

GNLRT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

18<sup>th</sup> March 2008

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, NET

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Four members of the public have written to the Committee since the last meeting. Copies of the letters from three of these correspondents can be found in the Appendices to this report.

CORRESPONDENT A (SEE APPENDIX A)

A lady has written complaining about the way that she has been treated by the Tram Operator after her Easyrider travel card was not accepted by the conductor's ticket machine and was then retained by the conductor. She claims that her card was valid and, despite numerous telephone calls, she has not received a satisfactory response from the Operator. She also claims that she has not been reimbursed for the additional costs that she has incurred whilst travelling without her pass, despite claiming to have sent her tickets to the Operator. This correspondent has sent two letters of complaint to the Committee, one on 21<sup>st</sup> January and one on 19<sup>th</sup> February.

The Tram Operator has responded to the complainant in two letters (copies also at Appendix A) apologising and stating that they have been unable to establish why the ticket machine did not accept the card. Although they were originally unable to locate the tickets she sent, these have now been traced and she was sent a full refund on 25<sup>th</sup> February.

CORRESPONDENT B (SEE APPENDIX B)

A 76 year old lady who has recently undergone a major operation and also fractured her hip and hand has written complaining about the treatment she received from tram staff when a tram she was travelling on to Phoenix Park was held up by another vehicle which had broken down at Cinderhill. All passengers were required to leave the tram at Basford Tramstop without being asked whether they had any means of reaching their destination and the complainant considers this to be unacceptable.

The Tram Operator has responded to the complainant (copy also at Appendix B) apologising for the poor level of service that she received and informing her that Control Room staff have been reminded to consider passenger needs when making decisions during disruptions. They admit that, in hindsight, the tram should have been allowed to continue to David Lane where other methods of public transport are available.

CORRESPONDENT C (SEE APPENDIX C)

A husband and wife who are both holders of County Concessionary Passes and are regular users of the tram have written to complain about the way they are made to feel by the conductor on those occasions when they use the tram before 9.30am, the qualifying time after which free travel is allowed. They consider that they are made to feel like second class citizens as a result of the conductor either not accepting payment and not issuing a ticket or alternatively having to issue a manual ticket which can be a long drawn out process at busy times.

The Tram Operator has responded to the complainants (copy also at Appendix C) by apologising that their experience of travelling on the tram has not always been a pleasant one and stating that all of their staff have been reminded of the importance of customer care.

The issue of not being able to issue an automated ticket has been raised with the ticket machine software company and it is hoped that a remedy will be found shortly.

CORRESPONDENT D

A gentleman has written to the Committee concerning an incident in which he was involved on the tram which required him to attend court as a witness. He has requested that the earnings he lost whilst appearing at court are reimbursed by the Tram Operator. The Operator has written back, having contacted the police about this matter and the correspondent has been asked to submit their claim to court. It is not considered appropriate to include copies of the correspondence in this report due to the nature of this matter.

The views of the Committee are sought on the views expressed by Correspondents A, B and C.

**Director, NET**

Lawrence House  
Talbot Street  
Nottingham NG1 5NT

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APPENDIX A

LETTER 1 FROM CORRESPONDENT A

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to complain about the way I have been treated by the people at NET. Whilst on a tram last Wednesday, a conductor with a faulty ticket machine/scanner, scanned my card and told me, and everyone else that was on the tram, that my card was "Hot Listed". He told me my card was confiscated and in order to continue my journey, I would have to pay. I assume hot listed means stolen (I wasn't told) Common sense should have told him to look at the photo, which is most definitely me! My card also had just been credited with 28 days, so I knew it was valid. I protested that his machine must be wrong, but he wouldn't check it on his colleagues machine who was standing 5 feet away! He said company policy is to accept the scanner's reading, whatever! If this had happened to a child, that didn't have the extra money (as I had) to pay the fare, they could be taken off the tram and left in dodgy area with no way of getting home. How can this be acceptable? Money obviously, is more important than customer care. I have complained to a manager at the Tram depot at Wilkinson Street, She was very

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unsympathetic and quite off-hand with me. She also stated company policy.

