

EDINBURGH TRAM (LINE ONE) BILL COMMITTEE

Tuesday 27 September 2005

Session 2

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EDINBURGH TRAM (LINE ONE) BILL COMMITTEE 14th Meeting 2005, Session 2

CONVENER

*Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab)

*Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO ATTENDED:

Iain Gaul
Mrs Odell Milne
Frazor Murphy
Graham Scrimgeour
Malcolm Thomson QC (Counsel for the Promoter)
Richard Vanhagen
Kristina Woolnough

THE FOLLOWING GAVE EVIDENCE:

Mark Bain (Transport Initiatives Edinburgh Ltd)
Dr Mark Bastin
Alison Bourne
Les Buckman (Steer Davies Gleave)
Vince Casey
Dr Dermot Gorman (Lothian NHS Board)
Aileen Grant (City of Edinburgh Council)
Scott McIntosh (Mott MacDonald)
Chris Nicol (Capital City Partnership)
Alan Penman (Lothian NHS Board)
Karen Raymond (Environmental Resources Management)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Jane Sutherland

LOCATION

Committee Room 1

Scottish Parliament

Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill Committee

Tuesday 27 September 2005

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:31*]

Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill: Consideration Stage

The Convener (Jackie Baillie): Good morning everybody and welcome to the 14th meeting this year of the Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill Committee. I apologise for the slight delay in starting, but I am sure that we will make up time as we go along.

The first item on our agenda is consideration of witness lists and summaries for groups 48 to 50. Annex A of paper ED1/S2/05/14/1 provides members with the witness lists and summaries for those groups. As members will recall, we agreed at the meeting on 13 September that the joint objectors to the proposed amendment at Haymarket may give oral evidence on 1 and 2 November and that they should submit their witness lists and summaries by 21 September. I thank all who have contributed written evidence. I know that it will make the work of objectors and promoters during oral evidence taking much more focused and, I hope, less time consuming.

Members will note that no witness list or summary has been received from Haymarket Yards Ltd. Therefore, I invite members to agree that we will treat Haymarket Yards as resting on its original objection and not providing any further evidence. Are members so agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: Do members agree the witness lists and summaries in annex A?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: The next step is for the witnesses to provide their witness statements by 12 October; any rebuttal witness statements must be provided by 26 October.

We move on to agenda item 2, which is oral evidence from groups 12, 33, 36, 43, 45 and 47.

Consideration stage is about the committee considering the bill's detail. Our job is to consider the arguments of both the promoter and the objectors and, ultimately, to decide between competing claims. All parties attending today will be aware of the procedures for giving evidence, so I do not intend to reiterate them. However, the

committee appreciates brevity in both questions and answers.

Members will recall that the committee agreed at its previous meeting that it did not wish to take further evidence on the issue of planning. Having considered the witnesses who are before us, I seek members' views on whether we have sufficient evidence on the issue of whether the Roseburn railway corridor is designated as a transport corridor, an urban wildlife corridor or a linear park. I propose to take no further evidence on those issues from either promoter or objector witnesses. By way of explanation, whether the Roseburn corridor is designated as a transport corridor, an urban wildlife corridor or linear park, any such designation will be superseded by the bill should it become an act.

I acknowledge that the corridor's previous planning history may provide background to the arguments that the promoter and objectors have presented on the current impact of the proposed and alternative alignments. As I have said, we have comprehensive written evidence from the promoter and objectors on the issue and the committee will consider all of that evidence. I am content that the evidence that we have on that particular aspect is sufficient at this stage. Do members agree?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: In that case, I see no reason to hear evidence from Ms Grant today on the reserved passenger transport corridor. I propose to call her to speak only to her rebuttal witness statement to group 35, on overhead line equipment, bridges and viaducts. Do members agree with that approach?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: On another matter, members will be aware of the recent publicity surrounding the cost of the tram projects and whether line 1 will be a loop. I am sure that members will agree that the committee will want to comment on any uncertainty about costs and on whether there will be a loop later on during this stage.

On costs, members received a copy of a letter from Transport Initiatives Edinburgh Ltd last week, which confirmed that the capital cost for the Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill remains at £274.15 million. That figure is the same figure that appears in the September 2004 updated preliminary financial case and in our preliminary stage report. Members will be aware that we have requested further information and updates on the funding and patronage case for the Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill. In addition, through the clerk I have requested monthly updates on the costs of the tram project and will circulate those updates to members to keep them informed. The committee

will, of course, continue to monitor the costs of the tram project and I expect that we will return to the issue in more detail later in the year.

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): I would like to pick up on an issue. As a result of inflation, prices have increased to the extent that people have questioned whether, in the light of its contribution, the Scottish Executive is committed to raising the amount of money that must be raised for the schemes. It seems to me that, as a result of inflation, the Scottish Executive has provided sufficient money for only one line.

A report that TIE passed to us says that if the Parliament agrees to tramline 1 and tramline 2, TIE will determine which sections of each line will be provided. If the committee makes a judgment on tramline 1 and the circular route and people start to cut bits out of that route somewhere along the line, we may have made a false judgment. There could be a major impact on individuals who live along the route as a result of land being sterilised, and whether people want to sell their homes could be affected by effective planning consent being given on the route. I simply make the point that TIE must further justify the costs as we proceed. Perhaps the Scottish Executive should comment on the level of its contribution, and TIE must be open about the possibility of taking sections of the tramline 1 route or the tramline 2 route out of the equation prior to Parliament giving its consent.

Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab): We must proceed with the process on the basis of the information and the facts that are before us. The situation is not ideal, but that is the reality. We have information from TIE and the objectors and we must take a balanced view that is based on that information. I am afraid that we cannot hypothesise in the meantime on what might or might not be.

Phil Gallie: May I respond?

The Convener: Just a second.

Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): It is important for the public to understand that any development leads to disruption of homes, businesses, routes and so on. We take seriously the question of how development will affect people, but we are aware that issues such as compensation are dealt with after the decisions are made. The people who arbitrate on compensation deal with the actual effect on people, rather than the potential effect.

The Convener: I will draw this matter to a conclusion. I am conscious that we have received confirmation that the capital costs remain the same as indicated in the preliminary financial case, which we considered at preliminary stage. I am also confident that with the in-built Treasury

optimism bias of 24 per cent—which gives a margin of £60 million for additional costs—the costs can be absorbed. I take the point that it would be nice if the Executive chose to index link the funding that it will commit. I say to Phil Gallie and other members that TIE and the Executive will be back at a future meeting to discuss finance, so we will return to the issue.

Finally, on planning blight, section 38 allows for the powers that the promoter will acquire to last for only five years, so while there will be blight during that time, it will not be never-ending. Equally, the bill deals with compensation for planning blight. On that basis, I hope that members will agree that, having aired the issue and recognised that there will be considerable work to do in future, we will return to the matter when we consider all the financial information at the end of the process. Is that agreed?

Phil Gallie: In response to Helen Eadie, I make the point that we are not working with hypotheses, because we are working with a TIE document that states clearly at paragraph 3.1.3 that insufficient funds may be available to provide both tramlines as they stand. That raises the question of the contributions of City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Executive. During the course of our deliberations, TIE should come back to state clearly which sections it would prefer to remove in the event that the SE and CEC cannot clarify the situation. Those are not my words, Helen, they are the words of TIE in its report.

The Convener: Let us not have a big debate about this. Equally, I could say that I can find other passages in TIE's progress report that say something different. For example, paragraph 7.3.2 states that the objective between now and the delivery of the final business case in November 2006 is

“to construct over time the totality of Line 1 and Line 2 as and when the sources of funding become available.”

That remains the promoter's objective. We will return to scrutinising whether it is able to achieve it at a later stage. I thought that it would be helpful to put that on the record.

Helen Eadie: That is helpful, convener.

The Convener: Dearie me; managing this lot is impossible.

On the press coverage on whether the loop will indeed be a loop, the bill as proposed would give the promoter the power to construct and operate a loop, either in whole or in part. As it stands, the bill does not propose any timescales over which parts of the loop are to be constructed, although there will be limits within the bill. As I mentioned before, section 38 limits exercise of the powers of acquisition to five years from when the bill

becomes an act. That said, it is extremely unhelpful to all concerned to have officials or senior sources at TIE commenting on the costs and the tram route. I am sure that members agree that any announcements about the costing of the line 1 project or its route should properly be made to the committee, rather than in the press. I hope that those who are present today pass on our comments to the promoter and its officials. We expect the promoter to control its officials, and we will take an extremely dim view of matters if the practice continues.

Finally, people will be pleased to hear that we have received legal advice that it is not necessary for witnesses to take the oath or affirmation at every single meeting. Having taken the oath or affirmation once, witnesses should consider themselves under oath in giving all subsequent evidence to the committee during its consideration of the bill. That will avoid us popping up and down all the time.

We move to consideration of evidence in respect of groups 12, 33, 34, 35, 36, 43, 45 and 47.

At the end of last week's committee meeting, as everyone might recall, we stopped halfway through the cross-examination of Karen Raymond on the issue of route selection. Before we commence our oral evidence taking today, I remind Karen Raymond, Les Buckman, Mark Bain and Aileen Grant that they are under oath or affirmation.

We now return to Karen Raymond, who will address the environmental inputs to route appraisal, which are covered in the first part of Ms Raymond's witness statement. The remainder of her witness statement, on visual and amenity impacts and on the loss-of-vegetation impacts, will be addressed later today. We restart today with group 35. I call Mr Vanhagen.

10:45

Richard Vanhagen: Ms Raymond, you mentioned that the Murrayfield Road/Ravelston Dykes option was your least preferred option during link sifting. At the same time, you are saying that the Roseburn wildlife corridor is the most preferred option. Will you explain how that divergence of opinion came about?

Karen Raymond (Environmental Resources Management): I can comment on the environmental impact of both options.

Neither the Murrayfield Road/Ravelston Dykes option nor the Roseburn corridor would have been a preferred option solely on environmental grounds. In my previous evidence, I made it clear that, on purely environmental grounds, an on-street solution would have been the preferred

option. However, when the full balance of the considerations that were addressed across our team was taken into account, other very strong reasons for selecting the Roseburn corridor emerged. I am referring to patronage, run times and so on.

Richard Vanhagen: Did you consider the Murrayfield Road, Ravelston Dykes and Craighleith Crescent option as part of your sifting? You talk about 25 siftings, but I do not know whether the route down to the Craighleith retail park was included.

Karen Raymond: We considered an alternative that continued along the A8 from Roseburn, went westward up Murrayfield Road, round Ravelston Dykes to the junction with Queensferry Road and crossed and ran through Drylaw back up to the Telford Road area. It is a very long route that runs through areas that are quite heavily residential. Also, in the section around Ravelston—along the side of the Edinburgh green belt—it runs through areas of open land where a tram route would be less appropriate than it would be on other routes.

Richard Vanhagen: I am thinking of the 38 bus route and the fact that that existing on-road route could have been used to link the Western general hospital and the retail park; it would then have come across to Haymarket via Murrayfield Road. Your intention was to come back on the Glasgow Road. Did you consider that option? It is already there as a viable routing.

Karen Raymond: I cannot comment on the details of the 38 bus route, although I used to use it in years gone by. I believe that the bus route comes back along Ravelston Dykes to the bottom of Queensferry Terrace

Richard Vanhagen: Yes.

Karen Raymond: No, we did not consider a link that came back along Ravelston Dykes.

Richard Vanhagen: Obviously, we are told that the tram will affect the half-mile area that surrounds the Roseburn corridor. A tram stop is proposed for Ravelston Dykes, which is obviously within half a mile of Murrayfield Road. In our opinion, we are talking about the same—

The Convener: Mr Vanhagen, you need to ask a question.

Richard Vanhagen: I am sorry. Ms Raymond, do you agree that we are talking about one and the same area or district? You have indicated that, for different reasons, one of them is the least preferred and the other is the most preferred, but basically we are talking about the same built-up area, the same landscape heritage—if that is the right phrase to use—and so on.

Karen Raymond: I am not sure how to answer that question. The on-street options on Murrayfield

Road and the on-street solutions to the east of the Roseburn corridor clearly both run through partly residential streets. The Roseburn corridor is of a different nature to either of those. The Murrayfield Road route also runs through suburban open space in the Ravelston area, which is not the case with the other on-street solutions.

Richard Vanhagen: Did you do no more than note the potential for noise impact along the Roseburn corridor, or did you consider the 136 individuals on that mile of route who raised objections to the proposal? Did you do more than note the impact on the residents? Did you investigate further the objections that were lodged?

Karen Raymond: When the options appraisal was conducted, we took into account the potential for noise impact along the Roseburn corridor in comparison with that along the alternative routes. The promoter will have taken into account the comments that were made in response to the Craighleith options report in reaching its conclusions.

Richard Vanhagen: So you did not scan the 136 objections to establish the proximity of those individuals to the corridor.

Karen Raymond: Those objections had not been lodged when the options appraisal was carried out.

Richard Vanhagen: Have you examined the list of residents who are adversely affected in the Roseburn corridor?

The Convener: Mr Vanhagen, I am allowing you a huge degree of latitude, given that none of the points that you raise is in your rebuttal witness statement. I would be grateful if you either came to a point or stuck to the content of your rebuttal witness statement.

Richard Vanhagen: I am trying to make the point that people on the Roseburn corridor are adversely affected. I wondered whether Karen Raymond had done more than note the consequences of the tramline for the area.

Is it appropriate for an environmental study to consider lower capital and operating costs and faster and more reliable run times as justifying the utilisation of the Roseburn corridor?

Karen Raymond: Consideration of those issues was not part of the environmental appraisal. The environmental appraisal was one element of the overall consideration of the options. The other matters were addressed by other members of the team.

Richard Vanhagen: That is reassuring. I was surprised that the environmental study did not come out in favour of the line being on-road rather than off-road.

The Convener: Mr Vanhagen, please ask a question.

Richard Vanhagen: Okay. This is my final question.

Ms Raymond, I note that you are talking about a cycleway and walkway of 3m or less because of the narrowness of the route. I do not know whether you are a walker and whether you have been passed by a cyclist at speed in a confined space, but how would you feel about being passed from behind by a tram that is travelling at 50mph?

The Convener: I have to say that that is one of the longest questions that I have heard. Personal comment is not called for. Ms Raymond is here as a witness because of her expertise rather than because she cares whether a tram is passing her by. However, if you have a question, by all means ask it.

Richard Vanhagen: That was my question.

The Convener: I am excluding personal comment.

Richard Vanhagen: I have been startled by cyclists passing, and I was asking whether we can expect the people who are using the Roseburn corridor to find it comfortable to have a tram passing at such close proximity. That is the question.

Karen Raymond: I am not sure what bearing it has on route selection, as such, although I have been startled by a cyclist coming past me on the Roseburn corridor.

Richard Vanhagen: As an individual, I just felt that, for people who are using the corridor, 50mph is—

The Convener: Is there a question in that, Mr Vanhagen?

Richard Vanhagen: That is all. Thank you very much. You have been very patient with me.

The Convener: You will get the opportunity later on, when it is your turn, to make statements. At present, you are not under oath, so we shall discount any statements that you make now. Questions are the order of the day.

I invite Mrs Milne to ask questions on group 43.

Mrs Odell Milne: Would your assessment of the environmental impact on the Roseburn corridor, between the hotel at Craighleith and Roseburn, have been any different if you had known that that stretch of the corridor is not set aside for trams in the local plan?

Karen Raymond: No. That did not feature in our assessment of the environmental concerns.

Mrs Milne: Do you mean that your assessment would not have been different, or that it did not feature because you did not know?

Karen Raymond: We knew, but it was not a consideration that was taken into account in the environmental appraisal of the route options, so our appraisal would not have been different.

Mrs Milne: Was the impact of construction, as well as of operation, assessed environmentally for all options, including the Roseburn corridor?

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Mrs Milne: Did you say at the committee meeting on 13 September that, where a route that avoided environmental impact on a wildlife corridor existed, that route should not be selected unless there were overriding technical reasons to use it?

Karen Raymond: I cannot recollect exactly what I said on 13 September.

Mrs Milne: Do you want me to provide the quotation?

Karen Raymond: If there were no other reasons for selecting the route, I would argue that the route that was best in environmental terms should be selected.

