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Finance Minister backs Light Rail

Treasury Minister Jesse Norman MP speaks
in Westminster Hall debate



Transport Debate, Westminster Hall 25 Nov 2020 **Light Rail (UK)**

All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group supported by Light Rail (UK), is encouraged by the support given to light rail by Jesse Norman MP, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, in a House of Commons debate in Westminster Hall on Wednesday 25th November 2020

<http://www.lrta.org/finance-minister-backs-light-rail/>

Question from James Grundy MP (Leigh Conservative), a member of the All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group, about connecting Leigh to Greater Manchester's Metrolink system.

“The final issue I should like to raise is that of connecting Leigh to Greater Manchester's Metrolink system. In the fullness of time, I would hope that the Leigh guided busway system could be upgraded into a light rail link.

Evidence provided to me by the Light Rail APPG shows that buses persuade between 4 and 6.5% of car users to switch to public transport. Light Rail by contrast persuades nearly 27% of car users to make the switch. If we are to meet our ambitious environmental targets, a new generation of hydrogen fuel powered light rail serving suburban communities will be critical, and we need to start undertaking feasibility studies as soon as possible.

For too long northern constituencies like Leigh have been left behind in terms of infrastructure investment. We have been talking about these issues for the better part of 60 years. It is time for the talking to stop. It is now time to deliver for towns like Leigh across the North.”

Mr Norman was replying to a question from Mr Grundy who hoped that, in the fullness of time, the Leigh guided busway system could be upgraded to a Public Transport Pathway including a light rail link. He cited evidence of the greater ability of light rail to persuade motorists out of their cars as well as the environmental gains from new technology such as hydrogen powered light rail.

Mr Norman replied that it was absolutely right to pick up light rail, which was inexpensive compared with heavy rail and could lead to a beautiful new industry for the UK to develop. He looked forward to hearing more about the proposal.

Jim Harkins, Chairman of the LRTA Campaigns Group, said “The Minister was very positive about light rail when he was at the Department for Transport and it is encouraging to hear the same sentiments now he is at the Treasury.”