

CITY DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING AND STRATEGY

Willie Gallagher
tie ltd
65 Haymarket Terrace
EDINBURGH
EH12 5HD

Date 28 March 2008
Your ref
Our ref
DRL/SMH/PLGPRJ/FM

Dear Mr Gallagher

TRAMWAY PRIOR APPROVALS AND QUALITY CONTROL ISSUES

I have previously indicated my complete cooperation with programme delivery for the Tram project and I regularly monitor progress with the prior approvals element to ensure that there are no impediments to such delivery. It is in that context that I feel obliged to bring two issues to your attention. The first relates to the programme of submissions of prior approvals to us and the second relates to the quality of the submissions. Both require action by yourself.

Programme for Prior Approvals

It is extremely disappointing that TIE, as the Council's agent, have been unable to ensure that SDS have completed all the prior approvals prior to the bidding process, and that there still seems to be no effective control over the constantly-slipping timetable for PA submissions. This could create difficulties in the coming months where BBS have been forced to make assumptions in their bid which do not correlate with our own expectations.

The Planning service is giving priority to early completion of the Prior Approvals programme to allow the contract to be closed off, and will endeavour to minimise any delays within our part of the process. We have gone through the current programme in some detail and, as far as possible, have projected our likely resource needs. We now have an additional member of staff who is currently undergoing training in the prior approval process and familiarising himself with background and route of the project; and as additional back-up we are ready to deploy our established "troubleshooting" team if a particular peak occurs. On current projections we will require the extra member of staff until July, although given the continued programme slippage this will probably need to be extended.

Quality of Prior/...

ANDREW HOLMES
DIRECTOR

Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh, EH8 8BG



CEC01493318_0001

Quality of Prior Approval submissions

Our planning assumptions have always been based on the agreed protocol of informal pre-submission discussions, followed by a formal submission which addresses all the points raised at pre-submission stage, with only for minor adjustments after this stage. We have re-iterated this approach on several occasions in the past, particularly the need for submissions to conform to our policy background and to be of sufficient quality in themselves.

It is therefore of concern that the quality of so many submissions, despite a quality assurance checking system supposedly in place by TIE/SDS, remains very unsatisfactory, requiring extensive revisions or resubmissions as appropriate. The recent submission for Haymarket is typical, and we are sending detailed comments separately to SDS. Regrettably it is still the same issues – submissions being incomplete, inadequate in detail or specification, with little evidence of response to pre-application advice, lack of consistency between different drawings, failure to indicate other items of equipment to assess the cumulative effect, and general shortcomings – which we have drawn to the attention of SDS on many previous occasions.

These deficiencies and consequent resubmissions mean extra work both for ourselves and TIE / SDS, resulting in delays to the programme and increased pressure on Planning to make faster (and therefore less considered) decisions. We are also concerned at occasional acerbic remarks in recent correspondence attempting to divest blame onto the planning process. We are happy to work constructively with TIE / SDS / BBS, but we cannot take responsibility for delays which result from quality deficiencies in the prior approval submissions or from failure to meet projected target dates for submission or supply of further details.

Action required

My assessment is that we are reaching a point where we require urgent action from you to ensure that proper planning consideration of the prior approval details is possible. In particular, the following points need to be addressed and rigorously applied to all future submissions:

- the design must be fit for purpose and in line with agreed policies, demonstrating that the requirements of the Tram Design Manual, Edinburgh Standards for Streets and the requirements of the Capital Streets Design have all been taken into consideration. Any departures from policy must be agreed in advance.
- the initial approach should be through the agreed informal pre-consultation process, with plans submitted in advance of any meeting to enable us to review details, consult with specialist colleagues and ultimately provide more meaningful feedback.
- prior to formal submission the proposals must be subject to a meaningful Quality Check by TIE / SDS to ensure that it is now of adequate quality, it is complete and consistent, shows all the equipment at that location to set the context, and has incorporated Planning's required changes.
- the final submission should address all the points raised at the pre-consultation stage. Drawings must be consistent with each other and with parallel approval processes (eg structures and road technical approvals) and must be clearly marked with details, colours, finishes, junctions and specifications.
- where further deficiencies/...

- where further deficiencies are identified, the missing or amended information must be provided timeously so as not to interrupt the 8 week programme period. For comparison, a set of printed plans and disk will be required 2-3 working days before any further meeting to make a more thorough assessment, ensure technical compliance and reduce the chance of further submissions being required.

It will assist in meeting the timescales if SDS's designers prioritise a realistic workable solution, taking into account our comments. On a project of this size there are bound to be changes, and it is more sensible to aim for a complete set of approvals which set a quality baseline as soon as possible. This can be revisited as circumstances change. We will be in a better position to deal with subsequent adjustments and amendments timeously and expeditiously if we are not still enmeshed in a legacy of resolving protracted first stage approvals.

Generic solutions can be useful for standard details such as kerbing, OLE equipment, lighting columns and signals and cabinets etc, for easy reference and consistency.

I hope that this clearly alerts you to my concerns and that we can achieve a speedy resolution. I am on leave for the next two weeks and would appreciate if, during that period, contact could be made with Stephen Hajducki on [REDACTED] or e-mail stephen.hajducki@edinburgh.gov.uk to progress these issues.

Yours sincerely

David R Leslie
Development Management Manager

Copy: Director of City Development
Head of Planning and Strategy