Mrs Milne: Do you consider it acceptable to ignore environmental impact and to make a decision on route on totally economic grounds?

Karen Raymond: No, I do not think that that is acceptable, but in this case environmental impact was not ignored; it was fully taken into account.

Mrs Milne: Did not you say in pages 5 and 6 of your statement that the environmental difference between options was not considered sufficient to outweigh technical and cost arguments?

Karen Raymond: That was the case at the stage of the loop options appraisal, when we were examining the environmental impacts over all loops within the city centre.

Mrs Milne: Mr Bain has stated that any of the options could be made to fulfil engineering criteria, and it has also been revealed that there had been no cost estimates for the stretch between the hotel and Roseburn. On that basis, how could it be said that the environmental impact did not outweigh unknown costs and technical engineering problems that had not been considered insurmountable?

Karen Raymond: At each stage of the options appraisal, other members of the team were responsible for providing cost estimates either for the whole route or for the sections of the route that were being examined, so I do not believe that at any stage cost information was not available.

Mrs Milne: At last week's meeting, it was admitted that there were no costings for the stretch between the hotel and Roseburn.

Karen Raymond: I do not believe that that is the case, but I am not the person who can answer questions on costings. I can comment on the costings that were made in relation to environmental mitigation, where we were satisfied that adequate provision had been made. We have since, based on the landscape and habitat management plan, confirmed that adequate provision was made for environmental mitigation costs along the Roseburn corridor.

Mrs Milne: On page 4 of your statement, at line 17, you state that the noise and visual impacts on properties along the route from Queensferry Road, and those along the Roseburn corridor, were "broadly similar". Do not you think that that ignores the fact that the route along Queensferry Road passes to the front of properties and along roads where there is already traffic noise, whereas the route along the Roseburn corridor passes to the rear of properties and therefore has a more significant noise impact and a greater impact on amenity and privacy?

Karen Raymond: We have agreed that the route along the Roseburn corridor will have a greater noise impact than would on-street routes.

Mrs Milne: So, was it correct to say that the effect on noise and visual impact on the route from Queensferry Road and on the Roseburn corridor was not broadly similar, notwithstanding what you have said in your statement, and that it is, in fact, quite different?

Karen Raymond: The route along Queensferry Road—can you just clarify that for me?

Mrs Milne: I am referring to page 4, line 17 of your witness statement. You state that the noise and visual impacts on properties along the route from Queensferry Road, and those along the Roseburn corridor, were "broadly similar".

11:00

Karen Raymond: What we are comparing is the impact of a given increase in noise on a number of properties. On the railway corridor, there would be a larger increase in noise on a smaller number of properties compared with the on-street solutions, where there would be a smaller increase in noise on a larger number of properties. That balance leads us to our conclusion.

Mrs Milne: But your witness, Mr Mitchell, said in his statement that he did not anticipate that the noise of the trams on the road would be noticed at all, because of traffic noise.

Karen Raymond: One must take into account both operation and construction, which you previously asked about.

Mrs Milne: So it is really construction noise that would be similar. However, you accept that it is not correct to say that the noise impact would, in the long term, be the same for properties on the Roseburn corridor as for properties in on-street locations.

Karen Raymond: No, I think that in operational terms there would be greater impact from noise along the Roseburn corridor than there would be for an on-street solution.

Mrs Milne: Was an environmental statement prepared for any other route apart from the Roseburn corridor?

Karen Raymond: No. One would not produce a formal environmental statement for anything other than the promoted scheme, as required by the legislation.

Mrs Milne: Surely route consideration would require you to consider all relevant factors, including the environmental impacts of alternative routes.

Karen Raymond: That was done through the options appraisal process.

Mrs Milne: At that stage, did you consider that the environmental impact on the Roseburn corridor would be worse than that for alternative options?

Karen Raymond: It depends on the stage at which we dealt with the alternatives that were available to us. Certainly, when we undertook the Craigleith options report, in which we gave the most detailed consideration to options, our view was that the Roseburn route was less preferred than the on-street solution.

Mrs Milne: If you do not know the extent to which mitigation can be achieved, because the design and the dynamic kinematic envelope are not yet known, might you be underestimating the environmental impact on the Roseburn corridor?

Karen Raymond: No. We know the design in sufficient detail. The variation in DKE will be a matter of centimetres, my colleague Mr Bain assures me, which would not affect our conclusions.

Mrs Milne: I come now to your rebuttal of Mr Leven's statement, in which you refer to Scottish Natural Heritage having withdrawn its objection and, on the enforceability of mitigation measures, you refer to your evidence to the committee at the meeting on 27 June and to undertakings given to SNH. What was in those undertakings?

Karen Raymond: Convener, do those matters relate to route selection? I believe that I am giving evidence on them later in the meeting.

Mrs Milne: I am referring to your rebuttal of Mr Leven's statement on route selection.

The Convener: I do not know the nature of the undertakings. I do not know whether they are private or whether they can be disclosed. However, if they broadly concern visual and amenity impacts and vegetation impacts, I am content to leave consideration of them until later in the meeting. Will that fit in what you want to do, Mrs Milne?

Mrs Milne: Ms Raymond's rebuttal specifically refers to the enforceability of mitigation measures in the context of route selection. That is where she refers to the undertakings.

Karen Raymond: Unfortunately, I do not have the papers in front of me, because I intended to have them for the later session in the meeting on Mr Leven's statement. We did provide copies of the exchange of letters between the promoter and SNH in our rebuttal.

Mrs Milne: You provided only copies of SNH's letters.

The Convener: May I just intrude on this private conversation? Why do we not deal with the matter this afternoon? That would allow you to give a fuller answer, Ms Raymond, because you will have the papers before you.

Mrs Milne: So in that case we will also deal this afternoon with the four options to secure enforcement and all that side of things.

I have just one last question about the route. Do you agree that avoidance of a route that has an environmental impact is the best mitigation?

Karen Raymond: Ultimately, yes, but as I said previously, other factors must come into play. Environmental mitigation in this context is about ensuring that we do the best we can with the chosen solution.

Mrs Milne: Thank you.

The Convener: Thank you, Mrs Milne. Do any committee members have any questions?

Phil Gallie: There is one point that puzzles me slightly. It seems to me that you have concluded that the disruption of the wildlife and leisure corridor and the possible serious impact on the wildlife are a better solution than an on-road route. Is that correct?

Karen Raymond: It is not for me alone to conclude that. I was part of a team involving all the various disciplines engaged in the project which collectively reached that conclusion. Our role was

to describe the relative environmental merits of the alternatives before us and to weigh them with other factors in making the team's recommendation to the promoter. That informed the promoter's decision.

Phil Gallie: May I confirm that you consider the Roseburn corridor—as it currently exists—to be an important wildlife and leisure corridor?

Karen Raymond: I agree, yes.

Phil Gallie: Thank you.

The Convener: Mr Thomson, do you have any follow-up questions?

Malcolm Thomson QC (Counsel for the Promoter): No.

The Convener: I thank Ms Raymond for giving evidence.

The next witness is Aileen Grant, who will address the issues of overhead line equipment, bridges and viaducts. She will be cross-examined on her rebuttal witness statement only by Mr Vanhagen for group 35.

Malcolm Thomson: Could you start by giving an update on any progress with the design manual?

Aileen Grant (City of Edinburgh Council): The draft tram design manual was sent out to public consultation. We sent out approximately 700 copies to various parties or advised people that it was posted on our website. That consultation period has now ended. We received approximately 25 responses: we are in the process of analysing them and drawing out the actual comments and underlying reasons for them.

Once we have done that, we will consider possible changes to the draft manual. We will present it to the planning committee for formalisation as supplementary planning guidance. It is therefore in a state of change at the moment.

Malcolm Thomson: Have the objectors been involved in any way in that process?

Aileen Grant: We advised all those who commented to Parliament on tramlines 1 and 2 about the design manual and sent copies to some of the parties. We tried to advise all parties that the manual had been redrafted.

Malcolm Thomson: On the general topic of updating, what has happened to Scottish planning policy 17 and the old national planning policy guideline 17 since you were last here?

Aileen Grant: NPPG17, which was Government planning guidance "Transport and Planning", has now been superseded by the production of SPP17. Planning advice note 75—"Planning for

Transport"—has also been published. All that is new planning guidance from the Scottish Executive.

Malcolm Thomson: Just to be thoroughly confusing, I think that there was an old SPP17, which was a fairly small document, and that has also been superseded by the new SPP17.

Aileen Grant: Yes.

Richard Vanhagen: Do you agree that precedent exists for alterations to stone bridges being constructed in similar design materials to existing ones?

Aileen Grant: I am sorry—did you say a precedent for stone bridges to be altered?

Richard Vanhagen: To be constructed—reconstructed or—

Aileen Grant: To be reconstructed?

Richard Vanhagen: Yes—or altered to similar design materials to those that currently exist.

Aileen Grant: When you say "precedent", do you mean from the planning authority's point of view, or do you just mean that there are examples in Scotland of bridges that have been extended or altered?

Richard Vanhagen: Yes—that there are examples of this type.

Aileen Grant: Within Scotland, there certainly are examples of bridges that have been altered and extended.

Richard Vanhagen: Do you have plans to do the same thing on the Roseburn corridor?

Aileen Grant: Any alteration to the existing bridges is a matter of concern to us. That is clearly controlled through the prior approval process after any act of Parliament is passed. The planning authority has raised its concern about that in the various planning committee reports. Some background papers were prepared by TIE on the subject of alterations to bridges. We are aware that we cannot deal with the matter until a later stage. We have raised the matter as a concern, which we will deal with then.

Richard Vanhagen: So you can guarantee that the bridges on the line, which are obviously of interest and which form part of a conservation area, will be reinstated. Is that what you are confirming?

Aileen Grant: Any alteration to those bridges will have to come before the planning authority for its consideration—for the granting of prior approval.

Richard Vanhagen: Is there a limitation on the costs for that, or will you simply guarantee full reinstatement, irrespective of the cost?

Aileen Grant: I am here representing the City of Edinburgh Council as planning authority, not as promoter. There is a separation there. The planning authority has not had any concerns about costs. We are considering the matter purely in relation to the aesthetic, townscape, listed-building and character aspects. Questions of cost are a matter for the council as promoter.

Richard Vanhagen: That is at the next stage. The Roseburn viaduct, which we call the Coltbridge viaduct—

Aileen Grant: Yes, we call it that too.

Richard Vanhagen: It might have been Mr Bain who discussed this, but I could be wrong. Although that is not a listed bridge as such, its design is of significance. What guarantees are there that the viaduct will remain in place, bearing in mind the plans to outrig and to make substantial modifications to it?

Aileen Grant: There is some background to that. As the planning authority, we, too, are concerned about any alterations to that viaduct. Although it is not listed, it is situated in the conservation area, and there is control over any possible demolition of it by virtue of its being located within that area.

TIE prepared a report suggesting a number of options. They ranged from single running on the bridge, which would need no alteration, to altering the bridge to rerouting the cycle route down the valley and up the other side. There were four possible options, and the limits of deviation were extended to cover all those options. That was as far as we could go. We were satisfied in our planning assessment that options in that paper could be delivered without an impact on the conservation area's character. We rested on that basis but raised it as a serious issue for the prior approval stage.

11:15

Richard Vanhagen: It is obvious that people who live close to the viaduct are concerned. I am glad that you are considering that.

Will the overhead line equipment be the same as will be provided in the world heritage site?

Aileen Grant: As planning authority, we will await proposals from TIE, as the council's agent, to develop the scheme. Having worked on the design manual, I understand that the equipment will not necessarily be exactly the same as that in the world heritage site, but it might be. That matter is controlled under the powers that are sought in the bill. For example, poles are specified as buildings, so the planning authority will have full control over their design and where they are to be sited, if poles are to be used—the potential exists

to use building fixings, too, although not on bridges. We expect such matters to be explained in detail at the prior approval stage.

Richard Vanhagen: Do you envisage fixings on residential properties in the Roseburn corridor? TIE has sent letters to that effect.

Aileen Grant: Has TIE sent letters that say that such fixings will or will not be used?

Richard Vanhagen: It says that they will or could be used. How do you view that?

Aileen Grant: If TIE says that, we must accept that such fixings could be proposed. The matter will be assessed in more detail at a later stage. Building fixings would be close to the corridor, which is defined by the limits of deviation. The question is where the properties are in relation to the corridor.

Richard Vanhagen: Those are all my questions.

The Convener: Do committee members have questions?

Phil Gallie: Sceptics might say that a conflict of interest might arise if the council planning department can make decisions that could cost the council money. Will you assure such sceptics that there is no chance that council financial interests could overcome the wish of a council's planning department?

Aileen Grant: In the process that we have sketched for our prior approval stage, which is in an appendix to a council planning committee report, we have tried to say how we will deal with prior approvals. Nothing about that is set out in statutory instruments, so we have said what process we will follow. We will put into the public domain the matters that need prior approval. In that way, checks and balances are built into our assessment, which will be in the public domain.

We are trying to make the process similar to normal council processes for obtaining a planning approval, which involve a notice of intention to develop. That happens all the time with council projects. The only difference with the proposed process is that it involves a prior approval rather than a notice of intention to develop. In setting out that process, we try to ensure transparency in the assessment of such detailed matters later.

Phil Gallie: I like that word "ensure". Although you have said basically that councils frequently face such problems, some sceptics—again, I will speak in general terms—might suggest that councils are able to benefit from council planning decisions in a way that is not open to private developers. In this instance, two council bodies are involved. Do you ensure that a total Chinese wall exists between those two departments?

Aileen Grant: There certainly is a Chinese wall. The fact that we report to a planning committee, through which any assessment must also be made, provides that Chinese wall.

Helen Eadie: I will follow on from what Phil Gallie said. I notice from your witness statement that the planning committee—and you as a professional planner—had the clear objective of achieving some key features of planning policy. For example, ensuring that the tramline links up with the retail park and serves the needs of the hospital seems to be the emerging view of your report. However, that view seems to have been overtaken by TIE's view. There seems to be a conflict between the promoter's view, which addresses technical and cost issues, and the view of the planning committee and planning officials, which addresses the wider policy and strategic concerns. Will you comment on that?

Aileen Grant: One of the earlier planning reports highlighted the desirability of serving traffic generators such as the hospital or the retail park. I think that our initial report in August suggested that the issue would be addressed as long as one of those locations was better served. In the event, the proposed tram stop that would have been closest to the Craighleith retail park was moved. That fact may not have been covered explicitly in later planning reports—it may be mentioned in one of the appendices—but, in practice, the tram-stop location was moved much closer to the retail park. The assessment rested on that.

At that stage, we were aware that we were not carrying out a full planning assessment—as that would happen through the private bill process—but giving advice to the council on the matter. In addition, the report mentioned that it was vital that the tram serve the transport interchange of Haymarket. In a way, that was a higher priority, as that was raised in every report. Therefore, I suppose that we were trying to highlight strategic planning issues in the advice that we gave to the council.

Helen Eadie: I understand that, in the minds of transport planners and planners such as yourself, there is a hierarchy in which walking comes first, cycling comes second, public transport comes third and the private car comes fourth. How was that global view taken into account when you were considering the tram proposals?

Aileen Grant: Many of those issues are dealt with in local plans, which address the mix of walking, cycling and public transport that we should have. In the case of a clear public transport proposal such as the tramline, it is important that the proposal also takes account of walking and cycling. Through the environmental statement that was part of our assessment of the emerging proposals and through the design manual, we

have tried to address some of those points. The hierarchy is set out in our development plan, but the tram proposal must be assessed as a public transport proposal, albeit that a number of other factors need to be taken into account.

The Convener: As members have no further points to make, Mr Thomson may now ask his questions.

Malcolm Thomson: In the context of Chinese walls and the Chinese wall between the council as promoter of the tram scheme and the council as planning authority, in your experience as an officer of the planning department have council projects had an easy ride through the planning system?

Aileen Grant: Not always. We have been known to refuse or withhold consent for council proposals or to object to notices of intention to develop. A full assessment is given to council projects. They are by no means rubber-stamped.

Malcolm Thomson: In your experience, are council projects scrutinised by the planning department just as closely as private sector projects?

