

Activity 6 – Trackform Design

Problem identified : There is an on-going debate in the industry over the best trackform design and the effect on the highway. Different designs have been used on UK systems, and there is concern that these may have been over-engineered in order to meet unrealistic utility company requirements. The result has been to make trackform designs difficult and time-consuming to install and maintain, causing extensive track closures and significant service and traffic disruption.

There is also concern that the trackforms used in the UK may result in sub-optimal highway design, with potential impacts on insurances for all concerned with tramway development.

Scope of work : Review applications in the UK for both highway and segregated running. What has been used where and why?

Review practice in France, Germany, and the USA.

Establish best practice (ie: embedded rail or coated rail), and recommend a choice of 2 or 3 designs depending on the prevailing ground conditions, highway surface, topography, etc. Ensure that recommendations are consistent with the findings of Activity 1 re stray currents, etc.

Timescale : 9 months

Likely Benefits : Simplification of tender specs.

Improved material compatibility at the road/rail interface.

Marginal reduction in scheme costs.

Reduced operating and renewals costs.

UKT Board Rep : Harj Dhaliwal

Note – There may be an opportunity to link with EU research into trackform design for which funding bids are due in September 2005.