Machines are prone to errors, there must be a back up system in place or, the benefit of the doubt should be given, as it is on buses. Prop. it ~~is~~ should not come before customer care.

I am very disappointed, I have been humiliated. I have had my time wasted, running around trying to get information, I have had to pay £2.70 every day for bus + tram fares that I have already paid for on my buscard. (These fares must be reimbursed to me). I still haven't got my buscard back from Wilkinson Street depot, they promised me, I would have it by Friday, it's now Monday. I have been put through all of this, for being a loyal, customer, with a VALID card, through no mistake of mine. No one I have spoken to, or is prepared to try to stop this from happening again. Lets hope, it doesn't ever happen to them.

## APPENDIX A

### LETTER 2 FROM CORRESPONDENT A

Dear sir/madam,

I am writing to complain to you about the way I have been treated, by the management at the Net depot on Wilkinson street in Nottingham.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2008, having used my easyrider card all day on both buses and trams, in the evening after work I caught a tram outside the High school (which is where I work) I presented my card to the conductor (which was credited with 26 days of travel) he immediately announced to the everyone in earshot that I was using a "Hot Listed" card and he put it in his pocket. The conductor told me I would have to pay or leave the tram. I was extremely embarrassed and argued that his machine must be faulty. He asked me if I had reported it stolen, I said I hadn't as I was holding it, and it had my picture on the front. He told me it was company policy to take the machines reading as correct, regardless of what the customer may say. Luckily I had enough money to pay, but what if I hadn't?

I got off the tram in the market square and proceeded to the NCT Travel centre to see if they could help. The lady was very helpful, and checked on her computer to see if my card was "hot listed". she told me that there was nothing wrong with my card and issued me with a slip stating this fact. The lady advised me to phone Net when I got home.

All the troubles began when I contacted Net. Initially they told me that a faulty reading on the machine was to blame and my card was in fact O.K.

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with my bus card being credited.

I am totally fed up, I am out of pocket, I've been humiliated, virtually called a thief, they are trying to annoy me, by keeping me waiting, its cost me time, money in phone calls and stamps, this can not be right I can see why people drive to work. Please help me!!! with this, this is not the way to treat loyal customers. If by taking time to write this letter, it will save someone else from going through this, then it will have been time well spent.

Yours sincerely

A very upset customer !

PS.

I have complained to you already about the company's policy, this is a different matter and is about the way I have been treated and that I haven't been reimbursed.

**APPENDIX A**

**LETTER 1 FROM NOTTINGHAM TRAM CONSORTIUM TO CORRESPONDENT A**



NOTTINGHAM EXPRESS TRANSIT

21<sup>st</sup> January 2008

Dear

I am writing with reference to your telephone call of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2008 regarding your easy rider travel pass being taken off you during your journey on the tram on that day.

I can confirm the Duty Manager on duty that evening had spoken to the conductor and checked the ticket machine involved. The Control room and Operations Manager have investigated why the machine came up with the error message that the card was hot-listed but are unable to find an explanation as to why this happened. The Operations Manager had tried to ring you but had not been able to contact you.

I understand you felt publicly humiliated and are angry at having to pay for another ticket. I would like to apologise for the way you felt during this journey and enclose your easy rider travel pass with this letter. If you could send any tickets in that you had to pay for after the pass was taken from you to the address below, I will be happy to arrange a refund for you.

Yours Sincerely

Louise Sills  
NET Customer Services



NOTTINGHAM EXPRESS TRANSIT

19 February 2008

Dear

Further to your telephone conversation with the Operations Manager he has explained to you that no reason could be found for the problem you encountered in January.

You have informed us that following our letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> January you have sent in your tickets unfortunately we have not been able to locate these but as a gesture of goodwill I enclose 2 weekly tram pass vouchers for your use.

I am sorry this investigation as taken so long to try and resolve.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'S Hollick'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sue Hollick  
Customer Services



APPENDIX B

LETTER FROM CORRESPONDENT B

22nd, January 2008

Dear Sir,

I am writing to complain about the treatment I received at the hands of the Train Network at lunchtime to-day.

A train had broken down at Cisterhill, our train could not proceed so everyone was turned off our train at Basset, we were not asked if we were able to walk to Phoenix Park or if we knew how to get there.