Aileen Grant: They are. They are put on the weekly list and are subject to comments from interested parties. They are subject to the same consultation procedures with the planning consultees and a report has to be prepared for the planning committee. They are dealt with in much the same way as planning applications.

Malcolm Thomson: Has your planning department offered advice and guidance and provided consultation responses to the council as promoter of the tram project?

Aileen Grant: The reports to the planning committee, which encapsulate the advice to council, are the formal way in which that advice is taken forward. In this case, there has not been a formal assessment because we recognise that that is being carried out by Parliament, but at the later—prior approval—stage we would act more in line with our procedures for notices of intention to develop. We will then be the planning authority acting in its full powers as prescribed by the prior approval process.

Malcolm Thomson: So thus far there has not been a formal process but nonetheless the planning department has been consulted and has advised the council as promoter?

Aileen Grant: Yes. It was agreed that the project would be better informed if the planning committee gave advice to the council on general planning matters and consistency with policy and so on, to try to tease out issues to be addressed, before it came into this arena.

Malcolm Thomson: In the event that the bill receives royal assent, how will the planning department be involved more formally?

Aileen Grant: The way in which we envisage being involved is contained in our note about prior approvals. We would treat the procedure as we do planning applications, albeit that there are constraints inherent in that process. We cannot grant or refuse consent; we have to deal with the submissions in accordance with the requirements of class 29 of the general permitted development order.

Malcolm Thomson: You have explained that you have already looked at a process for taking forward that prior approval, which would involve public participation.

Aileen Grant: Yes. Submissions appear on the weekly list and are available for parties to comment.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you see that as a further safeguard for policing the activities of the council?

Aileen Grant: Yes, because it will ensure that when submissions are received they are in the public domain. We are aware that many community organisations receive our weekly list, and the intention would be to ensure that their submissions are on the list, identified with a tram suffix or something to make it clear that they relate to the trams. Community councils are particularly vigilant about the weekly lists, and submissions would be picked up in that way and through our planning portal.

Phil Gallie: In response to Mr Thomson's question about the council's advantage with respect to its own applications and the planning department, you said "Not always." That suggests that, on occasion, advantage is given to council applications.

11:30

Aileen Grant: I am sorry if I gave that impression. Some planning applications go through relatively easily, in the same way that some council submissions will go through relatively easily. It depends on the issues the submissions raise. That was all I meant.

Phil Gallie: I was slightly worried about that. After that, you used the term "much the same way". That suggested to me that there could well have been other ways for council departments to deal with things.

Aileen Grant: Sorry—that was not my intention. We certainly do not operate in the way that you suggest. You could ask colleagues in other departments of the council if you wanted to confirm that.

Malcolm Thomson: I have one more question. It is one that I forgot to ask earlier rather than one that arises from what has just been said. Could you clarify whether fixings require prior approval?

Aileen Grant: Fixings do require prior approval, because they are alterations to buildings.

The Convener: There are no further questions for Ms Grant. Thank you very much for your evidence today.

We now have a changeover of questioners. Les Buckman will now address issues of traffic impacts, the accessibility of stop locations and the stop at Roseburn. Starting with traffic impacts, Mr Buckman will be cross-examined on his witness statement by Graham Scrimgeour, for group 34.

Having considered the rebuttal witness statement provided by group 43, it is my view that it does not meet the criteria for a rebuttal witness statement, in that it does not actually rebut the particular points made by Mr Buckman, nor does it clearly identify the issues in dispute. Instead, it refers to a range of quite generic issues to which it might not be appropriate for Mr Buckman to respond. Are members in agreement?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: Therefore, group 43 cannot cross-examine the witness. The committee may, however, ask questions of the witness on behalf of group 43.

Malcolm Thomson: I am trying to work out what I can and cannot ask questions about.

The Convener: It is alright—I will keep you straight.

Malcolm Thomson: I was proposing to ask Mr Buckman whether he had knowledge of the location of the Craighleith stop and the Groathill Road North stop at the time of the council meeting of 11 December 2003. Is that still relevant?

The Convener: I think so, yes. We were going to take these points in a slightly different order, but you might as well proceed with that question now.

Malcolm Thomson: In that case, if you heard and can remember the question, Mr Buckman, what is the answer, please?

Les Buckman (Steer Davies Gleave): Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Well, that was easy.

Do you still consider it appropriate to provide a stop at Roseburn?

Les Buckman: Yes, I think that there is a case for a stop at Roseburn. It will service the local area and it will facilitate interchange by travellers coming in from the west by bus, who can then transfer to the tram and proceed northward to Granton, for example.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you have any general comments at this stage about the locations of the proposed Craigleith and Groathill Road North stops?

Les Buckman: Yes. As they stand, the proposed locations are optimal in many respects. The Craigleith one would enable access to the retail park and it would enable good access to the surrounding residential area. The Groathill or Western general stop enables line 1 to serve the Western general hospital, but the proposed location would also enable good access to the Drylaw area.

The Convener: I revise what I said earlier: we will try to deal with evidence logically. I ask Mr Scrimgeour to confine himself at this stage to traffic impacts and we will then cover each of the stops separately.

Graham Scrimgeour: That is the order in which I prepared.

The Convener: Excellent—then I am sticking to your order.

Graham Scrimgeour: At paragraph 4.2 of your witness statement on traffic impacts, you talk about highway benefits, the modelling analysis and the forecast of severe levels of congestion in the future. Are those severe levels of congestion dependent on the completion of the waterfront development?

Les Buckman: Yes, effectively. The modelling reflected the structure plan numbers as regards residential and commercial development in the Granton and Leith areas.

Graham Scrimgeour: Later on, in paragraph 4.3, you talk about the transport users benefit appraisal analysis, which is multimodal. Does that multimodal appraisal include cycling and walking as modes of transport?

Les Buckman: Not in the way that we use it here—we are talking about the Roseburn corridor and the impact that line 1 would have on walking and cycling. There would be two impacts. One is the transport impact. The promoter has made it clear from the outset that it will maintain the ability to walk and cycle down the Roseburn corridor as now. In strict transport terms, there would be no impact because one could still cycle to work at Haymarket and walk to the shops at Craigleith retail park. The fact that we have not included walking and cycling in the TUBA analysis will have no bearing on the impact.

The other impact would be on the amenity benefit. People often walk their dogs or take their kids there. That is covered by the environmental assessment, which has an amenity heading, and is covered by my colleague Karen Raymond.

Graham Scrimgeour: I do not want to mix those two issues. However, qualitative impacts on cycling and walking might lead someone to choose not to use that route because it was no longer as effective—one has amenity even in travelling. Has the impact of journeys being changed been considered?

Les Buckman: No, because the change is because of the change in the amenity, not in the transport network.

Graham Scrimgeour: In the last paragraph of your statement you talk about travel time and operating cost savings relating to

“a large number of travellers experiencing a small level of benefit”.

How much risk is there that that small level of benefit could go up or down by a small amount and that because it affects a large number of users, the total value of benefit could be much less as a result?

Les Buckman: The world is full of risk. We have used a state-of-the-art modelling framework and put in assumptions about levels of development and how the transport network and car ownership might change, to name but a few of many. We have made assumptions that are, on the whole, prudent. We have certainly not over-egged the case in any way, so while there are clearly potential up-sides and down-sides to the risks, I consider the numbers that forecasting produced for the core case of the scheme to be robust.

The Convener: Thank you Mr Scrimgeour. Do committee members have any questions on traffic impacts?

Helen Eadie: In light of your experience and with hindsight, how reliable have your forecasts turned out to be? The public might be sceptical but that is a serious question. The public always ask us about how accurate forecasts are and whether the forecasters got their sums right. It also has a big impact on policy.

Les Buckman: I have just explained that there is an element of risk in all the work we do. We have used a state-of-the-art modelling approach, but our forecasts are just that—forecasts. I am not sure whether I want to quote a number, but any number could go up or down. The figure of 30 per cent is often bandied around and the number could fall within that range. However, there is just as much chance of a number being plus or minus 30 per cent as there is of its being “right”. The chances are that eventual results are much more likely to be around the same as was forecast than plus or minus 30 per cent; it is not a straight line on the distribution curve.

Helen Eadie: I guess that I am really asking for examples of where your forecasts have been

proven to be absolutely accurate in the past, or where they were wildly wrong. I can tell you that on the Forth road bridge and at Barnton this morning, for example, your forecasts were wildly wrong. There might be little traffic in the city, but that section of road was nose to tail. That says to me that traffic planners do get their sums wrong.

The Convener: Aside from the member now indicating why the meeting started late—and I was trying to protect you from that—I question the relevance of the question, but if you want to give a short answer, Mr Buckman, feel free.

Les Buckman: I am not sure that I want to.

Helen Eadie: It just showed me how wrong such predictions can be, convener.

The Convener: Indeed, but I am sure that you will campaign for improvement there.

Mr Thomson, do you have any follow-up questions?

Malcolm Thomson: Only one, if I may, without in any way being impolite. I was just wondering whether Ms Eadie's question presupposed that it was not the intention of the city's traffic planners that there should be standing traffic between the Forth road bridge and the Barnton roundabout.

Helen Eadie: Getting sums right is very important.

The Convener: Helen, enough.

Les Buckman: Sorry, what was the question?

Malcolm Thomson: Whether the question presupposed that it was not the city's traffic planners' intention that there should be standing traffic between the Forth road bridge and the Barnton roundabout, to enable traffic within the city to move more smoothly.

Les Buckman: No. I cannot believe that.

The Convener: There being no further questions for Mr Buckman, I will ask him to stay where he is because we are going to move to the issue of accessibility of stop locations. With members' agreement, I am minded to exclude the rebuttal witness statement provided by Mr Adams from group 34 because it does not meet our criteria for a rebuttal witness statement. Are members agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: On that basis, Mr Buckman may not be cross-examined on the issues raised by Mr Adams' rebuttal witness statement.

11:45

Malcolm Thomson: I have already asked the questions that I was going to ask, so I have no questions at this stage.

The Convener: Excellent. Ms Bourne for group 33.

Alison Bourne: With regard to section 4.2 of your statement, would the removal of intermediate tram stops increase the total through-patronage by reducing journey time to a minimum?

Les Buckman: Yes, it would. There would be faster run times so through-trips would increase.

Alison Bourne: Does that apply only when the end-to-end stops are considered the most critical?

Les Buckman: I am not really sure what you are getting at.

Alison Bourne: In the case of tramline 1, is one end of the line the city centre and the other end the waterfront?

Les Buckman: It is a case of trying to strike a balance between serving the key demand generators and picking up local patronage along the route.

Alison Bourne: Your answer to my first question implies that the promoter would have liked to have fewer tram stops between Haymarket and Granton. Is that correct?

Les Buckman: No. I have never come across any view from the promoter that we ought to have fewer stops between Haymarket and Granton.

Alison Bourne: It is my recollection that in the early stages of the tramline 1 proposal it was intended that there should be very few stops between Haymarket and Granton. Did you ever see that proposal?

Les Buckman: I did. Dare I say it, it was because I asked why there were so few tram stops that more stops were put in.

The Convener: Mr Scrimgeour for group 34.

Graham Scrimgeour: In section 3.1 of your witness statement you talk about issues for stop location. Was the impact on localised parking considered as part of that?

Les Buckman: No.

Graham Scrimgeour: What about use of the corridor and particular areas of the corridor by wildlife, such as badgers?

Les Buckman: Only in so far as once I had proposed the stop locations, the wider team would have had the opportunity to comment on whether my suggestions were good or bad, and why. There was the opportunity to move stops if there was a particular concern about badgers, but no such concerns were raised. On that basis I can only assume that there were none.

Graham Scrimgeour: We could debate that, but the location of badgers is not a good thing to debate in public, so we will stop there.

In section 5.1 of your statement you refer to the stop locations in the Roseburn corridor being heavily influenced by the nature of the corridor, particularly the access points. Effectively the stops there are located over bridges, which is a constraint. I compare that with section 3.1, where you say that accessibility is a key criterion. Is there not a significant conflict between the objective and what has been physically possible in the corridor?

Les Buckman: On the point about access being constrained, there are two issues. There is accessibility to the network per se and there is accessibility to particular stops. There will be full access to particular stops. People will not have to scramble down the cutting to get to the stop. Stairs, and access ramps for disabled users, will be provided. It will be fully compliant with the regulations. Particular stops will be fully accessible. Access to the route is constrained by the access points but, for example, the stop spacing along that stretch of route is broadly comparable to the route as a whole. The argument that there would be better access to the system if it were on-street is rather weak.

Graham Scrimgeour: Someone can access a street and walk 100yd or 200yd along it to the nearest stop. There are lots of access points on to a street. On the Roseburn corridor, on the other hand, there are very few access points. In our example, someone living very close to the alignment will still have a long walk of 400yd or 500yd to go round and get to a stop even if the stop is only 100yd away from where that person is starting from. With a street alignment, the person would be able to walk 100yd and gain immediate access. That is the nature of our concern. Would you agree with that assessment?

Les Buckman: You make a reasonable point, to some degree. I am looking at an Ordnance Survey map. The street layout, apart from the area between Ravelston Dykes and the Craighleith stop, involves parallel roads. Effectively, that would be the proxy for an on-street route. Instead of walking along the street, people would walk along the parallel roads and then access the stop at the point where an east-west road crosses the route.

Graham Scrimgeour: I suspect that we do not agree on that point. I will leave it there.

In paragraph 6.1, you mention the patronage figures for the Roseburn stop, but not those for the other stops on the Roseburn corridor.

Les Buckman: To which statement are you referring?

Graham Scrimgeour: This is your statement to group 34.

Les Buckman: My original witness statement?

Graham Scrimgeour: Yes. You mention demand levels at different points on the route,

particularly the demand level at the Roseburn stop, which you describe as “lower than average” for the route. How do the other stops along the corridor compare? Are the demand levels for those other stops comparable to that of the Roseburn stop, or are they lower still?

Les Buckman: The demand at Ravelston Dykes was a shade under 1 per cent; that at Craighleith was of the order of 5 per cent.

Graham Scrimgeour: The demand at Ravelston Dykes is therefore well below average.

Les Buckman: Yes.

Graham Scrimgeour: I also have questions about your rebuttal to Sue Polson, who is also a member of group 34. This is included within a rebuttal on other points. Your rebuttal deals with the frequency of stops, whereas Sue Polson’s original statement describes the difficulty experienced by wheelchair users getting up the hill to Ravelston Dykes and then down a ramp. That will be ramped at a suitable gradient, but it will be a very long ramp, as it has several metres to descend or ascend. The question is whether you agree with Sue Polson’s statement. I do not think that that was addressed in your rebuttal.

Les Buckman: I can only say that all the stops will be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Therefore, they will be accessible by wheelchair users.

Graham Scrimgeour: The Ravelston Dykes stop will not be easy to access because of the significant distance over which a wheelchair will have to be pushed up or down. It is a long ramp for gaining the 5m or 6m to road level.

Les Buckman: Yes, that is a statement of fact that I cannot deny.

The Convener: We now come to group 43, with Mr Gaul.

Iain Gaul: I have no questions.

The Convener: I invite questions from committee members.

Helen Eadie: In response to Mr Scrimgeour’s questions, you acknowledged that saying the Ravelston Dykes stop will be difficult to access is a statement of fact. Committee members visited the location and saw how difficult it will be to access. Do you have a proposal in place for facilitating a change to the plan to make it possible for a disabled person to gain access up and down the ramp independently?

Les Buckman: I am afraid that that is beyond my area of competence. It would be best to address that point to Mark Bain in the first instance—dare I say it, just as he looks away. He is more involved with the detailed design aspects.

The Convener: I am sure that that point will be picked up. Let us now turn to the specific issue of a stop at Roseburn. Mr Buckman will be cross-examined on his witness statement by Iain Gaul for group 43.

Iain Gaul: Would you agree that the location of the tram stop at Roseburn requires to be carefully considered, as it affects a quiet residential area?

Les Buckman: Yes.

Iain Gaul: Do you agree that a large number of the users of the Roseburn stop will be coming from Murrayfield stadium, Tynecastle stadium and Tynecastle High School, which are all positioned on the south side of the A8, and that the positioning of the stop on the south side of the A8 should therefore be fully considered?

