

Light Rail (UK)

All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group

House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA
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A new West Midlands export industry

The Stourbridge Rail Car

Ultra Light Rail Partners Ltd

Ultra Light Rail Partners Ltd (ULRP) is a new company set up by four partner companies, Parry People Movers Ltd (PPM) (www.parrypeplemovers.com); Sustraco Ltd (www.ultralightrail.com) (the successor to Bristol Electric Railbus Ltd (BER));

Clayton Equipment Ltd (claytonequipment.co.uk), a former subsidiary of Rolls Royce (but now independent after an MBO) and

Pre Metro Operations Ltd (premetro.co.uk), the operators of the Stourbridge service (see PPM web-site for details) for Abellio, the current franchisee.

Major Kit Holden, a former Inspector of Rail, is also on the Board of the company as he is the inventor of an innovative form of rail-track known as metal Waybeam Tramway Track.

The Chairman is Professor Beverley Nielsen, Associate Professor at Birmingham City University.

ULRP has been set up in order to take advantage of the success of the Stourbridge service by building a worldwide ULR industry that will provide a solution to the lethal particulate pollution (known as the Oslo Effect) created by buses running on rubber tyres on tarmac.

This meeting by invitation only, where MPs, Stakeholders etc., within the Light Rail industry and invited members of the Public will have a chance to discuss debate and raise questions concerning Light Rail & Trams.

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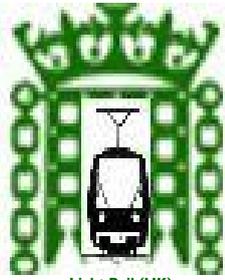
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ULRP has four immediate objectives:

- 1) to build the successor to the PPM Class 139 light rail car in the form of the PPM90 Compact Tramtrain. This larger vehicle will be able to accommodate the increased patronage on the Stourbridge route.
- 2) to develop an innovative Tribrid drive train combining flywheel/ battery energy storage with a drive fuelled by liquid air/nitrogen, using Sustraco's Bristol tram (pictured below) as a demonstration vehicle on a Waybeam Track.
- 3) To build a one-kilometre test track, using the Waybeam system, in the Tyseley Energy Park in Birmingham, on which to run the Tribrid demonstration, in time for the Commonwealth Games in 2022.
- 4) To organise a worldwide marketing campaign to re-engineer buses to run on steel wheels on steel rails instead of on rubber tyres on tarmac.



The "track record" built up by the PPM Class139 light rail cars over the last 9 years of service in Stourbridge is now well placed to prove itself to be an asset of enormous value. It has the potential to provide the foundation for a major new export industry, based in the West Midlands

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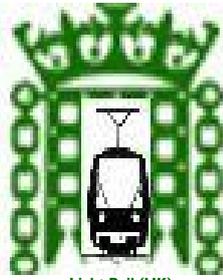
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where it originated, producing simple, low-cost, energy-efficient, zero-emission vehicles with steel wheels running on steels rails as the centre-piece of a new public transport system in the category of Ultra Light Rail (ULR). ULR offers a new technology that can provide a simple and effective way to re-engineer buses and thus up-grade public transport services worldwide to prevent people dying from air pollution.

In transport technology particularly, it is a successful “track record” that is by far the most essential of all attributes, worth more than any amount of theoretical blueprints. The proven success of the Stourbridge rail car, which has just carried its 5 millionth passenger, gives the West Midlands a huge potential advantage and lead over its competitors in meeting the worldwide demand that is now about to develop for public transport vehicles that do not produce polluting particulates.

The Stourbridge rail car is the successor to the Bristol PPM Tram, owned and operated by Sustraco’s predecessor, Bristol Electric Railbus Ltd, providing a highly popular and successful public transport service for 2 ½ years along the Bristol Harbourside, demonstrating its use as a street-car running amongst pedestrians, cyclists and cars.

Air pollution is a worldwide problem, estimated to cost 3 million lives in 2012, predominantly in low and middle-income countries. In the UK the number of deaths from air pollution is estimated to be around **twenty times** as great as the number of deaths caused by road accidents.

Just as governments are finally starting to take action against the use of fossil fuels in transport in order to reduce this lethal air pollution, new evidence has now emerged to show that the most toxic pollution of all comes not so much from ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide but from particulates.

In the UK in 2012 it is estimated that whereas 14,100 people died from nitrogen dioxide pollution, 37,800 premature deaths were attributed to particulate matter (PMs) in the form of tiny particles of road, tyre and brake wear (see Oslo effect at <https://www.applrguk.co.uk/media/files/L-R-Applrg-Oslo-Effect-2-v12pdf>).