I am 76 years old. I had a major operation at the end of August last year and since then I fell and fractured my hip and my hand. I was just returning from a visit to the hospital.

I think the treatment we received was outrageous. Your staff need lessons in how to care for their passengers with a disability.

**APPENDIX B**

**LETTER FROM NOTTINGHAM TRAM CONSORTIUM TO CORRESPONDENT B**



NOTTINGHAM EXPRESS TRANSIT

19 February 2008

Dear

Thank you for your letter regarding your journey on the 22 January 2008 which has been forwarded to us.

I have looked into your complaint and can inform you of the following.

When the Tram in front of you failed, some time was spent trying to ascertain if we could get the vehicle back in service, unfortunately this exercise took some time. When it was realised that we could not get the Tram moving again, we had to make a decision as to what we did with other Trams on the same route.

A decision was made to hold your Tram at Basford until the failed Tram could be moved.

I think that with hindsight your Tram should have been allowed to continue to David Lane because at David Lane there are other methods of public Transport available.

I apologise for the poor service you received on your journey and can inform you that our Control room staff have been reminded to consider passengers needs when making decisions during disruptions.

Once again I am sorry that your journey was not a pleasurable one and hope that in the future your journey matches your expectations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Harris', is written over a thin horizontal line.

Ray Harris  
Operations Manager

APPENDIX C

LETTER FROM CORRESPONDENTS C

GNLRT Advisory Committee  
c/o NET Project Office,  
Lawrence House,  
Talbot Street,  
Nottingham.  
NG1 5NT

Monday 4th February 2008

Concessionary Travel

Dear Sirs,

My Wife and I are both holders of County Concessionary Passes. We are regular users of the tram into Nottingham from Phoenix Park at all times of day and are grateful to travel free of charge.

We do however, use the tram two mornings a week (sometimes more) before the 9.30am deadline is past and wish to complain at the way in which on these occasions we are embarrassed and made to feel like second class citizens by the simple action of attempting to pay the due half-price fare.

Very often the conductor will wave our money away and pass us by without issuing a ticket. This then includes us within the large group of people who deliberately try, and often succeed in non payment and we do not like this. On the occasions when the conductor does go through the process of issuing a ticket, it results in such a long drawn out and unwelcome process, that it makes us feel guilty at giving him/her the obvious hassle at a time when the trams are full to bursting.

Why does it have to be like this? Surely it wouldn't take the brains of Einstein or be a logistical problem the size of mounting a military operation, to have the ticket machines programmed to issue a pre 9.30am £1.15 ticket for concessionary pass holders. If this were done NET would receive the proper revenue and passengers like us would be treated the same as all the others and not made to feel a nuisance.

We await your comments with interest.

APPENDIX C

LETTER FROM NOTTINGHAM TRAM CONSORTIUM TO CORRESPONDENTS C



NOTTINGHAM EXPRESS TRANSIT

19 February 2007



Dear

Thank you for your letter regarding your experience of travelling on the Nottingham Tram.

I am sorry that the experience has not always been a pleasurable one.

All our staff have been reminded of the importance of customer care and the effect that poor customer care has on both the image of Nottingham Tram and also the effect on passengers.

I understand you feel that the process of issuing a manual ticket makes leaves you feeling guilty about taking up the conductors time, the issue of not being able to issue an automated ticket has been raised with the software company and we hope to have a remedy for this shortly.

Once again I am sorry that your journey is sometimes not to your liking and hope that your future travel experience lives up to your expectations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Harris', is written over the typed name.

Ray Harris  
Operations Manager



APPENDIX B

LETTER FROM CORRESPONDENT B

22nd, January 2008

Dear Sir,

I am writing to complain about the treatment I received at the hands of the Train Network at lunchtime to-day.

A train had broken down at Cisterhill, our train could not proceed so everyone was turned off our train at Bostock, we were not asked if we were able to walk to Phoenix Park or if we knew how to get there.

I am 76 years old. I had a major operation at the end of August last year and since then I fell and fractured my hip and my hand. I was just returning from a visit to the hospital.

I think the treatment we received was outrageous. Your staff need lessons in how to care for their passengers with disabilities.