Les Buckman: Yes. I think that it was. As I understand it, that idea was discounted on visual intrusion grounds.

Iain Gaul: I will come on to that. Paragraph 6.2 of your statement is on the location of the Roseburn stop—I assume that you are referring to the current proposal, which is to position the stop to the west of Wester Coates Terrace. You state:

“The location of the Roseburn stop was ... dictated by the presence of the Roseburn and Coltbridge viaducts, which are physical constraints”.

In paragraph 6.3, you state:

“An alternative stop location to the south of the A8 has been examined ... but it ... will cause significant visual intrusion for a number of flats”.

Do you consider that suffering from a visual intrusion is more important than the noise, light pollution and loss of amenity that would be suffered by the residents of Wester Coates Terrace?

Les Buckman: It would probably stray outside my area of competence to say that one impact is better or worse than another impact.

Iain Gaul: In paragraph 6.3, you state that the “location to the south of the A8 ... is high on an embankment”.

Presumably at some time during the construction of the railway line, the level of the existing cycleway to the south of the A8 was artificially raised. Has the promoter considered, or will the promoter consider, the possibility of designing a stop on the south side of the A8 and, at the same time, reducing the existing level, which would allow easier access and provide a wider area of land to accommodate the track and cycleway?

Les Buckman: I am sorry—could you repeat the question?

Iain Gaul: There is an embankment on the south side of the A8. It is an artificial embankment,

which was presumably constructed when the railway was constructed. Has the promoter considered reducing its level, or will the promoter consider reducing its level, and positioning the tram stop in that area? If you reduced the level there, that would widen out the area.

Les Buckman: I imagine that there might be issues over the alignment design. We would effectively have to come back down to ground level to adjoin the railway line and—

Iain Gaul: To be fair, there is a change in level of about 6m, so you will never get down to the ground level.

Les Buckman: I appreciate that.

Iain Gaul: It would be a matter of reducing the level, rather than taking it all the way down to ground level. What I am asking is whether you will consider doing that.

Les Buckman: It is not really within my gift to say yes or no about whether we would consider doing that. You are talking about an area of detailed design, which may be reviewed.

Iain Gaul: The petrol station to the south of the A8, adjacent to the bridge over the road, has recently closed and that site is currently being marketed for sale. Is the promoter aware of that and has it considered the purchase of the land for possible utilisation in access to the tram system or to a tram stop?

Les Buckman: I am aware of the petrol station in question, but I am not aware whether the promoter has considered purchasing it as part of the tram scheme. I am afraid that I would not know.

Iain Gaul: So you cannot say whether the promoter is prepared to consider that or not.

Les Buckman: It is not within my gift to say whether the promoter is prepared to consider it.

Rob Gibson: You said earlier, Mr Buckman, that you had increased the number of stops on this section. It was said in discussion that, in the system of stops, the Roseburn stop could have a high input. Do you agree that the stop will be important for the overall scheme?

12:00

Les Buckman: It is important to retain a stop at Roseburn.

Rob Gibson: On how the business stacks up, do you feel that stops that would have lower uptake or average usage are as valid in the process of creating the tramline as the potentially high input stops?

Les Buckman: Yes. Clearly, there will be stops with below-average demand and others with

above-average demand. The way in which tramlines tend to work is that a series of stops with a relatively low input feeds into a higher-demand stop. Therefore, it is clearly valid to include low-input stops in the scheme. There is also a question of accessibility to the system. We do not want a few kilometres of tramline without any access or means to use the system.

Rob Gibson: If the system were set up, some of the stops for which a below-average use is implied could change and become more popular.

Les Buckman: I am sorry, could you say that again? I did not understand the question.

Rob Gibson: Nothing is static, so I assume that, according to your current estimates, some stops would be highly used and others would be less popular. However, in the future, stops for which you have estimated below-average usage could have an increased usage.

Les Buckman: Absolutely.

Rob Gibson: So once the tram system develops, there could be more use of a stop than you have envisaged.

Les Buckman: Yes.

The Convener: Members have no further questions, but I have one. The specific locations for stops are not a matter for the committee, but I am curious because the alternative stop that Mr Gaul proposes is within the limits of deviation. Am I right on that point?

Les Buckman: I will have to pass on that one.

The Convener: Okay. I will find out from somebody else—Mr Bain, perhaps.

Les Buckman: Mr Bain is probably the best one for that.

The Convener: Excellent. Mr Bain will be busy. Mr Thomson, do you have any follow-up questions for Mr Buckman?

Malcolm Thomson: No.

The Convener: There being no further questions for Mr Buckman, I thank him for giving evidence.

The next witness is Mark Bain, who will address the issue of the stop at Roseburn. He will be cross-examined only on his rebuttal witness statement on that issue by Iain Gaul, for group 43.

Malcolm Thomson: First, I understand that Mr Gary Turner would be better able than Mr Bain to answer questions about the detailed design of stops with a view to Disability Discrimination Act 1995 compliance. That may be the reason for Mr Bain's lack of enthusiasm for answering questions on the subject.

The Convener: He seemed perfectly enthusiastic to me. However, you have just been rescued, Mr Bain. We will address those questions to Mr Turner in due course.

Malcolm Thomson: First, Mr Bain, on the answer to that final point, could the alternative that Mr Gaul proposes be accommodated within the limits of deviation?

Mark Bain (Transport Initiatives Edinburgh Ltd): That alternative is different from the one that was submitted in evidence, but I believe that the limits of deviation would extend far enough for the stop to be included. However, we would also have to gain DDA-compliant access to that stop and location. We would have to reconsider that issue, because we have not looked at the access application.

Malcolm Thomson: The one that has been proposed in evidence thus far is different from the one that the promoter proposed.

Mark Bain: That is correct—it is marginally different.

Malcolm Thomson: In your rebuttal statement, you indicated a possible compromise location.

Mark Bain: That is correct.

Malcolm Thomson: Could you explain for us, first of all, why the location proposed in the objector's written evidence is not appropriate and then tell us something about why the compromise might be appropriate?

Mark Bain: In answering that question, I would like to point out briefly a number of constraints to any alignment in that section. Mr Gaul mentioned Les Buckman's evidence that there are two bridges: the Roseburn bridge, which sits approximately 20m south of the stop location, and the Coltbridge viaduct, which is approximately 120m to the north. Obviously, any alignment approaching the stop has to take account of those two bridges, so they place significant constraints on what we can do with the alignment in that vicinity. Over and above that, there are the limits of deviation. I can confirm that the objector's proposals are within the limits of deviation.

There are other constraints. We have proposed, as has the objector, the development of a pedestrian access directly from Roseburn Terrace, which would need to be DDA compliant. At the moment, according to the way in which the objector's proposals are illustrated, that access is only approximately 50m in length. In order for it to be DDA compliant, I would anticipate that it would have to be closer to about 120m. That would need to be addressed if pedestrian access were to be feasible there.

Over and above that, the promoter is seeking to develop a vehicular access directly from the A8 on

Roseburn Terrace to access the corridor for maintenance. As the promoter's advisers, we believe that either a single-track, one-way access or a bi-directional access, which would obviously be slightly wider, could be implemented to provide that access, but that would be a matter for detailed negotiations with whoever has maintenance liability for the infrastructure.

Looking in detail at the objector's proposals, we see that there are two tight curves that enter the stop, both north and south—one of around 25m and one of around 30m. The straight that is between those two curves is approximately 35m to 40m long. That length is insufficient. It would need to be around 60m in order for us not to have to sculpt the platforms and give them a straight edge. That is an important point for DDA-compliant access to the vehicle. There is a requirement for a specific space between the platform edge and the vehicle at each of the doors; if there is curvature on the lines passing through the stops, that distance will be widened. Those are the principal reasons why we consider the objector's proposals, as currently illustrated, to be technically unfeasible.

On the compromise solution, it is my understanding that the promoter would propose that there be some degree of latitude to have an alignment that splits the difference between the promoter's current position and the objector's position as illustrated.

Malcolm Thomson: What about the option that you heard today?

Mark Bain: We have not looked at that option in detail. When we considered the stop locations, the petrol station was still a going concern and had not ceased trading. We were not aware that it was available. As I said, the stop platform certainly could be to the south of the A8 and within the limits of deviation, but whether a suitable, DDA-compliant pedestrian access could be developed would need to be considered in detail.

Malcolm Thomson: Finally, when you gave evidence last week, you referred to the Coltbridge viaduct as being grade B listed. Would you like to reconsider that proposition today?

Mark Bain: Yes. It transpires that there are three Coltbridges. It is a case of mistaken identity. The Coltbridge viaduct on the Roseburn railway corridor is in fact not listed, albeit that it is set within a conservation area. The Coltbridge that is listed is some 200m to the south-west on the A8, where Roseburn Terrace becomes Corstorphine Road. Two bridges cross the Water of Leith at that location. As far as I am aware, it is the older of the two that is B listed.

Malcolm Thomson: So Mr Vanhagen was correct to say in his questions this morning that the Coltbridge viaduct is not listed.

Mark Bain: Yes.

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Thomson.

Iain Gaul: Mr Bain, paragraph 2.1 of your rebuttal states that the promoter is willing to consider a slight slewing of the track alignment to the rear of the houses on Wester Coates Terrace. You mention that there are technical reasons for not adopting the alignment indicated in the drawing that we prepared. Is the promoter prepared to give an undertaking that all reasonable measures will be taken to ensure that the track is positioned as far as is practical from the houses on Wester Coates Terrace?

Mark Bain: I am personally not able to give that undertaking, but my understanding is that the promoter is willing to go some distance to come to a compromise solution.

Iain Gaul: Paragraph 2.1 of your rebuttal—you have again mentioned this already—states that one of the reasons for the only slight slewing of the track is the provision of a 6m-wide maintenance vehicle access. Is the promoter prepared to examine the possibility of routing maintenance vehicles elsewhere, investigating a narrowing of the 6m width locally or—this is probably the best solution—utilising the area of vacant land to the west of the line, although that is outwith the limits of deviation?

Mark Bain: On the width of the access, I think that you are referring to a conversation that we had privately last week. That information is not in my rebuttal.

Iain Gaul: I apologise.

Mark Bain: However, as I alluded to earlier, as technical advisers we believe that a bi-directional access, which would be approximately 6m wide, would be suitable, as would a narrower one-way access route. The decision as to which is required is not for me to make. On whether we would have access elsewhere, the A8 is a principal road and an abnormal-load route. We consider what has been proposed to be the most appropriate road access to the corridor at that location on its southern extent.

Iain Gaul: In the light of what we have discussed, will the promoter fully consider the location on the south side of the A8?

Mark Bain: Once again, it is not for me to state the promoter's position. We only advise the promoter.

Iain Gaul: Is the promoter prepared to consider restricting public access to the tramline from Wester Coates Terrace? The main access will be from the main road. That is fine and we do not have a problem with that, but we are concerned that there are already two access points from

Wester Coates Terrace. Is the promoter prepared to restrict the access?

Mark Bain: As far as I am aware, the promoter is not proposing to alter those access points to the corridor as a result of promoting a DDA-compliant access direct from Roseburn Terrace.

The Convener: Thank you very much, Mr Gaul. Are there any questions from committee members?

Rob Gibson: Mr Bain, can you enlighten us as to whether an elevator, instead of a ramp, would be a DDA-compliant means of access to a station?

12:15

Mark Bain: It certainly would be. It is just a question of how that would be configured in that location.

Rob Gibson: Thinking about the conversation that we have had about the availability of the petrol station, I took a look at the map. The line would appear to be straighter at that point than it is at the proposed platform opposite Wester Coates Terrace. Would that make it easier to make the access DDA compliant?

Mark Bain: The promoted route is straight on the north and the south sides of the A8. Obviously, a compromise solution would introduce a certain degree of curvature in advance of the platforms. However, what I alluded to as the compromise solution would also have a 60m straight portion between the curves and would, therefore, be equally DDA compliant as any stop to the south would be.

Phil Gallie: You made the point that it is not your task to speak for the promoter. However, I detected a certain sympathy with Mr Gaul's suggestion. Is it your task to advise the promoter that, perhaps, this could be an option that it could consider?

Mark Bain: We could do that as advisers to the promoter.

The Convener: Would your advice to the promoter be that it should go away and consider the proposal?

Mark Bain: Given the evidence that has been presented today, yes, it would be.

Malcolm Thomson: I have no further questions for Mr Bain. The promoter could, if given the opportunity, provide a written submission on the other options that we have heard about today. Given that we have not heard about the proposal before, it is clear that Mr Bain could not be forearmed with a position.

The Convener: That would be helpful. If it is any help to you, the committee is encouraged by the

prospect that the promoter might consider the issue again.

There being no further questions for Mr Bain, I thank him for giving evidence.

12:18

Meeting suspended.

12:21

On resuming—

The Convener: Before we recommence oral evidence taking, I remind Mr McIntosh that he is under oath. He will address the issues of traffic potential and tram stops, which were raised in his rebuttal witness statement and which were part of the promoter's rebuttal of Alison Bourne's witness statement.

Malcolm Thomson: I intended to ask no questions of Mr McIntosh, but I know that he has experience of the design of DDA-compliant stops in Croydon. It may be helpful to the committee if I ask him about that.

The Convener: Absolutely.

Malcolm Thomson: Mr McIntosh, I understand that you have experience from Croydon in the design of DDA-compliant tram stops. Can you enlighten us about that?

Scott McIntosh (Mott MacDonald): I do indeed have such experience. I was involved in the design of the Docklands light railway, on which all the stops have access to platforms by means of lifts. Subsequently, I was responsible for the design of the Croydon tramlink. It was built before the DDA, but the transport authority committed itself to providing a fully disabled-accessible system. We had a disabled liaison group and, having seen the lifts on the Docklands system, the members of that group were of the opinion that they were claustrophobic, relatively unattractive and had a high potential for becoming mobile urinals. Therefore, at the urging of the disabled liaison group, we designed out the requirement for lifts at stops.

The group said that ramps, even if they are long, are far more attractive than elevators because they have an open aspect—disabled people can see along them and know that they are also being seen. Therefore, all elevators were removed from the Croydon proposals on the urgings of the disabled. The system has a significant element of former railway and has access from overbridges via a number of relatively long ramps.

Malcolm Thomson: Do the ramps appear to have worked satisfactorily?

Scott McIntosh: Indeed they do. The system is popular with people with disabilities. By that, we

mean not only wheelchair users, but people encumbered with shopping trolleys or perambulators and people who are simply getting on in years—as I am—and find on many occasions that ramps are more attractive than staircases

Malcolm Thomson: Are platforms and stops designed to allow a wheelchair to be wheeled easily from the platform straight on to the tram?

Scott McIntosh: Yes. The requirements of the DDA are that the gap between the platform edge and the car threshold, both in the going and in the height difference, is such that an ordinary wheelchair—what the DDA calls the reference wheelchair—can be manoeuvred with ease by the occupant without the help of a second party. We see that happening every day in Croydon. The gap between the car and the platform edge is an important one, because if it is more than approximately 75mm there is a great danger that the front wheels on the wheelchair will turn through 90° and drop into the gap. Therefore, maintaining that gap is vital if accessibility is to be maintained for that group.

Malcolm Thomson: Does the same apply to pushchairs, which may tend to have smaller wheels?

Scott McIntosh: They are more affected by the height difference. Bumping up and down is more of a problem for them. Again, maintaining the gap within no more than 50mm difference is important, particularly if the baby is not to be somewhat disturbed, as that would have the effect of the baby disturbing the other passengers in revenge when it is finally put on the tram.

Malcolm Thomson: Is the need to maintain that fairly fine tolerance of space the reason why you cannot sculpt the platform away at the ends?

Scott McIntosh: It makes it extremely difficult. Effectively, one needs a tangent—a straight piece of track—that is not only the length of the tram but runs for a certain distance before and after the stop, so that, as the tram comes in, any tendency to weave has been eliminated. The gap is maintained uniformly, past every threshold of every door on the tram, and as it moves away again it needs to maintain that alignment so that the rear end of the tram does not hit the platform edge. The problem is that it is not simply the length of the tram car that needs to be considered, as a piece of tangent needs to be provided before and after that.

