

Frustration at major projects delay

Chairman calls for review process to be finessed.

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Responding to today's announcement by the Government that major transport schemes in development should be put on hold pending its plans, Chairman Cllr Ryk Downes said,

"Metro fully understands the Government's need to review the NGT trolleybus network and other transport projects as it re-explores measures in the current economic situation.

Frustrating

"However the potential delay is frustrating when, as the Department for Transport has accepted, NGT alone will help to create 4,000 new jobs and a £160m per annum boost for the City Region's economy.

"The review process needs to be finessed so that those projects where public and private sector funding has already been committed or, like the trolleybus, have been acknowledged by the DfT, can still be progressed."

Today's announcement did not mean all work on future projects would stop, added Cllr Downes, but it did mean that there would come a point when there would be a review of how much more progress could be made.

"Developing transport projects such as the trolleybus network is already a lengthy and complicated process so we hope that George Osborne will continue his long-standing vow to provide funding for NGT, and will support other key projects in the pipeline such as Castleford Interchange, new rail stations at Kirkstall and Moor and the new southern entrance at Leeds Station.

Legacy of underspending

"This would be an opportunity for the new Government to end a legacy of transport underspending in our region by ensuring the cuts are less severe in the poorer areas, where per capita spending on transport schemes has been much higher.

"In doing so he will be following the advice of the CBI and the British Chamber of Commerce which have stressed the importance investment in transport for ensuring the nation's economic recovery, and meeting the Government's own aims of putting an emphasis on more sustainable, low carbon transport."