

Nottingham City Council backs NET Phase Two

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NET Phase Two glided past another milestone today as Nottingham City Council voted in favour of applying for the powers to build and operate the tram extensions.

Nottinghamshire County Council voted to support the application on 22nd February. As joint Promoters for the scheme the City and County Councils will now apply to Government for a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) to obtain the legal powers to buy land, build and run NET Phase Two. The application is expected to be formally submitted in April.

Councillor John Taylor, Chair of the NET Development Board, said: "Today's vote brings us one step closer to the Nottingham of the future – a successful city with a good public transport system, low congestion and a clean environment.

Government funding for NET Phase Two has given us the opportunity to radically improve our transport infrastructure and the success of Line One has already shown how effective NET Phase Two will be.

In Nottingham we have one of the best public transport systems in the UK. Patronage has gone up 8% since 2000 whereas in most big cities it has actually fallen. But more investment is required to match investment in other European cities. Anyone with vision for the future recognises the need for not just one successful tram line but a network."

When the TWAO application is submitted in April it will be advertised publicly and stakeholders, including businesses and residents from along the routes, will receive a formal letter of notification. The public advertisements and letter of formal notification will explain the process for people to formally comment on the scheme. The process will be a period of six weeks starting from the date of the TWAO application submission.

For this six week period the TWAO application documents will be available to view at libraries and public offices along the NET Phase Two routes. The documents will also be available on the NET Phase Two website www.netphasetwo.com. These documents will contain details of how to formally comment on the scheme.

Should there be any objections the Secretary of State for Transport is expected to call a Public Inquiry in winter 2007. A Public Inquiry would determine independently if NET Phase Two is in the public interest for the people of Greater Nottingham and the East Midlands region. An independent inspector would listen to all interested parties over a period of several weeks. The findings and recommendations from the Public Inquiry would be reported to the Secretary of State for Transport, who would then confirm or reject the application for the TWAO.

Following a confirmed TWAO by the Secretary of State for Transport, there would be a competitive tendering process whereby private companies will bid for the work of building and running NET Phase Two. It could take a year to negotiate this commercial contract and get the final proposals agreed by Government. The new company – which would take over running NET Line One as well as building and running NET Phase Two – could start construction work in 2010 with trams running on the extended NET system in 2013.