The Convener: In fairness, I believe that it was Mr Scrimgeour who first raised the issue, as did Rob Gibson. Before I bring in Ms Bourne, I shall give them an opportunity to deal with the issue.

Graham Scrimgeour: We are surprised that we are discussing disabled access again under this

heading. We had not realised that it was coming up.

The Convener: I allowed it to because you raised the question, which Mr Bain was unable to answer because other people have that expertise. Therefore, to get your question answered I allowed Mr McIntosh to deal with Mr Thomson's questions. Do you want to ask Mr McIntosh any follow-up questions?

Graham Scrimgeour: The key question earlier was about access at Ravelston Dykes, where there is a significant height difference that could make things difficult. Even if there was a ramp, it would have to be quite a long ramp, and getting to the top of it would be quite tiring.

Scott McIntosh: That is so. A ramp that has recently been put in at my local station, Dalmeny, is approximately the length of the one that could be required at Ravelston Dykes when the solum has been raised. I have observed people with pushchairs using the ramp, which is in the open air, is attractively lit and is covered by closed-circuit television—all the things that make people feel happier and more comfortable about using such ramps. Therefore, I have experience of seeing a ramp used a number of days every week in Scotland as well as having seen ramps being used in Croydon.

Graham Scrimgeour: Our original argument was that access would be much easier if the tram were at-grade on a road. Do you agree?

Scott McIntosh: At that particular location, yes, but that presupposes that the person lives on the street, that the street is level and that they can cope with the kerbs or that there are sufficient drop kerb stones on the way. We are considering a specific case, and there will always be difficult cases.

Graham Scrimgeour: The road design is surely a matter for the council and not for the bill.

Scott McIntosh: Indeed it is, but you are taking an optimum case and comparing it with another case that may be sub-optimum. One has to take the rough with the smooth, and the disabled always say to me, "We are disabled, not completely incapable, and we are capable of living within the confines of the city." As many people have said, Edinburgh seems to consist of hills that always go upwards and never go down.

Kristina Woolnough: That is what this will be.

Scott McIntosh: I am sorry. I did not hear that. Was that a question addressed to me?

The Convener: That comment ought not to be on the record.

Graham Scrimgeour: I do not think that we are going to agree on that point.

Rob Gibson: Mr McIntosh, I do not know whether I missed what you said, but did you comment on the access to the stations or stops on the Docklands light railway?

Scott McIntosh: Yes.

Rob Gibson: Is it the same as in Croydon?

12:30

Scott McIntosh: No. In the case of the Docklands light railway, where some sections are elevated and some sections use a former railway alignment, the height difference was always dealt with by the use of lifts. In Croydon, the use of ramps was preferred, partly at least at the urging of the disabled consultative group, which had seen and used the elevators.

Rob Gibson: Has there been a move to remove the lifts from the Docklands light railway and replace them with ramps?

Scott McIntosh: In many cases, there would not be enough space to do that because of the level of development that has taken place close to the railway line since it was built.

Helen Eadie: Can you give an example of the very best model that you have seen in the Croydon area?

Scott McIntosh: In what sense?

Helen Eadie: In terms of disabled access.

Scott McIntosh: One example is the stop at Blackhorse Lane, which is on a section of former railway line. Access is from a road overbridge across the railway and there is a ramp along one side. Another example is Mitcham Junction; again, access is from a pre-existing road overbridge that crosses the railway at more than the minimum height. The height difference is probably about 4m.

Helen Eadie: Does TIE intend to bring together a group of disabled people from throughout Edinburgh to ensure that all your plans and proposals are satisfactory in their eyes?

Scott McIntosh: I am afraid I cannot answer for the promoter on that. Of course, since the Croydon tramlink was designed, statutory provision has been made in the DDA, which clearly sets out the rules. Dare I say it, I have no doubts that that will be a material issue when planning applications are considered.

Helen Eadie: Are you aware that a disability group was formed to ensure that there was satisfactory DDA compliance in the Scottish Parliament? I was chair of Fife Council's equal opportunities committee and was the council's transport spokesperson. We insisted that the council had a working group to test all transport

proposals. Only when that group had endorsed a proposal, giving it a satisfactory mark, did it happen. Do you accept that there is wisdom in that approach, and that you should take the idea back to TIE and ask whether it will do that?

Scott McIntosh: I am happy to do that. Having spent nearly a year of my life with a badly broken leg—it was plated together, which required me to use either a Zimmer frame or crutches—I am aware of the practical difficulties that the disabled face every day of their lives. I would never want to be involved in a scheme that did not take into account the interests of people with disabilities. That does not mean just wheelchair users, if we use the wider definition and include people who are encumbered with children, with shopping or simply with arthritic conditions and so on. That is a wide group of people that constitutes a significant element of the population and of the potential traffic of a line such as tramline 1.

I well remember a lady who spent a great deal of time with us and who was confined to a wheelchair. She was interviewed on the day when the Croydon tramlink opened and was asked what the scheme meant to her. She said, quite simply, "It has given my city back to me."

Helen Eadie: I have to say, as someone who has two replacement hips, that I feel the issues profoundly in the same way that you do. I feel passionately that the matter has to be attended to.

The Convener: I think that that point has been acknowledged by the promoter, but I am always mindful of Mr McIntosh's interesting stories.

Scott McIntosh: I will try to keep them short, convener.

The Convener: Indeed.

Phil Gallie: I will keep my question short. Mr McIntosh, do you have any idea of the gradient and the length of the ramp that is envisaged at Ravelston?

Scott McIntosh: The gradients are set out in the DDA compliance requirements and the rail vehicle access regulations. Those set out the requirements for gradients and for intermediate landings to let people get their breath and so on. The drawings that have been submitted to the Parliament contain an indication of the length of the ramp.

Phil Gallie: Okay. I have not seen them, but I think that they are relevant. I will pick up on the matter later with other members of the panel.

The Convener: Before we move on to what we should be discussing, which is traffic potential and tram stops, I ask whether Mr Thomson has follow-up questions.

Malcolm Thomson: I have none.

The Convener: Excellent. In that case, we will move on to traffic potential and tram stops. I recollect that Mr Thomson has nothing to add on that.

Malcolm Thomson: That is correct.

The Convener: Excellent. Ms Bourne will ask questions for group 33.

Alison Bourne: Good morning, Mr McIntosh. I have a couple of questions about your comments in the promoter's companion document in rebuttal to my witness statement. On your response to paragraph 287 of my statement, do you consider that the tram stop for the Western general, which will be located approximately 700m away from the busiest sections of the hospital, at the back of a housing estate, and will require people to cross the busy dual carriageway of Telford Road, complies with the promoter's tram system aspirational high-priority objective of providing direct and convenient access to a major key generator?

Scott McIntosh: I will not labour a point that has been discussed many times before the committee in the past few meetings. A balance must be struck between several accessibility issues along the alignment. I was not involved in the team that produced or reviewed the alignment, but having come later to the project and reviewed the alignment, I am happy that the alignment that runs through the Roseburn corridor and serves the Western general hospital is the best overall balance that could be achieved.

As I said in my rebuttal, not every traffic potential along the line can be served as closely as might be the ideal. However, the balance that the proposed alignment strikes is the best that is possible. The walk distances that you have specified are longer than those that I have walked or that others have submitted in evidence. Combined with the undertaking to provide a feeder bus, such distances provide an attractive link to the Western general hospital, without compromising the scheme's overall efficiency.

Alison Bourne: Last week, the promoter's witnesses agreed that my walk distances were roughly the same as those that they gave.

Given the location of the tram stop that I described, how can it be considered to provide good access to all the other key generators on that stretch of road? Crewe Road South is one of the few roads in north Edinburgh with so many key generators. The distances to other key generators on that road from the Crewe Toll or Drylaw stops are even longer than 700m, so how will those stops cater to those key generators' needs?

Scott McIntosh: I repeat that the proposed alignment offers the best overall balance of

attracting people to the tramway and providing an efficient service to the whole of that area of north Edinburgh.

Alison Bourne: Do you accept that a tram stop on Crewe Road South would better meet the objective?

Scott McIntosh: I find it difficult to understand what objective an alignment along Crewe Road South would serve, short of taking the tramway alignment away from your house.

Alison Bourne: The objective would be to provide direct easy access to key generators and to put tram stops as close as possible to their entrances.

Scott McIntosh: The price for doing that is a long and somewhat convoluted alignment that would lead to a longer run time for many people. Therefore, I repeat that the best overall balance of service of all the key generators in the area is achieved by the alignment that the promoter proposes. As I said in my rebuttal, simply because the line cannot serve every potential traffic objective along the line, to say that it is in some way without merit is fallacious. It achieves a good balance of serving major traffic generators along the route. It cannot pass the door of every one of them without having an alignment that is so convoluted and unattractive that many people would not use it.

Alison Bourne: I do not think that we are ever going to agree on this issue, so I will leave that question there.

With regard to your response to paragraph 288, I note that group 33 is proposing the option involving Crewe Road South and Craighleith Road because it considers that it better serves the key generators on that stretch of road. Why do you say that it is "facile" to consider those particular local boarding figures?

Scott McIntosh: Because one has to balance the end-to-end boardings along the route with the local boardings. If one makes a route that is attractive to and serves well a smaller traffic generator but which makes the line unattractive to larger traffic generators, the overall economic effect will be less attractive. As I have said, I believe that this route strikes the best balance in terms of serving all the traffic generators in the area.

Alison Bourne: The Western general hospital in particular has been identified by the promoter as an important location. Last week, Mr Oldfield mentioned that he kept bringing it up in the hope that it could somehow be served. I am curious as to why no work has been done to establish a patronage figure that would tell us how much traffic would come from the generators on Crewe

Road South and the hospital in particular, given that the promoter has identified it as an important location.

Scott McIntosh: There is a level walkway—which, admittedly, crosses a main road—from the Western general hospital stop to the hospital. There are a large number of buses, which would be part of an integrated transport network, serving Crewe Road South. The promoter has undertaken to secure a feeder bus service to serve the hospital. That integrated transport package provides the best possible solution for this area.

Alison Bourne: I take it, convener, that I am not allowed to ask questions about Croydon.

The Convener: Mr McIntosh introduced the subject, so I will allow you a tiny bit of leeway.

Alison Bourne: In your response to my statement, Mr McIntosh, you suggest that tramline 1 is like the Wimbledon and New Addington lines of the Croydon tramlink, because those lines pass through large areas of uninhabited open spaces. Are you suggesting that, because tramline 1 is proposing to use the Roseburn corridor, it will have similar patronage levels to Croydon's tramlines?

Scott McIntosh: I think that Edinburgh would be fortunate if tramline 1 had similar patronage levels to those in Croydon, which has the most successful tram system in the United Kingdom.

I have considered the proportion of patronage that is contributed by intermediate stops in Croydon. If I may have the committee's indulgence, I will explain the argument. I hope that you will understand that I am not introducing new evidence.

Not including the large interchanges—such as East Croydon station, Wimbledon and so on—there are 28 intermediate stops in Croydon that contribute approximately 43 per cent of the total patronage, which comes to an average of approximately 1.5 per cent per stop. However, the stops that are in areas that are similar to those along the Roseburn corridor—they serve areas with large numbers of detached and semi-detached villas, flatted houses and apartment blocks—contribute approximately nearly 2.2 per cent each. In other words, they are much better performers. Large numbers of people walk to those stops to access them. That is consistent across all the stops in areas that are broadly similar to those along the Roseburn corridor. The figures are consistent from Monday to Friday, on Saturdays and on Sundays.

Alison Bourne: Those percentages imply that 47 per cent of the patronage in Croydon arises from interchanges. Is that correct?

Scott McIntosh: No. I said that 43 per cent came from the intermediate stops. The 10 major

stops, which are interchanges and city-centre stops, contribute more than 50 per cent of the patronage.

12:45

Alison Bourne: Do you agree that patronage levels in Croydon are more likely to be high, not because some lines run through areas of large, mostly uninhabited open spaces, but because the network has seven interchanges between the tram and heavy rail, an interchange between the tram and the underground and seven major interchanges between the tram and bus services?

Scott McIntosh: No. I would say that the Croydon system is so successful because it links areas where people are to areas where people would like to be. I believe that that is very much what tramline 1 would do.

The Convener: Committee members have no further questions. Mr Thomson, do you have any follow-up questions for Mr McIntosh?

Malcolm Thomson: No.

The Convener: I thank Mr McIntosh for giving evidence.

The final witness is Karen Raymond, who will address first the issues of visual and amenity impacts and vegetation impacts as they relate to security and privacy, which are the remaining aspects of her witness statement. That will be followed by consideration of issues of air quality and impact on bridges.

Malcolm Thomson: Ms Raymond, can you start by updating us on the landscape and habitat management plan?

Karen Raymond: Yes. The most recent issue of the plan was on 17 June and that still stands. In oral evidence to the committee before the summer recess, I talked about a number of ways in which the landscape and habitat management plan might be given more force. That aspect was being explored within the team in the promoter's organisation.

I am pleased to advise the committee that my current understanding is that the promoter would be content to lodge an amendment to the bill to address objectors' concerns in this respect. The amendment would commit the promoter to implementing the measures that are set out in the landscape and habitat management plan, once it has been approved by the planning authority. That recognises that the plan will continue to evolve as the detailed design is developed, but that it would be subject to approval prior to its implementation. That is similar to the condition that is frequently attached to applications for planning consent through the normal planning system.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you know why the promoter is prepared to do that?

Karen Raymond: The promoter is doing that in response to the evident concerns of a number of objectors about the force that could be given to the landscape and habitat management plan. The document has been developed recently and it will need to continue to evolve with the detailed design. The plan cannot be made a mandatory requirement at present, but if we make it subject to approval later on, that should provide the objectors and the committee with significant reassurance.

Malcolm Thomson: Does that development supersede the indication in your written evidence that the promoter would give individual written undertakings to individual parties with regard to boundary treatment along the corridor?

Karen Raymond: I think that the plan should be sufficient, because it will be subject to continuing consultation and neighbours will be able to comment on it as it evolves.

Malcolm Thomson: Is the promoter aware of that aspect of your evidence?

Karen Raymond: I have advised it accordingly.

The Convener: Ms Bourne will question Ms Raymond for group 33.

Alison Bourne: In paragraph 2.2 of your rebuttal statement to Mrs Craik, you refer to current hedges

“suffering from a lack of management and becoming ‘leggy’ and ‘gappy’.”

Have you visited any of the gardens of the properties in the Groathill area and seen the management that some residents have undertaken on their side of the boundary?

Karen Raymond: No. I observed the hedges only from the corridor side.

Alison Bourne: In paragraph 2.3 of the same rebuttal statement, you state that there would be increased

“activity along the Corridor during tram operating hours,”

and that that would improve security. What evidence do you have that the tram would not deter many pedestrians, dog walkers, cyclists and other legitimate current users of the corridor from using it?

Karen Raymond: My comment relates principally to the increased activity that there will be along the corridor during the evening, which we understand from recent comments by the police to be their main time of concern. We have received a communication from the police in the past few days, following meetings that took place during the summer. The police state that the increase in

natural surveillance opportunities from drivers and passengers on the proposed tram will be a positive factor in the security of the corridor.

Alison Bourne: That is at odds with the feedback that we have had from local people about whether they are more or less likely to continue to use the corridor once the tram is in place. What evidence do you have to support the suggestion that it will be used more?

Karen Raymond: My comment relates to the fact that there will be more activity along the corridor in the hours of darkness when the tramline is in place.

Alison Bourne: But we established previously that you have not conducted counts in the corridor to establish the current number of users. I am puzzled that you can think that there will be increased usage.

Karen Raymond: I am commenting on the matter based on my local knowledge of the corridor.

Alison Bourne: Section 2.4 of your rebuttal states that five properties on Groathill Avenue will probably need security fencing to replace their existing boundary planting. You state that the owners will be consulted. Will they have direct input into the type of fencing that is proposed or will it be whatever the promoter determines?

Karen Raymond: I did not mention security fencing—I said “secure fencing”. The phrase “security fencing” implies that there will be barbed wire and broken glass on the top of it, which I do not believe will be required. My advice to the promoter would be that it ought to consult the residents and agree on the form of the fencing. I imagine that that will happen.

