

# Light Rail set to benefit from university collaboration

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A light rail safety organisation and a university have proposed a partnership to drive sector innovation.

The Light Rail Safety and Standards Board (LRSSB) said its meeting with academics and researchers from the University of Huddersfield's Institute of Railway Research established a wealth of opportunities for future collaboration.

The meeting, and a series of workshops that followed, covered a broad spectrum of topics: from risk modelling and data analysis to research into vehicle and track dynamics and smart maintenance. It included the potential for working with both the LRSSB and the sector's representative body, UKTram.

Carl Williams, LRSSB chief executive, explained: "It's clear that there is a lot of overlap between the work of the IRR and the aim of the LRSSB to use innovative technology and authoritative research to enhance light rail safety.

"Initial meetings have provided us with a fascinating insight into the expertise offered by the university and, together with UKTram, we hope to establish closer links with the IRR over the coming months."

Dr Peter Hughes, principal research fellow at the IRR, says he was impressed with the work already done by the LRSSB on establishing updated sector-wide safety guidance and a risk management framework that includes a comprehensive Tram Accident and Incident Reporting (TAIR) database.

“The TAIR system for recording incident data, logging risk assessments, and providing intelligence to the industry is honestly one of the best systems I’ve seen for providing safety information to decision-makers,” he said.

“The agile approach being taken by both organisations provides very clear benefits to the UK’s light-rail industry, and we’re keen to collaborate with both LRSSB, and UKTram, in the areas of safety and risk management, engineering and innovation.”

His views were shared by the University’s Professor of Railway Systems, Dr Adam Bevan, who said the IRR could provide valuable input to future projects, drawing on its extensive experience of working with the wider rail sector.

Dr Bevan said: “The IRR has many years’ experience of working in the light-rail sector, supporting both regional and global light-rail systems through the provision of its rail engineering research and enterprise services.

“By working more closely with the LRSSB, UKTram, and their members, we are looking forward to supporting the delivery of its R&D and innovation portfolio to help address the current and future challenges in light-rail.”

Further meetings are now planned between the IRR, UKTram and LRSSB, with a view to establishing a formal working relationship on a broad range of projects that look set to benefit all three organisations, as well as the wider travelling public.

*Photo credit: Transport for Greater Manchester*