

Successful summit sees launch of far-reaching strategy

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A bold vision to help drive the expansion of light rail in the UK has been welcomed by sector leaders at a high-profile summit.

The unveiling of a new draft strategy document proved one of the highlights of the event in Edinburgh, organised by UKTram in partnership with the LRSSB.

Following months of consultations, 'A Light Rail Strategy for the UK' is now available [here](#) for wider comment from sector colleagues ahead of its submission to Government Ministers and the Department for Transport later this year.

James Hammett, UKTram Managing Director, explained: "With around 100 delegates taking part in the event last week, the summit provided the ideal platform to launch this landmark document.

"The strategy, which has already been widely welcomed by summit delegates, builds a compelling case for future investment in light rail and looks at ways to remove barriers to the expansion of existing systems and the building of new networks.

“Crucially, it highlights the many economic, environmental and social benefits of putting tramways and similar transit systems at the heart of future integrated urban transport networks.”

To support the launch of the far-reaching strategy, UKTram has also produced a new video which also received its premiere at the summit. Featuring examples of how tramways have provided a major boost for cities where they already operate, it also includes expert views on the wider benefits light rail can deliver and can be viewed [here](#).

The video also features the views of Alistair Gordon, CEO of Keolis UK, one of the keynote speakers at last week’s summit.

In a powerful presentation he provided an international perspective on light rail, highlighting how the UK failed to match its continental neighbours when it comes to investment. For example, of the 72 metropolitan regions in Europe with a population of over 1 million, only three do not have a light rail or equivalent metro. All of them are in the UK.

Further views were provided at the summit by Jonathan Bray, Director of the Urban Transport Group, who stressed the importance of building an ‘armoury’ of evidence to support the argument for light rail. He said this needed to be presented as part of a national debate on how our cities can be made better, rather than being considered as a local issue as it often is now.

The launch of the strategy, together with the presentations by two of the leading figures in the sector, provided the platform for a day of top-level debate on the future of the sector, alongside updates on the work of the LRSSB, UKTram and its working groups. All were introduced by George Lowder, Chair of UKTram and Chief Executive of Transport for Edinburgh.

Mr Hammett added: “The keynote speakers made a huge contribution to the success of the summit and the wider debate on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the sector, and we would like to thank them for their valuable insights.

“Thanks must also go to all those who attended the event at the Edinburgh Grosvenor Hotel and for helping to shape the debate on the future of light rail.”

Anyone who would like to comment on the Light Rail Strategy should email info@uktram.co.uk by Friday, October 8.

Photo credit: UKTram