Alison Bourne: Okay.

Section 2.5 of your rebuttal states:

“All planting will be scheduled to be implemented at the earliest possible date”.

Given that the promoter intends to commence construction in 2006, which is just a few months away, can you advise us when the planting will start to be implemented?

Karen Raymond: I cannot do so at this stage. That will depend on aspects of the detailed design.

Alison Bourne: Section 2.7 of your rebuttal states that you have suggested that the promoter gives individual undertakings in writing to individual residents. Are you aware whether the promoter has commenced such actions yet? Would those undertakings be enforceable?

Karen Raymond: No. As I said in response to Mr Thomson, I believe that the measures that we now propose in relation to the landscape and

habitat management plan and the consultations that will take place during its development should supersede any requirement for such undertakings.

Alison Bourne: Section 3.3 of your rebuttal states that long-term maintenance will revert to the council. In all the years that I have lived in the area, I cannot remember the council undertaking maintenance of the hedge once. What confidence can we have that that will change without any enforceable requirement?

Karen Raymond: That is the understanding that I have been given by the promoter.

Alison Bourne: That it will be enforceable.

Karen Raymond: That it will be maintained.

Alison Bourne: But that the maintenance is enforceable.

Karen Raymond: I cannot comment on that. Yes—it will be through the landscape and habitat management plan.

Alison Bourne: Section 3.4 of your rebuttal states that the 2m strip of mature vegetation cannot be provided as it takes time for new planting to grow. Group 33 fails to understand why new planting is to be provided. The promoter has written to residents in Groathill stating that it intends to have a 1.5m separation strip between the hedge and the works. That 1.5m strip would cover much of the 2m, hence there is no need to lose mature vegetation. Are you suggesting that the separation strip will not be provided and that it is the promoter's intention to remove all existing vegetation up to the boundary hedge?

Karen Raymond: No. We will retain as much as possible of the vegetation along the boundary. The narrowest part of the corridor is in the Groathill area. We have confirmed in writing—to Alison Bourne, I believe—that 1.5m of existing vegetation will be maintained adjacent to her boundary. There is an issue on the opposite side of the corridor from her property where we may require to clear the vegetation right back to the fence.

Alison Bourne: The letter was in response to Mrs Craik. There has been a lot of confusion about what was suggested at the community liaison group and what was stated in the letter. I wanted to clarify the situation. Thank you, Ms Raymond. I have no more questions for you.

The Convener: Thank you very much, Ms Bourne. We turn to Ms Woolnough on the amenity impact for group 34 and all of her statement for group 45.

Kristina Woolnough: It will take me a minute to get organised. We have a lot of rebuttals from you, so I know what it feels like.

First, I want to clarify that amenity is not the same as function. Last week you said that the

function of the cycleway and walkway would be retained and you confirmed that you had not done an assessment of human users. Is amenity the same as function?

Karen Raymond: The amenity of the corridor is part of its function. The two are integrally linked with each other.

Kristina Woolnough: A number of witnesses for the promoter have said that the cycleway and walkway are being retained, so that is therefore all right from a transportation point of view. I wanted to check with you what the implications of that are for amenity.

Karen Raymond: The function of the corridor as a route for cyclists and walkers will be maintained.

Kristina Woolnough: But its amenity value will not.

Karen Raymond: Its amenity value will be altered.

Kristina Woolnough: Why was no measure of human amenity made?

Karen Raymond: It was.

Kristina Woolnough: When was that?

Karen Raymond: The amenity of the corridor has been recognised and taken into account throughout the assessment.

Kristina Woolnough: Has it been measured by way of a user survey?

Karen Raymond: I see. No, we did not feel that it was necessary to undertake a survey. At every stage of the assessment, we were well aware that the corridor is used for a variety of purposes.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you accept that you or other members of your team who live close by have given anecdotal evidence, and that anecdotal evidence about human amenity is not really enough?

Karen Raymond: It is what we would normally use for such purposes. As I think I said in the evidence that I gave last week, we would have undertaken a detailed survey of users of the corridor only if we needed to identify alternative provision for them.

Kristina Woolnough: It would have been useful for you to know what the impact on human users would be during the construction period when sections of the corridor will be shut. Is that not the case?

Karen Raymond: We have sufficient understanding of the use that is made of the corridor to enable us to identify appropriate mitigation for the purposes of environmental assessment.

Kristina Woolnough: Has such mitigation for human users been identified for the construction phase?

Karen Raymond: We do not have the details yet. Some commitments have been made and they are set out in the environmental statement, but the detail will have to await the finalisation of the construction methodology.

Kristina Woolnough: Has an assessment been made of what the impact will be when sections of the corridor are closed?

Karen Raymond: There will be a significant impact on the corridor during construction.

Kristina Woolnough: Local people are very concerned to know where they might cycle or walk their dogs. There will be a knock-on impact on the entire surrounding environment.

Karen Raymond: There will be an impact on current users of the corridor during the construction period. My understanding is that the corridor will be shut only section by section, but the details will have to await the appointment of a construction contractor to work out the final methodology.

Kristina Woolnough: Were the vistas and views that we heard talk of this morning factored into the human amenity value?

Karen Raymond: Vistas and views—

Kristina Woolnough: From the Coltbridge viaduct, Craighleith Drive bridge and from Groathill.

Karen Raymond: They would all have been taken into account in the broad assessment of the contribution that is made by the corridor.

Kristina Woolnough: Has the impact of the tramline on those been mitigated?

Karen Raymond: Do you mean the impact of the tram on the views from those structures?

Kristina Woolnough: Yes.

Karen Raymond: Not specifically. The tram would have an impact on those views only when it was passing in front of someone who was crossing at the same time.

Kristina Woolnough: That is every 3.5 minutes, so the impact and interruption of views and vistas would be felt fairly frequently.

Karen Raymond: That depends on what you are comparing it with. In comparison with walking along a road, the interruptions will be much less frequent.

Kristina Woolnough: We have heard that there is a proposal to enforce the landscape and habitat management plan under the proposed legislation. How feasible is the plan? For example, we know

that the corridor is constructed partly out of shale spoil and we also know that your arboriculturist was concerned that land slippage might occur if trees needed to be felled. Have you assessed whether your replanting schemes and so on are feasible?

13:00

Karen Raymond: Our judgment is that they are feasible. We worked with our engineering colleagues to put forward a set of proposals that, we believe, should be deliverable.

Kristina Woolnough: But we are aware that there are no design details of the alignment and there have been no ground tests of the corridor.

Karen Raymond: I am not sure what ground testing has been done by the engineering team, but it advised us as we developed the landscape and habitat management plan.

Kristina Woolnough: So it might be possible that there will be landslips. Locally, we know that trees were planted to retain the banks and prevent shale slips. Again, your arboriculturist noted that it might not always be possible to retain trees that you want to retain. I suppose I am asking about the margin of error in the landscape and habitat management plan.

Karen Raymond: There is some uncertainty, which is why we have indicated throughout that the landscape and habitat management plan will be an evolving document as the details of the design develop.

Kristina Woolnough: You say that the planning authority will have to approve the plan. Will the plan be in a finalised form at that point or will it evolve throughout construction as well?

Karen Raymond: It would be approved by the planning authority prior to commencement of construction in exactly the same way as if it were a condition attached to a planning consent. That is not to say that, once construction commences, things will not occur that will cause amendments to be proposed. However, such amendments would have to be approved as well. That is the normal course of events in a major construction project.

Kristina Woolnough: So one can assume that there might be some caveats in the landscape and habitat management plan.

Karen Raymond: There would not be caveats as such. The plan would be final. If it subsequently required to be amended, it would need to be reapproved.

Kristina Woolnough: Was an exact survey of ground cover and scrub included in the landscape and habitat management plan surveys?

Karen Raymond: That depends on what you call an exact survey. We have not identified every

single plant along the corridor. We have undertaken what is called an extended phase 1 habitat survey, which is the survey that one would normally undertake at this stage in a project. It identifies the nature of the vegetation and highlights any particular species or features of interest.

Kristina Woolnough: So when you describe what will be lost, you do not have an exact picture of what is already there.

Karen Raymond: No. That will change from month to month and year to year. Vegetation is not static.

Kristina Woolnough: In my original witness statements, I said that you had not done accurate seasonal surveys of shrubs, ground cover and so on, so I will recognise that it is a seasonal matter.

Last week, you described brambles in a rather disparaging way. Do you accept that what might be perceived as brambles or gappy hedgerow might be of benefit in a wildlife corridor, for protection or as a source of feeding?

Karen Raymond: Absolutely. My point is that its value as a feeding resource and as security provision for neighbouring residents could be improved by better management.

Kristina Woolnough: I meant for wildlife. Ground cover is—

Karen Raymond: Its value as a feeding and nesting resource for wildlife could also be improved.

Kristina Woolnough: As objectors, our concern is that you have described everything that you perceive to be wrong with the management of the corridor and that, in a sense, you have made a virtue out of a vice. Is the management body not the promoter of the bill? It has failed to implement every management plan it has ever had for the corridor.

Karen Raymond: It is not for me to comment on the historical performance of the City of Edinburgh Council. I can only advise you what the promoter has told me, which is its intention in respect of the future of the corridor.

The Convener: May I interrupt you for a moment, Ms Woolnough? I am conscious that Mr Scrimgeour will cover certain aspects that you are dealing with now. I wonder whether there will be much left for him. Will you focus firmly on the rebuttal witness statement? That would be helpful to us all.

Kristina Woolnough: I take “human amenity” to mean walking and cycling as well. We propose that the walkway should specifically be included in the bill. Is there any word from the promoter about whether that is acceptable?

Karen Raymond: My understanding is that the intention has always been that it should be a walkway and a cycleway. Whether the words in the bill reflect that, I am not sure.

Kristina Woolnough: They do not. The bill says “cycletrack”.

Karen Raymond: I cannot comment further, in that case.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you think that speed restrictions in the Roseburn corridor would improve human amenity in terms of walking and cycling?

Karen Raymond: My understanding is that there will be a 70kph speed restriction in the Roseburn corridor.

Kristina Woolnough: Would a lower speed restriction improve human amenity?

Karen Raymond: In the absence of any other factors, yes.

Kristina Woolnough: Does the width of the walkway and cycleway have an impact on human amenity?

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you agree that the cycleway and walkway should be as wide as possible if they are to remain attractive in terms of human amenity?

Karen Raymond: Yes; that is what we have sought to provide in the design of the scheme.

Kristina Woolnough: Paragraph 3.2 of one of your rebuttals—the one relating to issues 15 and 18—notes that the 2000 to 2004 Edinburgh biodiversity action plan had no mentions of trams and that the 2004 to 2009 plan does. Is it possible that that Edinburgh biodiversity action plan was retro-fitted to include trams, bearing in mind that the biodiversity action plan started in 2004 and the bill was lodged in 2003?

Karen Raymond: I cannot comment on the council’s motivations, but we know that it was aware of the proposals for the trams and had taken account of them as far back as 1989, when the original north Edinburgh railway path wildlife management plan was produced.

Kristina Woolnough: Could you share your professional view about how the barriers between the tramway and the cycleway and walkway will impact on human amenity, vegetation and the wildlife corridor function?

Karen Raymond: My understanding is that the current proposal, which is for a low-level, kick-rail type of barrier, would not particularly adversely affect the walkway when compared with a situation in which there was no barrier.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you think that the containment of the tramline and the walkway with various levels of retaining walls will have an impact on the wildlife corridor function?

Karen Raymond: Badgers are the main concern in relation to wildlife moving along the corridor. The intention of the badger mitigation plan will be to ensure that the corridor's longitudinal function is maintained and that routes across the corridor are provided for badgers. I am comfortable that that can be achieved.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you accept that other forms of wildlife move along the corridor?

Karen Raymond: Yes. Anything that flies will not be constrained, but anything that moves along the ground will be. However, the badgers are the animals that make the most use of the corridor and move the longest distances along it.

Kristina Woolnough: Will the overhead cables affect flying wildlife?

Karen Raymond: I would not have thought that they would do so any more than cables in streets do.

Kristina Woolnough: Except for the fact that they would be in a constrained space in the Roseburn corridor.

Karen Raymond: I do not believe that that would be an issue.

Kristina Woolnough: Have you assessed the risk to bats, for example, or included any mitigation in that regard?

Karen Raymond: Bats certainly should not fly into cables. Their echo location systems are some of the most effective in the world.

Kristina Woolnough: But it might be possible for birds to fly into cables in a constrained environment.

Karen Raymond: I think that they are more likely to sit on them than to crash into them.

Kristina Woolnough: I believe that Michael Howell, the chief executive of TIE, suggested to objectors that talk of low barriers was, as he put it, "weasel words". If bigger barriers were required, would that impact on the human amenity value and on the corridor flow for wildlife?

Karen Raymond: There would come a point at which the barriers, as they increased in height and became more substantial, would start to affect the amenity of the walkway and cycleway.

Kristina Woolnough: Where would that point be, in your view?

Karen Raymond: It is hard to judge. It would depend on the specific circumstances. In a narrow section of the corridor, it would be at a lower level. In the wide sections, it would be less so.

Kristina Woolnough: Let us say that you had a waist-high solid barrier. Would that affect human amenity and flow along the length of the corridor?

Karen Raymond: It would be a matter of personal opinion, but from my point of view it would not.

Kristina Woolnough: I think that that will do. Thank you.

The Convener: Mr Scrimgeour, have any questions been left for you to ask on the visual and vegetation impact on security and privacy for group 34?

Graham Scrimgeour: There are still a number of points to be raised.

The Convener: Are there?

Graham Scrimgeour: I shall try to handle each one quickly and efficiently.

The Convener: That would be helpful.

Graham Scrimgeour: Ms Raymond, on page 13 of your statement issued to our group, where you talk about visual and amenity impact—

Karen Raymond: Do you mean my witness statement to group 34?

Graham Scrimgeour: Yes.

The Convener: Should we not be dealing with the rebuttal statements?

Graham Scrimgeour: I understood that we were questioning on both the statements and the rebuttals.

The Convener: Oh, you are going to question about the rebuttal as well. That is good.

Graham Scrimgeour: In paragraph 4 of your statement, you note that new planting will be required to replace that which is lost. Will that new planting be close to where the previous planting was removed or will it be some distance away?

Karen Raymond: It will be as close as possible. I explained in answer to a question from Mr Thomson last week that we clearly cannot put it in exactly the same places because the tramway will be in some of those locations, but the aim is to put it as close as possible and there is ample space in the corridor to provide the more-than-one-for-one replacement of trees that we are proposing.

Graham Scrimgeour: In the narrower sections of the corridor, is it likely that the replacement planting will be some distance away?

Karen Raymond: It could be. We have illustrated in the landscape and habitat management plan the sorts of locations where we think that that can be achieved.

Graham Scrimgeour: How long will that new planting take to reach maturity?

Karen Raymond: That will depend on what is planted. We propose to provide a significant number of what in landscape jargon are called extra heavy standards and heavy standards, which are semi-mature trees up to 15 years old when they come in. We will provide a mix, so that there is a good age structure in the corridor. It will take up to 15 years to achieve full growth of the vegetation in the corridor, but we aim to put more mature vegetation in locations where there is greatest sensitivity.

Graham Scrimgeour: I suppose that a key issue with maturity is hedging. Would the hedging provide a barrier within two years?

Karen Raymond: It depends on whether you are putting in entirely new hedging or improving existing hedging. In most locations, we aim to improve existing hedging by improved management. Our arboriculturalist—I have as much difficulty as you have in saying that—has suggested that some of the hedging along the corridor could do with being cut back to 1.5m or 2m high, in which case it will regrow quite rapidly to the current height of about 2m to 3m.

Graham Scrimgeour: So there is no proposal to remove the hedging on the existing boundary.

Karen Raymond: We will need to do that in a couple of places, because there is not enough space—particularly in one section at Groathill on the east side of the corridor.

Graham Scrimgeour: We have heard about the promoter considering enforcement of the landscape and habitat management plan. We had not heard about that until this morning, so I am adjusting my questions. Is that proposal intended to enforce planting at the time of construction or will it continue to provide an enforcement mechanism when the tram operates, to ensure that what is planted according to the plan is maintained in accordance with it?

