



The voice of light rail Tram Members Update

December 2020

Season's Greetings as we look to the future

As 2020 draws to a close, everyone at UKTram would like to wish members and stakeholders all the very best for the festive season, as we reflect on a year like no other in modern times.

Throughout the pandemic the light rail sector has consistently risen to the challenge of keeping key cities moving and once again proven its value to the communities it serves.

Clearly, the impact of Covid-19 on members has been a prime focus for UKTram, and as a result we've been effective in helping to secure over a quarter of a billion pounds of support funding for UK light rail systems and been instrumental in sharing best practice on measures to help prevent the spread of the virus.

However, these are far from our only achievements this year, and we recently announced plans to deliver to Government a powerful strategy aimed at shaping a progressive future for the UK's light rail sector.

We recently announced that work to develop the comprehensive plan has been taking place over the last six months, and you can read all about it [here](#).

This was achieved while the organisation continued to work on a wide range of initiatives aimed at overcoming engineering and operational challenges – work that's set to continue at a pace in the new year.

As we look forward to what we all hope will be a very different year when compared to 2020, we would once again like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

James Hammett
UKTram Managing Director



*Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year*

Coronavirus challenges raised at meetings

A recent 'Sounding Board' Teams meeting for members of the UKTram Light Rail Operators Committee has highlighted the challenge of meeting the demands of changing travel patterns due to evolving coronavirus restrictions.

Members heard operators had faced capacity issues during the middle of the day with an increasing number of shoppers and part-time workers. However, the closure of the hospitality sector during the second national 'lockdown' has seen a significant reduction in demand later in the evening.

Overall, the gradual rise in customer numbers in the autumn had been reversed by the lockdown and Tier 3 restrictions.

Read more on the meeting [here](#).

The impact of government Covid-19 measures also proved the headline topic of conversation at a recent online meeting of communications professionals from across the sector.

The UKTram Marketing, Communications and Customer Services Group heard that most networks continue to report high levels of compliance with rules on face coverings, although the introduction of the 10pm curfew had created capacity issues for some, and you can read more [here](#).

Plans for 2021

There are really exciting times ahead and 2021 promises further developments for light rail engineers, following up on their work in 2020.

With consultation on the recently developed engineering National Occupational Standards (NOS) well under way, we're confident this can become a fully embedded process across the sector.

UKTram is also now part of the rail apprenticeship trailblazing group, providing an ideal opportunity to encourage individuals to consider a career in light rail while increasing diversity and addressing a long-standing skills gap.

In 2021 the organisation is looking to pilot the first instalment of a project to develop a potentially game changing sector-wide digital platform. For the first time it will incorporate genuine bench marking for both operators and maintainers and realise the potential for data analytics.

Not only does the project promise to be highly beneficial to existing systems, it should encourage government to support future schemes based on genuine information relating to life cycle maintenance and operational costs.

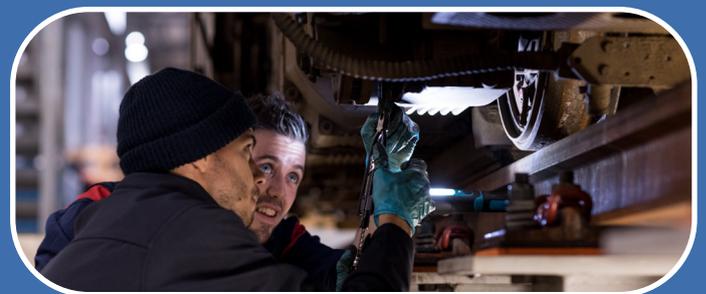
When complete, all the information compiled to date can be combined and housed in a fully functional ready to use digital platform.

Engineering update

Engineers from across the sector have been working to drive forward practical solutions to a range of technical challenges.

During a recent meeting of the UKTram Light Rail Engineering Group, members agreed to share data on low rail adhesion as part of wider research into possible solutions to the issue.

They also looked at re-emerging proposals for allowing bikes on trams nationwide and more information can be found [here](#).



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