

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, NET

1. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 1.1. A member of the public has written to the tram operator and to the City Council following an accident that she had when cycling along the tramway. She has requested that more signing is provided to warn cyclists of the tram tracks and has also requested compensation. The correspondent has sent a copy of her letter to this Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee considers this report and advises on any actions it would wish to be considered.

3. DETAILS OF COMPLAINT

- 3.1. The Committee has been copied in to a letter addressed to the tram operator, Nottingham Tram Consortium (NTC), from a member of the public who suffered injuries following an accident when cycling along the tramway on the approach to Old Market Square Tramstop from Hockley (see Appendix A). The correspondent has also sent the same comments to the City Council's website.
- 3.2. Copies of photographs of the injuries sustained by the correspondent have been withheld from this report.
- 3.3. According to the correspondent's account of the accident, the wheels of her bike became stuck in the groove of the rail when she made a sudden manoeuvre to avoid a vehicle that stopped unexpectedly in front of her. She fell to the ground and suffered a broken nose, and grazing, bruising and swelling to her knees, elbows and hands. She has also suffered from pain to her neck since the accident.
- 3.4. The correspondent considers that there is insufficient signage to warn cyclists of the potential dangers of cycling along the tram route and is seeking compensation for the traumas that she has suffered.
- 3.5. The City Council has responded (Appendix B) by explaining that the tramway has been designed and constructed to precise regulations, standards and specifications and in consultation with statutory bodies, including Her Majesty's Railways Inspectorate and the Local Highway Authority. The layout of the highway, including the position of the rails and the use of signage all reflect these requirements and that, as a result, no compensation can be paid. A copy of the leaflet "Cyclists and Trams", which provides guidance when cycling in the vicinity of the tram tracks, has been sent. It has been pointed out that, whilst some warning signs for cyclists have been erected along the tram route, these are at locations where specific problems in negotiating the rails may be encountered, and that this accident does not appear to be directly related to the location at which it occurred.

3.6. The Council's Road Safety Section has confirmed that there have been no other cycle casualties reported at this location.

4. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

4.1. Photographs of injuries sustained by the correspondent.

5. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

5.1. Cyclists and Trams Leaflet – Nottingham City Council

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5.11.10

Neil Wood, General Manager
 Nottingham Tram Consortium
 NET Depot,
 Wilkinson Street,
 Nottingham, NG7 7NW

Dear Mr. Wood,

I have been trying to write this letter to you for the last 4 weeks, however my health has prevented me from doing so. On October 12th 2010 I cycled to Nottingham town centre from my home in Stapleford, following all the cycle routes I could to make my journey as safe as can be. I am relatively new to cycling, trying to improve my health and improve my carbon footprint. I am extremely cautious and therefore always find cycle paths and follow all warning signs displayed for cyclists.

At 5.15pm I was heading home and was cycling down from Hockley and was nearly at the Old Market Square Tram stop. There was a van a few meters in front of me moving towards the tram stop. The van suddenly stopped and I had to move around it. Whilst doing this maneuver, my wheels got stuck in the tram tracks. I tried really hard to stop myself falling but I couldn't do anything. I fell off my bike and went head/face first onto the floor. Many people, including two police officers standing in front of the Council Building, witnessed this.

Immediately my nose swelled quite dramatically and the police officers made a decision to call for an ambulance immediately. They all commented on how lucky I was to be alive and that it was all because of the helmet that I was wearing. (Which had to be replaced)

I was in a great deal of pain and was very traumatized. I was crying, shivering and shaking uncontrollably. After the paramedics assessed me on site, they decided to take me to A and E. Again, in the ambulance and at the hospital, 5 different medics told me that I was very lucky.

The outcome of the hospital visit was that I had to come back to the ENT

emergency clinic in a few days after the swelling had subsided on my nose. I had whiplash, in my neck, a very bad graze on the left knee, where the skin had completely come off and you could see the bone. My left arm/elbow was badly grazed and severely bruised. My wrists and palms of my hands were badly bruised too. The next week required complete bed rest and many painkillers. I also saw a chiropractor (privately) to help me realign all the movement that had taken place in my body.

My visit to the ENT Clinic on the following Monday, involved the doctors informing me that my nose was broken and then they tried to push it back into place using local anesthetic in my nose. This was unsuccessful. I now have an appointment with a consultant in December where he will assess what to do. I may have to now undergo an operation under general anesthetic.

The trauma of all this has really affected me. 4 years ago today I underwent a massive surgery to remove a brain tumour. Cycling and getting fitter has all been a part of my recovery. I have to be careful and safe.

I had no idea that the tramlines could be so dangerous to a cyclist. There are NO signs warning a cyclist of the potential dangers. Had there been signs, I would never have chosen that route. The police who helped me so kindly that evening, said that many people had had the same accident. Since my accident I have spoken to 6 people who have been involved in the same accident or who know of others who have.

I feel very strongly that you must look at this matter. This letter can only give you a gist of what I have been through, the trauma has been immense and is still ongoing. I have lost my confidence on my bike and am still in a great deal of pain in my neck, knees and the nose is still broken. I feel like my health has taken a real backward step, after I had worked so hard to get well.

I am writing to you in the hope and anticipation that you will put up signs to warn cyclists of the dangers of sharing the same route as the tram. I am also seeking compensation for the traumas that have been inflicted upon me due to lack of care and attention to the needs of cyclists by NET.

I look forward to hearing from you soon

Kindest Regards



NOTTINGHAM EXPRESS TRANSIT

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Dear

Cycle Accident, Old Market Square

I refer to your letter of 5th November 2010, addressed to Nottingham Tram Consortium and copied to the Greater Nottingham Light Rapid Transit Advisory Committee. I also acknowledge receipt of the complaint that you have made on the Nottingham City Council website. I am sorry to hear about the unfortunate accident that you had whilst cycling along the tram route in the Old Market Square and hope that you are beginning to make a full recovery from the injuries that you sustained.

The NET light rail system has been designed and constructed by Arrow Light Rail Limited, to precise regulations, standards and specifications, following close consultation with various statutory bodies, including Her Majesty's Railways Inspectorate and the local Highway Authority. The layout of the public highway, including the position of the rails on the road, and the use of signage all reflect these requirements and the enclosed leaflet explains in more detail what has been done to make the tram system as safe as possible for cyclists and provides guidance when cycling in the vicinity of the tracks. The design of the system was also undertaken in close consultation with the local cycle action group, Pedals.

At certain locations along the tramway, where it has been identified that cyclists may encounter specific problems in negotiating the rails, warning signs have been erected. From the description of your accident however, it would appear that the cause was not related to the location but could have occurred anywhere along the tramway if a vehicle stopped in front of you.

I do regret that you have suffered this accident. However I must reiterate that the system has been designed and constructed to the appropriate standards and unfortunately must inform you that NET is unable to compensate you for the losses you have incurred.

Your concerns will be reported to the next meeting of the GNLRT Advisory Committee, due to be held on 14th December, and I will let you know if any recommendations are made as a result of the discussions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.C. Holdstock', written over a horizontal line.

A.C. Holdstock
NET Project Office

Copies to: Nottingham Tram Consortium
Arrow Light Rail

Joint Promoters of Nottingham Express Transit