13:15

Karen Raymond: I am not sure whether I can answer that definitively. The proposal will require all the planting that is shown on the plan to be planted. An establishment and maintenance period usually runs for five years after the completion of a construction project. That will be a matter for the contract between the promoter and the landscape and construction contractors, rather than the planning authority, but I imagine that the planning authority would have something to say if all the planting that was put in died.

Graham Scrimgeour: We originally submitted that an amendment should provide for enforcement at the start and subsequently. That proposal might still not be met by what we heard this morning.

The next page of your statement says that the area of vegetation will be reduced by 21 per cent, but that was corrected last week to 34 per cent. Does that calculation of the amount of vegetation that will be lost allow for the new accesses that will be created and for the tram stops?

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Graham Scrimgeour: I have tried to review the calculation and I have struggled to achieve 1.5 hectares when the stops are included. The length of space that you are talking about, which is about 1,800m of corridor, and a tram alignment that is about 8m wide, or slightly more, will on their own remove 1.5 hectares. The stops and accesses would take another 0.2 hectares. That would increase the loss to about 40 per cent. That is my calculation from trying to work back to your figures.

Karen Raymond: We took into account measurements from computer-aided design drawings of the before and after situations. All that I can say is that those figures are what the plans reveal when they are measured by that electronic method.

Graham Scrimgeour: I tried to work back to the figure from knowledge of the space that will be required for the tram and the length. The calculation is fairly simple and appears to produce a higher figure.

Karen Raymond: The figure to which I referred concerned the section between the A8 and Telford Road.

Graham Scrimgeour: That is what I measured on the basis of the information that you gave last week.

Another concern is that the corridor includes some very wide sections, such as that at Maiden Craig, and some much narrower sections. Do you accept that in some parts of the area north of Maiden Craig, the reduction in space could be 50 or 70 per cent?

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Graham Scrimgeour: In the area that concerns our group, the reduction in green space between Craighleith Drive and Ravelston Dykes will be 50 per cent.

Karen Raymond: I cannot comment specifically without examining the figures carefully.

Graham Scrimgeour: Does that seem reasonable?

Karen Raymond: I do not know—I think that 50 per cent is a bit high for the area from Craighleith Drive to Ravelston Dykes.

Graham Scrimgeour: An enormous area will be taken out for the disabled access ramp to the tram

stop. That will take out a whole embankment side and will use a massive area.

Karen Raymond: As I said, I cannot comment on the details of those figures without an opportunity to examine them.

Graham Scrimgeour: We remain concerned, because that is an awful lot of green space. That area is heavily used by badgers, so they will lose much of their foraging space.

I will now focus on security and privacy—I am trying to move on. You have answered some of the questions already. How will privacy and security be maintained during construction? If vegetation is removed, that will reduce privacy and security. If the construction period is six or 12 months, how will security and privacy be maintained?

Karen Raymond: I understand that the site will be fully hoarded and will be secured, so no public access will be available to sites to the rear of properties while work is being undertaken.

Graham Scrimgeour: Hoarding on an embankment could have a significant visual impact.

Karen Raymond: The hoarding would have a visual impact during construction.

Graham Scrimgeour: In your rebuttal of my statement on security and privacy, you talk in paragraph 2.1 about a gap of 50m to 100m in the boundary hedging. I think that you are referring to the gap behind 16 Blinkbonny Road, which is about 15m long. How can that gap be described as 50m to 100m long?

Karen Raymond: I was not suggesting that it was a complete gap. However, it is an area where there is not much high vegetation along the boundary on the east side of the corridor. It is not a complete gap, because a number of trees are there.

Graham Scrimgeour: The background to my next question is that, when the May 2005 landscape and management plan was issued, I contacted TIE to say that some trees and vegetation were missing from the plan. I referred to that in my statement. In the June edition of the plan, those trees and vegetation were added. In your rebuttal, you say that the trees identified by the surveyor were those which had a trunk diameter in excess of 10cm. However, between May and June and my intervention, about 30 trees were added to the section for a 200m length, between my house and Craighleith Drive. Having received your rebuttal, I measured those trees, which all exceed 10cm in trunk diameter.

The Convener: Can you get to your question, Mr Scrimgeour?

Graham Scrimgeour: The question is: can we rely on the landscape and habitat management plan being accurate when a significant number of trees have been missed in such a short section?

Karen Raymond: I am afraid I cannot comment on the details of that. I would have to go back and look into it.

Graham Scrimgeour: My concern is that the plan is not accurate and that trees are missing from it. Over the whole length, that could be—

The Convener: The committee gets the point.

Graham Scrimgeour: In paragraph 2.5, you talk about the final planned works being carried out in consultation with the City of Edinburgh Council, SNH and local residents. What form do you expect the consultation with residents to take?

Karen Raymond: I am not sure at this stage. That will be for the promoter, and the contractor who undertakes the detailed design.

Graham Scrimgeour: That is obviously important to us. It would help to have detail about that now, but it seems that it is not available.

The Convener: The committee, too, would be keen to know about that.

Graham Scrimgeour: Towards the end of your rebuttal you refer to proposals for enforcement. Part of that has been touched on and we have recorded that some of it, about maintenance, is not clear. Thank you.

Rob Gibson: We have heard that, during the construction phase, hoardings would screen properties from the works. Given the time required for planted vegetation to mature, can you make clear exactly what would be planned for screening properties in the interim, while the newly planted vegetation matured?

Karen Raymond: I cannot do that specifically. It would depend on particular planting proposals in individual locations. While the vegetation was maturing, there could be a development of the screening over time.

Rob Gibson: There would be a development of the screening effect as the vegetation matures, but are other measures proposed for after the hoarding is removed and before the screening is mature?

Karen Raymond: We have not proposed anything at this stage.

Rob Gibson: We would like to hear more on that from the promoter, convener, if we can.

The Convener: It would be helpful if the promoter would undertake to fill us in on the detail. I allowed Rob Gibson's question because it was directly related to this point, but I am not bringing

in other committee members yet. I will take everybody at the end, if that is okay, because I am preventing Mr Murphy from having his shot; Mr Murphy for group 35.

Frazor Murphy: I will follow on from my colleague Mr Scrimgeour's point about the number of trees in the plan being inaccurate, even on the second set of drawings that we received. I did a second survey yesterday and I found that the diagram shows only 42 per cent of the trees that are actually on the walkway. You are paying for professionals to do a job, so how can you be that far out?

Karen Raymond: We asked our arboriculturalist to focus on those trees that are closest to the tramway and are therefore more likely to be affected. He did not do a complete survey of every tree along the Roseburn corridor. We are well aware that, particularly where the corridor is wide, significant numbers of trees are not identified on the plan.

Frazor Murphy: That takes me on to my next point. Your rebuttal statement says that

"Some larger trees towards the back of the corridor may also be omitted from the survey in this area as these were considered very unlikely to be affected."

I believe that that is what you have just said.

Karen Raymond: That is correct.

Frazor Murphy: Does "very unlikely" mean that they will not be affected or that they could possibly be affected or that they will be affected?

Karen Raymond: My current understanding is that they will not be affected.

Frazor Murphy: So that is a guarantee that all the trees that are not on the diagram will not be touched.

Karen Raymond: I would not like to give anyone any guarantees in the face of a major construction project.

Frazor Murphy: So the trees could be affected and they should be on the diagram.

Karen Raymond: Some of them could fall down tomorrow for other reasons entirely.

Frazor Murphy: They could be affected.

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Frazor Murphy: In point 2.4, you say that

"A basic principle of the LHMP is that all trees to be lost will be replaced on at least a one-for-one basis."

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Frazor Murphy: Does that include coppiced trees?

Karen Raymond: We have counted the number of trees with a girth of more than 10cm. That is the

number on which the explicit commitment of one-for-one is given. We have done some rough estimates on the number of trees that will be planted under the current landscape and habitat management plan and it comes to several thousand in total if we take into account the extent of mixed woodland planting that is being provided. We have not counted every individual coppiced tree and small sapling along the corridor, so I cannot guarantee that all those will be replaced one-for-one.

Frazor Murphy: Do you agree that 10 coppiced trees could look like 50 single trees?

Karen Raymond: One coppiced tree is one tree.

Frazor Murphy: I know, but the way that a coppiced tree grows means that eight very large trunks could be from one coppiced tree.

Karen Raymond: They could be, if the tree has not been coppiced in recent years. The coppicing would have to have stopped some time ago—

Frazor Murphy: That has happened because the corridor is no longer a railway.

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Frazor Murphy: So the coppiced trees look like more than one tree.

The Convener: Could you allow Ms Raymond to finish? If you are posing a question I assume that you are interested in the answer.

Karen Raymond: I have forgotten what the question was.

Frazor Murphy: Should coppiced trees be considered as one tree when you are replanting, or should it be considered that more trees should be planted to achieve one-for-one replanting?

Karen Raymond: We would normally replace one coppiced tree with one new tree.

Frazor Murphy: Do you think that that will be visually equivalent?

Karen Raymond: If that tree is coppiced, it will become so.

Frazor Murphy: That could take 100 years.

Karen Raymond: Coppicing does not take that long.

Frazor Murphy: Fifty years?

Karen Raymond: A tree could be coppiced from its initial planting and it will become a coppiced tree as a consequence of that process in 10 to 15 years.

Frazor Murphy: Are the trees on the line going to be coppiced?

Karen Raymond: We have made no specific proposals. Maintaining coppicing is a long-term management burden on any organisation.

13:30

Frazor Murphy: On diagram C7 of the most recent LHMP, some trees miraculously appeared between May and June.

"Figure 2 in section C7 of the LHMP illustrates that where feasible, trees will be replaced near their original location, including two heavy standard trees that will be planted close to the access bridge adjacent to 11 Upper Coltbridge Terrace."

That is my house. You are going to replant two heavy standard trees. How big are they going to be?

Karen Raymond: A heavy standard tree can be up to 5m high and will have a girth of anything between 4cm and 7cm.

Frazor Murphy: That is quite large. The two trees that are there at the moment are more than 100ft high. After construction is complete and the billboards or other security measures come down, the view from the bridge will look straight into my son's and daughter's bedrooms. What measures will be put in place to ensure that privacy is continued?

Karen Raymond: I cannot comment on the details of that. The two new trees will provide some measure of screening.

Frazor Murphy: They will not compare to the trees that are there at present.

The Convener: I have a suggestion. It is now 1.30—

Frazor Murphy: I should be quick.

The Convener: I do not know where you are going with this line of questioning because you are talking about a level of detail that is not in the rebuttal statements and I suspect it might be helpful to have a lunch break at this point. We will resume the meeting at 2.30.

13:32

Meeting suspended.

14:35

On resuming—

The Convener: Before I bring in Mr Murphy to complete his questioning, I will pass comment on the *Edinburgh Evening News* and say to those present that, in the interests of accuracy, the committee has put the progress report that we received from TIE on our website. I hope that, people will draw their own conclusions from that.

Frazor Murphy: Paragraph 2.5 of the rebuttal says:

"The plans for treatment of all boundaries along the Corridor will be set out in detail in the LHMP."

Is the version of the landscape and habitat management plan that I have in my hand not the version of the LHMP to which that paragraph refers?

Karen Raymond: It is a draft of an evolving document.

Frazor Murphy: Do you agree that it would benefit everybody if we had the final version now?

Karen Raymond: As I have previously explained, it is not possible to give you the final details until the details of the design have been finalised. That point has yet to be reached.

Frazor Murphy: At this precise moment, how near to completion is the LHMP? Is it half finished, 80 per cent finished or what?

Karen Raymond: It is not a matter of percentage of completion but of the level of detail that is presented within the document. That detail will evolve over time, so it is impossible to put a percentage on it.

I think that I have resolved the issue of the 30 trees. Might I be allowed to clarify that point?

The Convener: If it is helpful, you can do so.

Karen Raymond: I think that when the May issue of the LHMP was produced, we had not completed the tree survey in the section immediately to the north of the section that Mr Murphy referred to, and the bit of the corridor outside his property had not been surveyed either at that stage. That is why those trees were not shown in the May version but are in the June version.

The difference in the number of trees in the drawings arises because, in the May version, we did not show all of the smaller trees that are hidden by the canopy of larger trees. In the plans in the later version, we showed them in outline. I imagine that that is where the difference in numbers came from.

Frazor Murphy: You say that the May issue did not contain a complete survey.

Karen Raymond: We had not surveyed the section from Ravelston Dykes down to the St George's bridge.

Frazor Murphy: In the diagram that I have before me, trees are marked for removal. I assume that a survey must have been carried out before they could be so marked.

Karen Raymond: By June, that section had been surveyed.

Frazor Murphy: I am looking at the May issue.

Karen Raymond: In the May issue, there was no section C6.

Frazor Murphy: I have section C7 before me—sorry.

Karen Raymond: I am looking at figures 1 and 2 in section C7. There is nothing shown to the north of number 11 Coltbridge Terrace on those drawings.

Frazor Murphy: Right. The two trees are to the south.

Karen Raymond: We had completed the survey up to the corner of number 11 Coltbridge Terrace.

Frazor Murphy: Would it have been helpful if there had been some sort of marking on the diagram to show that it was inaccurate?

Karen Raymond: It would have been helpful if we had shown that certain areas had not been surveyed. It is fairly evident that it had not been surveyed, however, as nothing is shown there.

Frazor Murphy: I am sorry to go on about this, but are you saying that diagram C7 in the June issue is up to date and that all the trees are marked through the canopy at the bridge point?

Karen Raymond: All the trees that were surveyed as being likely to be affected and which were more than 10cm in girth are shown on that drawing.

Frazor Murphy: The reason why I was talking about the two trees—which you raised in your rebuttal; I did not raise that issue—was that the trees, which you plan to replace with what you call large—

Karen Raymond: Extra heavy standard trees.

Frazor Murphy: Yes. However, there are already two other trees under the canopy of those trees that are of a size that would be kept but which you have not marked on this diagram. Therefore, you will be replacing two trees in a place where there are already two trees. That was my point.

If you give us diagrams that are incorrect, what happens on the day when the chap arrives with the chainsaw? To explain again, under the two trees there are two other trees—they are smaller, but they are greater than 10cm in girth—and they are not marked on the diagram.

Karen Raymond: I will have to check with our tree surveyor. His report to us did not indicate that those trees were present. It may be that his judgment was that they will not be affected and that they can be retained. The judgment as to whether a tree will be affected is, in part, determined by its size, so smaller trees that are closer to the track can be saved.

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Murphy. Mrs Milne?

Frazor Murphy: I have not finished.

The Convener: Sorry. I was getting ahead of myself.

Frazor Murphy: In paragraph 2.6 of your rebuttal to me you state:

“All planting will be scheduled to be implemented at the earliest possible date to maximise the benefit offered during construction.”

What benefit will a couple of shrubs and some trees give to local residents who live within 2m of the construction? I imagine that construction will be similar to the building of a motorway.

Karen Raymond: The comparison with a motorway is a little inappropriate.

Frazor Murphy: Okay—a small dual carriageway.

The Convener: Let Ms Raymond answer the question.

Karen Raymond: I refer to the benefit to all the purposes that the corridor serves—to wildlife, to the amenity of users of the corridor and to the adjacent residents. In areas where the band of vegetation is only 2m wide, early planting will not be possible, but in the wider areas of the corridor, enhancement planting on the wide cutting slopes will be done as early as possible to enhance the various functions of the corridor.

Frazor Murphy: So the point that you made in your rebuttal is not relevant to me.

Karen Raymond: In certain sections of the corridor early planting will be possible.

Frazor Murphy: Yes, but your rebuttal to me said that the planting would give me maximum benefit.

Karen Raymond: No, I said:

“to maximise the benefit offered during construction.”

Frazor Murphy: Okay. Thank you.

In paragraph 2.7 of your rebuttal you state:

“Mr Murphy asks that the Bill be amended to require early planting of trees and bushes to give immediate screening.”

The reason for that request is that an earlier diagram showed that a large wall was to be built. I have the diagram here. At present, obviously, the wall is not going to be built, but it might be built in the future if the designs change.

Karen Raymond: I do not know which location you are referring to, or which diagram.

