

**THE CARRIAGE OF CYCLES ON TRAMS LEARNING FROM THE EDINBURGH EXPERIENCE**

**1. SUMMARY OF ISSUES**

- 1.1. From July 2015 Edinburgh Trams became the first UK tram system to allow cycles to be carried on regular services. This report considers the experience of Edinburgh and assesses if any lessons can be learnt.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1. It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes this report.

**3. EXPERIENCE FROM EDINBURGH**

- 3.1. Prior to opening, in May 2014, Edinburgh Trams, the most recent UK tram system to have entered passenger service, made a commitment to consider allowing bikes to be carried on trams. In May 2015, it was announced by the operator that an initial one-month trial would be carried out to assess the operational impact of carrying bicycles and this was then extended by a further month to allow further feedback from cyclists and passengers.
- 3.2. During the period of the trial, cyclists were allowed to take their bikes on the trams at any time on weekdays, except during peak hours (0730-0930 & 1600-1830), and all day on Saturdays and Sundays. Cyclists were required to use the centre section of the tram and to hold onto their bikes throughout their journey. A maximum of two bikes were allowed on each tram and on-board staff retained the discretion to prevent cyclists from boarding if a tram was deemed to be too busy.
- 3.3. The two month trial was considered to be a success, with little or no impact on daily operations and with, on average, 12 bikes per day being carried. On this basis, a permanent change was made to the Conditions of Carriage to allow bikes on trams from the beginning of July 2015. Cycles are not permitted during certain special events, including the Edinburgh Festival. A recent review has concluded that there have been no significant issues or incidents reported, resulting from the carriage of cycles, since the conditions were permanently changed.

#### **4. COMPARISONS BETWEEN EDINBURGH AND NOTTINGHAM**

- 4.1. It is initially important to recognise that Nottingham's tram system differs from that in Edinburgh in a number of respects, including the size and layout of the trams and the way in which the service operates.
- 4.2. The Nottingham tram, which is 32.7 metres long and 2.4 metres wide, is both shorter and narrower than that used in Edinburgh (42.8 metres by 2.65 metres). In addition, because the Edinburgh trams operate between the city centre and the airport, the internal layout allows more space for the accommodation of passengers' luggage.
- 4.3. In Nottingham, as there are no longer conductors, there is no equivalent of the Ticket Services Assistants, who are present on every tram in Edinburgh, and whose duties include the discretion to decline bicycle carriage if the tram is busy, to manage any conflicts with wheelchair users or passengers with prams or buggies, to ensure that no more than two cycles are carried on any tram, and to ensure that the time restrictions are adhered to.
- 4.4. Further to the above, Nottingham's trams tend to remain busy between the peaks on weekdays and for much of the day on Saturdays and it would therefore be difficult to identify times when there is sufficient space to carry cycles. It is also anticipated that the demand to carry bikes on trams in Nottingham would be much greater than in Edinburgh because of differences in the characteristics of the routes.
- 4.5. The NET Conditions of Carriage allow only folded bicycles to be carried on trams and, during the planning and implementation of both NET Line One and Phase Two, the focus has been upon providing effective and secure interchange facilities for cycles at tramstops and, wherever possible, the provision of signed cycle routes that run parallel to the tramway.
- 4.6. The Nottingham trams, whilst having level access throughout, have only two sections which are suitable for the accommodation of wheelchairs, pushchairs and priority seating. This is because the end and centre sections house the bogies, over which the seating is located, and the seats are therefore raised in these sections. As a consequence, bicycles, if permitted, would only be able to access the wheelchair, pushchair and priority seating sections and it is obviously essential that priority is given to these user groups. Given the restricted layout compared to Edinburgh, and the high level of usage by the disabled and by customers with pushchairs, it is inevitable that conflict would arise if cycles were permitted in these areas. The operator of NET has voiced concerns about how such conflict could be managed without a constant on-board staff presence, which is not considered to be an option.

- 4.7. It should be recognised that other UK tram operators have considered the carriage of cycles on their vehicles, all of which are wider than those used in Nottingham, and that this has been rejected due to issues such as lack of space, conflict with other passengers and the potential for injuries to be sustained from a falling bike, for which the operator would be liable.
- 4.8. Due to the differences between the Nottingham and Edinburgh tram systems that are outlined above, and taking account of the concerns highlighted by other tram operators, it is clear that there are significant issues that would need to be overcome and for which a solution has not been identified, before a trial to carry cycles on NET could be considered. As a consequence, there is currently no proposal to amend the Conditions of Carriage to allow unfolded cycles on board Nottingham's trams.

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