UK Local Authority Perspective on Trolleybus Future

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Leeds Overview

- Leeds, located in West Yorkshire (northern England)
- Population of over 750,000
- Important financial and business centre outside London.

Key Transport Issues:
- Road network is operating at/close to practical capacity
- Growth in rail commuting - overcrowding
- Declining bus use
Leeds Background

- Long history of developing mass transit proposals in Leeds
- Tram system cancelled by UK Government in 2005
  - Affordability/value for money
- Leeds asked to develop bus based system
  - A ‘top of the range’ system
  - To be a showcase for other UK cities
  - To deliver 90% of the benefits of a tram, at 50% of the cost’
New Generation Transport Trolleybus

• 14.3km Trolleybus network
• Known as NGT (New Generation Transport)
• Aim is for faster and more reliable journeys, and an improved environment
• System based approach – vehicle, infrastructure, Park and Ride, marketing etc.
  – To deliver a ‘Step Change’ in public transport
• Total cost of €288m
  – €199m from Central Government
  – €89m from local sources
Bypass of local centre

800 Space Park and Ride

New 13,500 seat music Venue

Bypass of local centre

2 Universities:
60,000 Students

Links to regeneration area & national museum

1,500 space Park & Ride site
Why Trolleybus for Leeds

• To meet regional transport objectives
  – Support economic activity and growth
  – Develop a low carbon transport system
  – Enhance quality of life

• Comprehensive option generation process in 2007
  – Existing transport issues and future predictions
  – Different transport solutions for different corridors

• Fact finding visits for Politicians to EU systems
Benefits of Trolleybus for Leeds

• Local Environmental benefits
  – Air quality Noise levels
• Potential for using sustainable electricity in the future
• ‘Permanence’ - fixed infrastructure
  – Modal shift
• Significant economic benefits
  – Approximately 4,000 permanent new jobs
  – Up to 1,000 jobs in construction process
  – €184m annual economic boost
• Potential uplift in property prices
  – Leeds cited in national media as a good location to invest
  – Discussions with local Real Estate Agents
Key Challenges

• Communicating the benefits
  – Seen by some as ‘old technology’
  – No existing UK Trolleybus
  – Calls for further consideration of alternatives (e.g. hybrid buses)
  – Relationship with local media

• Ensuring the benefits are not reduced
  – Local pressure to change designs
  – But need to maintain journey time & reliability benefits
Key Challenges (2)

• Integration
  – Deregulated bus market in Leeds
  – No control over wider local bus network

• Complicated UK Government approval process
  – Lengthy process to obtain legal powers
  – 8 week Public Inquiry
  – Central Government approvals at key stages

• Long Term project
  – Construction - 2016/7
  – Operation - 2019/20
  – Political support needed over many years
Next Steps

• Need to obtain legal powers and further government funding approvals

• Potential to extend NGT network in Leeds/wider region
  – Other routes previously considered

• Continue to monitor technology developments
  – Potential for off-wire sections in the future?

• Other UK cities closely watching Leeds
  – Trolleybus could offer value for money option
Thank You

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