

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE ON PROGRESS OF MEETINGS RELATED TO TRAM DECISION MAKING

- 1 Following meetings with W Gallagher and M Crosse of TIE on 12th and 19th February respectively, meetings were held with the following to further explore the decision making process and perceptions about hold ups and pinch points to the tram design:

Andrew Holmes	Director of City Development and Tram Promoter
Duncan Fraser	Tram Co-ordination Manager
Ian Spence	Development and Design Co-ordinator
David Cooper	Planning Co-ordinator
Riccardo Marini	City Design Leader

- 2 The overall impression was very similar to that given by TIE at the earlier meetings – there is a willingness to engage in the process and complete the outstanding tasks to the programme. There was also a strong expression of progress having been made within the Council over the last few weeks/two months. This was presented positively and it was clear that working relationships between groups within the Council and between Council officials and TIE have improved and all reflected that.
- 3 There were, however a number of areas where those interviewed felt there was a need for improvement. Some of these do come down to personal relationships and the working frustrations that result when communications are failing.

Role and performance of senior officials. There are some frustrations at the senior manager level that communication upwards to directors and chief executives is not working properly. As indicated above, the impression is that working groups are making appropriate decisions and working to resolve outstanding issues. However, the message also came across that directors can overturn working group decisions on an apparent whim without full information. Frustrations in City Development over access to the director and the limited time he can spare for project briefing also emerged quite strongly. Similar problems are present in LRT it was suggested.

'Inside/outside the tent' problems. Equally it is clear that there are some Council officials treated with a degree of caution if not suspicion by their colleagues in the design process. The 'charette' process in particular appears to have engendered this view. As explained, the process might have been intended to diffuse tensions and to provide broad structures to enable a solution but this does not appear to have been the initial result. The linking of that process to both Sir Terry

Farrell and, in Trevor Davies, an important Council member seems to have created a group which is 'outside the tent' and needs to be brought in as quickly as possible. That said, a positive message was also given on the role of the charettes and how the design process was being assisted. The central point of how strategic players like key politicians can be brought to sign up for the emergent solutions remains. This is obviously about the role of the **urban design dimension**. The need for acceptance of urban design around the tram corridor came up a number of times. The impression was of a constituency which felt disregarded and misunderstood. This might be a completely incorrect perception but if true it would have the potential to disrupt the tram planning process.

Governance and consultation structures. Related to the last point – there appear to be parallel working and governance structures in play. The overall planning structure starting with the Tram Project Board through Design Procurement and Delivery to working teams/groups has been explained. However, other working units and structures were raised by the interviewees – the Tram Prior Approvals structure in City Development, the Design Approval Panel, a number of 'Planning Summits' and the Tram Design Working Group. Within the Council a high level meeting involving the CE, Directors of Corporate Services and City Development with the CE of TIE and LRT (and possibly others) also exists or has recently been reactivated. Servicing these groups and ensuring exchange of information between and through these groups must be major problem. Going back to a point above, it was asked 'who represents and speaks for city design in the Tram Project Board'?

Technical issues. Following the briefing from TIE officials at the outset, the views of the interviewees on outstanding/emerging technical issues were sought. In no particular order the views offered were that:

- there is a continuing issue/concern about the development of the tram corridor and the need for a coherent approach to urban design around that corridor;
- progress has been made in agreeing a design for Picardy Place which will satisfy all the players but we need to sign it off now;
- there are hold-ups on the tram prior approvals (letter of 14.2.07 from TIE to Head of Planning refers) which should be progressed. This would appear to be directly related to the level of design in the submissions and how that can be boosted by SDS and their design capability;
- parts of the planning process encourage major rework e.g. designers working on the bridge structure at South Gyle which is then when presented in detailed form unacceptable to CEC officials. The need for better communication/integration of work teams throughout the process was highlighted;
- the foot of Leith Walk was identified as *the* interchange in the entire plan. Progress has been made and despite concerns

about LRT's design demands a solution is being agreed at working level. The concern is that that decision is ratified at the higher levels in LRT; and

- similarly, the depot design seems capable of resolution but was raised as key and in need of wider debate leading to agreement.

Conclusions

4 The following conclusions are based on very limited information at this stage. However there was consistency in the responses from those interviewed and those responses point to:

- at the highest level, the need to engage with the key players - including directors, chief executives or Council members – and ensure that they are aware of the vision that the tram is being constructed to;
- pressure to progress the prior approvals process and that means a higher design content from within TIE and that will have budgetary implications;
- the need to 'sign off' decisions which those interviewed said are nearing agreement on for instance, Leith Walk, Edinburgh Park bridge structure and the depot design;
- the need to address upfront the role of urban design and the contribution the designers are making. There was a suggestion that TIE and the Council should consider appointing a Design Director; and
- the necessity of reviewing the consultation/working structures operating in the three main agencies of TIE, CEC and LRT to ensure appropriate communication particularly on the key result areas.

Brian Farrell

bw/tiedec 6.3.07