why the A660 and a trolleybus system were being proposed. Looking at engineering drawings and detail, together with the inability of the NGT team to answer points being raised, even being unable to give an estimate of the likely distance between roadside support gantries did nothing to inspire confidence in the planning and design of the scheme – all of which has left residents angry, confused and wary of the whole scheme.

3.6 Community associations in north-west Leeds in late 2013 combined to distribute a new questionnaire, worded to replicate the 2009 survey, to gauge the reaction of residents to the scheme now being proposed (NWLTF Statement of Case Appendix I). 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 proposal has no widespread public support.

4 Consultation and local business

4.1 Consultation has been appalling as regards the numerous small businesses along the A660, seemingly only concerned with contacting landlords as opposed to the actual business tenants. As a consequence:

- Concerns about disruption during construction are unaddressed.
- The operational impact on their business customer base is not given due consideration.

4.2 The trolleybus scheme establishes a traffic clearway in front of business premise, discouraging any passing trade for local businesses.

- It removes significant local parking facilities for customers
- It fails to appreciate the basic logistical issues vital to the financial health of businesses.

4.3 At West Park this is seen in the removal of parking spaces at the end of Kepstorn Road, whilst Spen Road has lost spaces immediately outside the laundrette. Even more dramatic changes affect businesses in Far Headingley with the 24 hour priority lane along the business frontages (TWAO doc A-11 TD/012). NGT team had no appreciation of the issues affecting West Park local businesses, and the importance to these businesses of local parking .

4.4 The October 2013 survey and report by the Federation of Small Businesses reveals that only 31% of small businesses were consulted, and that the majority had serious concerns with the scheme. Overall, the likely outcome of the scheme changes will be the loss of customers for these businesses and their ultimate closure to the detriment of the local community and the prosperity of Leeds as a whole.

It is felt that NGT has solely concentrated on large business interests ignoring the likely impact on local businesses, especially as regards consultation.

I recommend that the Inspector hears the comments of Carole Carey-Campbell in her testimony next week, to gain a first hand account of the serious issues and concerns of local businesses along the A660.