

MEETING WITH PETER MINERS ON THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER 2014 IN SG  
RURAL PAYMENTS OFFICES IN ELGIN

I met with Peter (Pete) Miners of [REDACTED] Elgin. He has a degree in geology and an MSc in Transport Engineering and Planning. He has worked in Transport Engineering since 1988, although he has not been working in that area for the past four and a half years. He specialised in traffic signals and installations.

In summary, his main concerns related to whether the work carried out on Leith Walk represented best value for money, and added value to the existing road layout. The modal transfer information at that time did not indicate that large numbers of passengers would stop using cars and start using the tram. Also, the considerable cost of works on Leith Walk, the lack of communication between the various firms working on the project and the apparent lack of testing carried out on junctions gave him cause for concern.

He did present as very stressed, and had some difficulty in remembering who worked on the project, and in what capacity. He also had difficulty in remembering what happened during his time on the project, and in what order. His concerns about the layout of the junctions applied both to the Edinburgh tram project and the Mersey one. This might indicate that his concerns are really about working practices in Parsons Brinckerhoff, rather than with the trams project itself. He struck me as still being very unhappy about the circumstances of his departure from the firm.

He worked with Parsons Brinckerhoff from March 2005 to August 2006, mainly on the Mersey Tram Project, but also on the Edinburgh tram project for two months from June to August 2006. There were about 20 or so Parsons Brinckerhoff staff located in Edinburgh and a few staff (including Mr Miners) based in Manchester. Mr Miners visited Edinburgh once or twice, he could not now remember exactly how many times.

There were about four junctions about which he had concerns, all of which were on Leith Walk. He could now only recall one of them, Iona Street and Pilrig Street. His concerns arose out of the width of Leith Walk and the length of time it took to move traffic through the junctions. Under the new signalling proposals, each of the junctions gained at least an extra stage to the traffic light signalling system, and the Iona Street junction gained an extra two stages. Instead of all vehicles moving through a junction together on a green light, there was now either a separate left or right hand turn to be factored in, or in the case of the Iona Street junction, both. Mr Miners considered this to be a waste of time and a downgrading of the existing signalling service. At least one of the junctions, there would be five stages of traffic movement with spaces of several seconds in between each one, known as "intergreens," which added 45 seconds to the process.

Mr Miners raised the perceived problem with his line managers. They were Martin Ellis (he doesn't appear on the TIE/SDS contact list but this may be because he was based in Manchester), Martin Lax (he left the tram project at an early stage to go to work on something else) and also Firas Bakir, who was also a traffic signalling engineer. He had no idea who the overall project managers were and how he could contact them, so he voiced his concerns to his managers. He cannot recall seeing a hierarchical structure plan of the tram works project. He thinks that the Deputy Project

Manager might have been Jason Chandler who is on the TIE/SDS contact list under "Design Management and Reviews." In addition, there was a Malcolm Bissett, who worked for Halcrow in Highways Design. He thought that Halcrow worked to Parsons Brinckerhoff on the project.

Steer Davies Gleave (SDG)/Buchanan were doing traffic modelling on the project in 2006. Mr Miners would have expected them to be carrying out transit and junction signalling tests as they were going along (It would appear that some tests were being carried out by a firm called TPI world as they are copied into an e-mail from Mr Miners to Firas Bakir and Martin Ellis on 13 July 2006, which he had forgotten about). In any event, these tests had been conducted by January 2010, the date of the publication of the SDG/Buchanan modelling report. Mr Miners quoted extensively from this report at our meeting, but he did not copy this to me.

At the time he was involved in the project, Mr Miners wanted to know what figures were being used for the traffic modelling exercise, and where these came from. Mr Miners claims that his colleague Firas Bakir had noted that junctions had been designed without operational assessments being carried out. The tests he would have expected to have been carried out were called Linsig and Transyt tests. Mr Miners would have anticipated that these tests would be carried out while the junction was being designed. He accepts that these tests may have been carried out but nobody was providing him with reassurance on that point. Mr Miners did not think that Parsons Brinckerhoff were giving him adequate instructions to enable him to carry out the work he was asked to do, and he lost confidence in the chain of command above him. Nobody above Martin Ellis's grade asked to see him to listen to his concerns after he reported the problems he foresaw at the junctions.

We discussed some of the correspondence he had sent on to the Inquiry, including an e-mail he sent to Firas Bakir on 21 June 2006. In this he mentions his concerns about the extra seconds wasted at junctions through having the added stages for different traffic lanes. He also mentions modal transfers, and the fact that SDG/Buchanan assumed this would be from bus to tram rather than car to tram. This would mean that the transportation of people down Princes Street would move from one form of public transport to another, rather than from private vehicles to public transport. He also mentions potential difficulties with right hand turns on the junctions on Leith Walk, and the potential build-up of traffic at junctions where there were added stages. He thought this might lead to cars jumping the lights at these junctions due to impatience with the new light sequences. He concluded that if several hundred million pounds were to be spent on a new form of transport on Leith Walk, it should add value, not create delays and problems which were not already there.

Mr Miners had a telephone conversation with Malcolm Bissett of Halcrow on or about 2 July 2006. He cannot now remember exactly what was said and by who (he provided a note of the conversation) but he thinks that Malcolm Bissett had said he had tried to get the point about modal transfers and capacity across to Parsons Brinckerhoff, but had not got anywhere. He did not know what figures the traffic modelling team were using and what information they were based on.

I discussed another e-mail he had sent me concerning his colleague Firas Bakir's unhappiness that he was speaking to City of Edinburgh Council staff directly. Mr

Miners had been in e-mail contact on 20 July 2006 with Alastair Malcolm of City of Edinburgh Council about timings of pedestrian clearance at junctions, and had copied Mr Bakir into his e-mail correspondence. Firas Bakir stated that CEC had made their position regarding the junction design clear and it was up to him to get on and do what he was asked to.

Finally, Mr Miners referred to a list of points he wanted to make, including whether a particular traffic advice note had been followed, and whether Transport Scotland had carried out the necessary checks and balances on the project.

The meeting lasted two and a half hours.

JANE FERRIER  
17 October 2014