This evidence also shows that the heavier the vehicle the more PMs it will produce, to be breathed in by passers-by and residents, causing extra heart attacks, strokes and asthma attacks as air pollution surges.

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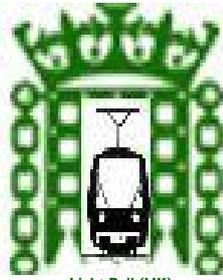
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The extra weight of battery-driven, electric eco-vehicles, especially buses, will thus still be responsible for the major part of the mortality from air pollution, even when they are not burning fossil fuels.

The solution to the problem caused by this new evidence regarding the principal source of air pollution mortality, is to re-engineer buses so that they run with steel wheels on steel rails, not with rubber tyres on tarmac roads.

Obsolescent transport technology is currently killing millions of people every year. It needs to be replaced with up-to-date technology in the form of affordable, light-weight, rail-based public transport systems that produce neither fossil-fuel emissions nor particulates. Conventional modern trams manufactured by Bombardier, Siemens, Alstom and CAF are far too expensive for any but the largest, most prosperous cities in developed rich countries.

For the rest of the world an enlarged version of the Stourbridge rail car, adapted to street running, is exactly what is required.

The technology of the Stourbridge tram is deliberately designed to be as simple and robust as possible so that it may run successfully in any country in the world.

The concept comes from the same design engineers and workshops that have produced innovative construction technology that is currently being used to build schools and low-cost housing in low-income countries all over the world. Simplicity, robustness, durability and low cost are the key factors in this kind of intermediate technology and they have been the guiding principles in the development of the Stourbridge rail car.

So far the development of ULR trams has been made possible entirely through the support of small investors, subscribing to the equity of the development company, together with small local companies that have cooperated in the construction of the vehicles. What is now required is for public investment to be made available for the establishment of the facilities that are needed to manufacture bigger vehicles on a much larger scale and to provide support for a worldwide sales programme.

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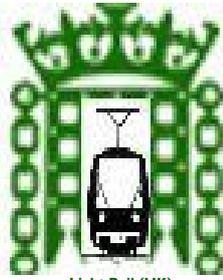
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The Stourbridge rail car is designed to form the centre-piece of a new industry, spreading worldwide this new ULR public transport system that has been developed by private initiative exclusively in the UK.

Another essential part of the system is a more economical new design of tramway track, based on a metal "Waybeam" that is being developed by the same West Midlands and associated workshops.

This not only reduces the cost of the rail track but also makes it possible to install the track quickly and neatly without any of the normal disturbance.

Re-engineering buses worldwide is long overdue. Rail-based vehicles have many other advantages over traditional buses. This is evidenced by the fact that cities all round the world have chosen to up-grade their main transport systems to rail when they can afford to do so.

Now that this up-grading is known to be essential for public health reasons, in order to save lives, a low-cost rail solution has become essential. A tram successor, based on the Stourbridge rail car, can provide the required solution.

Apart from the elimination of lethal particulates, the main advantages of a bus on rails as compared with heavy trams or rubber-tyred buses are:

- **Energy efficiency:** Vehicles running with steel wheels on steel rails use only about one third as much energy as the same sized vehicles running with rubber tyres on tarmac.
- **Durability:** Rail-based buses last for many more years than rubber tyred buses by running smoothly on steel rails.
- **Lower operating cost:** Maintenance of the rails is normally less costly than for tarmac roads.
- **Safety:** Buses on rails are safer and more acceptable than normal buses, especially when they operate in the pedestrianised areas that are becoming the norm in town and city centres.

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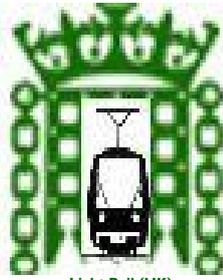
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- **Lower capital costs:** New lightweight ULR trams are less costly and more akin to traditional trams than the modern train-type trams. There used to be some 20,000 light trams operating in UK towns and cities whereas there are now only about 400 of the larger trams.
- **Lower installation costs:** The disruption caused by the conversion of buses to run on rails can be greatly reduced by continuing to manufacture bodies similar to the well-designed modern buses, but placing them on rail running gear. It is to be expected that in some cases just the bogie may be exported, to be used by existing bus manufacturers in the importing country.
- **Popularity:** The public have shown their preference for travelling on rail-based vehicles rather than buses in many countries where public transport use has risen sharply when rail-based vehicles have replaced old-fashioned buses.

Now is the time for the UK to grasp this opportunity for establishing a major new industry that has the potential to provide new employment and wealth from exports whilst at the same time saving lives and fighting climate change.

James Skinner
September 8 2018

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