Frazor Murphy: It is at 11 Upper Coltbridge Terrace. My point is that your rebuttal pointed out that I asked for early planting—

The Convener: Will you pose that as a question, Mr Murphy, rather than as a discussion?

Frazor Murphy: Okay. I will leave that one.

Paragraph 2.7 states:

“the promoter is also considering other mechanisms to ensure implementation of the LHMP.”

Can you tell me what those other mechanisms are?

Karen Raymond: I refer to the mechanism that I described to the committee this morning.

Frazor Murphy: Will you briefly run over it again? You said that you would continue consultation with residents and other bodies, but I have not been consulted about anything and, to my knowledge, no one else in group 35 has been consulted.

Karen Raymond: The consultation will be done through publication of the LHMP. That is how it has been done to date, although, as I indicated this morning, I would need to seek advice on how it will evolve in the future.

Frazor Murphy: So when you say “consultation”, you mean you will be telling us.

Karen Raymond: I mean that there will be an opportunity for you to comment to the promoter on the proposals in the LHMP.

Frazor Murphy: Okay. I have a final point on paragraph 2.7. It states:

“On this basis the promoter considers that incorporation of the LHMP into the Bill is not required.”

You mentioned this morning that the LHMP will be late because the design is late, so therefore it will be an on-going matter. On a recent trip to Dublin I talked to people who live next to the tramline there.

14:45

The Convener: Ask a question please, Mr Murphy.

Frazor Murphy: Those people said that if you do not get it in writing you will not get anything. Will that situation arise? If we do not get it in writing and it is not part of the bill, it might not happen.

Karen Raymond: You will get it in writing in the LHMP at the appropriate stage. I suggest that that is not a late stage, but an appropriate stage.

Frazor Murphy: If we do not agree, is there a route that we can go down to complain or object?

Karen Raymond: There will be an opportunity to comment on the LHMP. I cannot comment on the specific enforcement mechanism.

Frazor Murphy: Would it be good if the situation was like this or would you rather that we were just being told again?

Karen Raymond: It is not for me to comment on that.

Frazor Murphy: I have asked all my questions. Thank you very much.

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Murphy.

Mrs Milne: Do you have the plan for the next stretch down, which comes down behind Wester Coates Terrace?

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Mrs Milne: On the existing plan, is there a wall marked to the rear of numbers 1 to 9 on Wester Coates Terrace?

Karen Raymond: A wall is shown behind number 9.

Mrs Milne: Would it surprise you to learn that I live in number 9 but there is no wall behind my premises?

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Mrs Milne: I will turn to Roseanne Brown’s witness statement. You have commented on visual impact, but is not it the case that Roseanne Brown also commented on lack of privacy and peaceful enjoyment of property? It is proposed that 63 trees will be felled behind Wester Coates Terrace. To be honest, we have not counted them; we assumed that the figure was right. Twenty-five of the trees are to be replanted—you suggest that they will take 15 years to regrow—and 38 are to be replaced with a fence and climbers. Do you consider that that will have a significant impact on our peaceful enjoyment of our gardens?

Karen Raymond: I cannot comment on the detail. I can refer only to the drawing that is before me.

Mrs Milne: Sorry, the figures come from section B1, which is the reference to the number of trees. The figures are in Roseanne Brown’s witness statement and she refers to section B1.

Karen Raymond: I am sorry. Could you refer me to the appropriate section?

Mrs Milne: It is the penultimate paragraph of section B1.

Karen Raymond: B1 of the LHMP?

Mrs Milne: Yes. Sorry.

Karen Raymond: The penultimate paragraph of section B1?

Mrs Milne: That paragraph refers to the felling of 63 trees

“to accommodate the tram proposals”.

The phrase is used in section B1.

Karen Raymond: I am sorry, but I must be on a different page of the document.

Mrs Milne: The information is in Roseanne Brown’s statement and you have not rebutted it, so can we take it that you agree that 63 trees are to be felled?

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Mrs Milne: I will go back to my question. Do you agree that that extensive felling, with 38 trees being replaced by only a fence and climbers, will have a significant impact on our peaceful enjoyment of our back gardens?

Karen Raymond: The impact will vary depending on what particular property one is in on that section of the route.

Mrs Milne: The impact will be worse on some residents of Wester Coates Terrace than on others. Do you agree that there will be a significant impact on some of them?

Karen Raymond: There will be a reduction in the screening that is provided behind the trees—particularly further north along Wester Coates Terrace.

Mrs Milne: There will also be an impact on the properties to the south, unless we manage to persuade the promoter to move the station, because of the extensive felling that will be required to locate the station there.

Karen Raymond: The effect is less on the southern side of Wester Coates Terrace. The majority of the trees on the east side of the tramway will be retained.

Mrs Milne: Do you consider that felling that number of trees will impact on the conservation area of which Wester Coates Terrace is part?

Karen Raymond: Trees are part of the character of the conservation area.

Mrs Milne: So the felling will have an impact.

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Mrs Milne: Is planning permission normally needed to fell trees in a conservation area because being in a conservation area makes them subject to tree preservation orders?

Karen Raymond: The felling of trees in a conservation area must be the subject of planning permission. If planning permission has been obtained, I understand that conservation area consent is not also needed.

Mrs Milne: Should the felling of trees in the conservation area be subject to the prior approval provisions?

Karen Raymond: No. The granting of planning permission through this process is the route by which that consent is granted.

Mrs Milne: That is even though there is no recognition—that I can see—of the impact on the Wester Coates conservation area.

Karen Raymond: I am not sure who has or has not made that recognition.

Mrs Milne: In comparing one route with another, you said that taking the tram route along Palmerston Place would impact on properties in the conservation area there, so the Roseburn corridor was a better location. However, Wester Coates is also a conservation area. That has not been taken into account.

Karen Raymond: We are aware that Wester Coates is a conservation area; that has been taken into account in the assessment.

Mrs Milne: Is that the case even though it is not mentioned?

Karen Raymond: It is mentioned in the environmental statement.

Mrs Milne: It is not mentioned in the assessment of comparisons of routes.

The Convener: May I intervene? I am having trouble finding that subject in the rebuttal statements by you, Ms Milne, or other people. I have allowed some latitude for questions to be posed, but I ask you to come to the point.

Mrs Milne: The point is that Karen Raymond has not agreed that tree felling should be subject to prior approval. That was the question.

I move on to the enforcement method—I could have saved much time by not reading all the Scottish Natural Heritage information. Will objectors have the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment to the bill?

Karen Raymond: I presume so, but it is not for me to comment on bill procedure.

Mrs Milne: Will provision of mitigation depend on enforceability of the condition that is proposed for the bill?

Karen Raymond: No. The provision of mitigation will depend on the commitment that the promoter has given.

Mrs Milne: So why is the amendment to the bill needed?

Karen Raymond: It is needed to satisfy objectors’ concerns.

Mrs Milne: As an objector who wishes to enforce the mitigation, do I not need to be confident that the bill is sufficient to give me that benefit?

Karen Raymond: Yes.

Mrs Milne: That is particularly important because the bill's promoter is the City of Edinburgh Council, whose coffers are—I hope—large. The bill contains provisions that allow obligations to be transferred to operators and other parties that might not have large enough coffers to meet obligations. Therefore, we want to be sure that the obligation is enforceable against the council and that it cannot be passed on to somebody else who cannot meet it—a man of straw, for example.

Karen Raymond: I am not sure what the question is.

Mrs Milne: We need to be confident that the bill is drafted to enable us to enforce the obligations against the council.

The Convener: Even by my stretch of the imagination, that is not a question. I will try to be helpful. It is not the promoter, but the committee, that will amend the bill. The committee will want to be assured about the nature of the amendment, its enforceability and who will exercise the sanctions, and that a credible body is in place to give meat to the amendment. Objectors will not have a second bite of the cherry, but they can rely on the committee to do its job. If that helps, perhaps we can move on to the next set of questions.

Mrs Milne: That is helpful. My only other questions are about enforceability and long-term maintenance. I have no more questions.

The Convener: The amendment is to be welcomed, but it raises several questions. It would help if the promoter were to provide us with the detail that the committee requires on enforceability and the nature of sanctions; that would mirror comments that have been made in today's debate. Do committee members have questions?

Helen Eadie: We have heard a lot today about the landscape and habitat management plan. You have said that the document is an evolving document, but we have also heard that there will come a point at which it is a final document, which must be approved by Scottish Natural Heritage. At what point do you envisage that happening?

Karen Raymond: That will happen shortly prior to the commencement of construction.

Helen Eadie: On the objectors' point about consultation, is there a guidance note from City of Edinburgh Council, or from TIE to its advisers, about how that consultation will be undertaken with local communities?

Karen Raymond: No.

Helen Eadie: We have heard about the planting of trees, but we have also heard about security issues. In consulting and working with other agencies, will you consult the police? The police

obviously have security advisers who can advise on the type of planting that is appropriate between property boundaries to deter unwelcome intruders. Is that the sort of liaison that you would have with the police?

Karen Raymond: Yes. In fact, we have already had such liaison with an architectural liaison officer. I had not realised that the police have an architectural liaison officer, but they do, and he has advised us to use thorny vegetation where appropriate on boundaries.

Helen Eadie: Continuing on security, there will be a major conference on lighting in Our Dynamic Earth tomorrow. You obviously have to strike a balance between ensuring that light pollution does not cause an unwelcome nuisance to people and making the area as safe as possible for passengers. How do you plan to ensure that that will happen?

The Convener: Is lighting in your area of expertise?

Karen Raymond: Not in any detail, but it is a matter that will be covered in the detailed design of the scheme.

Helen Eadie: My last question is on CCTV. Again, I will stick to safety.

The Convener: I think that your question should be directed at somebody other than Ms Raymond.

Helen Eadie: I only wanted to ask what sort of CCTV there will be, whether video replay or—

The Convener: We will come to that later.

Helen Eadie: That is fine.

Phil Gallie: I would like to clarify your position with respect to vegetation and amenity, Ms Raymond. Is your job to ensure that minimal environmental damage occurs from the completion of tramline 1? Are you also there to advise on mitigation with respect to elements of the line, particularly through the Roseburn corridor?

Karen Raymond: I will take the second point first. We are there to advise on mitigation, not solely on the Roseburn corridor or particularly in relation to the Roseburn corridor, but throughout the route. To answer the first question, I would say that our job is not to ensure that minimal damage is done, but to ensure that the minimum damage is done, so that as little damage as possible is done within constraints that are imposed by other factors.

Phil Gallie: I accept what you say about minimum damage. Did I detect that you gave support to the Roseburn route with some reluctance, although you did recognise that it was perhaps a better option than to use roadways in the area?

Karen Raymond: "Reluctance" is probably an inappropriate word. As we discussed in evidence last week, there is always a balance to be struck. In almost every scheme, some aspects of the environment will be affected to allow other benefits that a scheme can offer to be realised. On balance, across the city as a whole, my view is that the tram will be good for the environment of Edinburgh.

15:00

Phil Gallie: Following Mr McIntosh's guidance of this morning, it seems to me that the proposed Ravelston stop will cause disruption to about 150m of embankment and vegetation in an area where wildlife is important, especially given the proximity of badger setts. If anything can be done to improve that situation, should it be done?

Karen Raymond: Yes. Certain ways of minimising the impact on the main areas of badger interest have already been explored. As Mr Murphy said, I do not want to reveal where they are, but there are some centres of activity and we have worked with the engineers to keep as far away from them as we can.

Phil Gallie: Access for disabled people will account for total vegetation wipe-out between the tramline and the road. Is that correct?

Karen Raymond: That is my understanding in respect of access on the north-west corner. It is not an area of primary interest.

Phil Gallie: There was a question about the validity of the Ravelston stop. It was claimed that patronage at that stop would account for only 1 per cent of total patronage on the circular route. Given the difficulties with the Ravelston stop and the fact that, as you have just said, so much environmental damage will result, would it be worth TIE's time to re-examine the need for that stop?

Karen Raymond: It is not for me to say whether patronage requires a stop. However, we are content that the current proposals can be implemented without a major adverse impact on the wildlife interests in the vicinity.

Phil Gallie: We have said that we are going to wipe out all the vegetation that lies to the west of the stop. The provision of that stop will disrupt about 150m of the area. As it is part of your remit to consider environmental matters, would not it be reasonable to suggest to TIE that the amount of environmental damage in this particular case would make it worthwhile to consider whether to drop that stop? Incidentally, doing so would make some time savings on the route.

Karen Raymond: I do not believe that the areas that will be affected most by the works in that

vicinity are those of greatest wildlife interest. I am also content that the principal areas of interest for badgers will be protected, so I would not recommend that to TIE.

Phil Gallie: Thank you.

The Convener: Mr Thomson, do you have any follow-up questions for Ms Raymond?

Malcolm Thomson: I have only one, if I may. In the context of the Ravelston stop, you agreed, having regard to the extent of the impact on undergrowth, trees and other vegetation in that part of the corridor, that what can be done should be done. Were you talking about mitigating the impact of what was to be done or were you thinking about not doing it?

Karen Raymond: I was thinking about mitigating the impact, or designing the scheme to minimise the impact.

Malcolm Thomson: That would include the stop.

Karen Raymond: Yes.

The Convener: I was going to invite Ms Raymond to address air quality, but I have examined the rebuttal witness statement by Mrs Milne for group 43, and although air quality is mentioned in the title, it is not in the substance of the rebuttal. With your agreement Mrs Milne, I will skip over it.

Finally, Ms Raymond will address the impact on bridges and will be cross-examined on her rebuttal witness statement only by Mr Vanhagen. Mr Thomson?

Malcolm Thomson: I have no further questions.

Mrs Milne: Will the committee excuse me? I have an appointment.

The Convener: Absolutely. Thank you for your time today.

Richard Vanhagen: Ms Raymond, will you confirm that you guarantee that the small stone bridge over the Roseburn corridor at the junction of Garscube Terrace, Coltbridge Terrace and Henderland Road, which serves as the main access to St George's School, will be retained as it exists at present?

Karen Raymond: That is my understanding.

Richard Vanhagen: How do you intend to meet the challenge that the bridge's narrow underpass poses and accommodate a cycle path and walkway as well as twin tram tracks?

Karen Raymond: My understanding is that the bridge will accommodate the tramway, the cycleway and the walkway.

Richard Vanhagen: It is a very small bridge. That is why we are asking the question.

Will you confirm that you have taken cognisance of the fact that because St George's School does not have a street frontage the bridge is an important access point?

Karen Raymond: I agree.

Richard Vanhagen: It is also part of an established right of way through the school campus to Crarae Avenue, which also serves as a second entry point to the school from Ravelston Dykes.

The Convener: The issue of access is wider than the narrow issue of bridges and it is certainly not in the rebuttal witness statement.

Richard Vanhagen: The point that I was trying to make is that there is also access via the bridge onto the adjoining ramp, which serves as the nearest right of way for recreational access for local residents. It is also used as a safe route to the school. We are anxious to retain that access, so I just wanted to be sure because it is a very small bridge. It has no through traffic as such.

The Convener: I suggest that your question is not for Ms Raymond, but your point is made. Do you have any other questions?

Richard Vanhagen: No. All the other bridges are through routes, but that one is a special case and we are concerned about its retention.

The Convener: I understand that from the written evidence that was presented to the committee. Do committee members have any questions?

Members: No.

The Convener: Mr Thomson, do you have any further questions for Ms Raymond?

Malcolm Thomson: No, thank you, madam.

The Convener: There being no further questions, I thank Ms Raymond for what has been a marathon evidence session. It was most helpful.

Next, we will commence oral evidence taking from objector witnesses on the issue of the Western general hospital, beginning with group 33. We will take a wee 30-second break to enable Dr Dermot Gorman, Vince Casey, Alan Penman and Chris Nicol to take their places at the table.

15:08

Meeting suspended.

15:09

On resuming—

The Convener: Before we commence oral evidence taking, Dr Dermot Gorman, Vince Casey, Alan Penman and Chris Nicol will need either to take the oath or to make a solemn affirmation.

DR DERMOT GORMAN, VINCE CASEY and ALAN PENMAN *took the oath.*

CHRIS NICOL *made a solemn affirmation.*

The Convener: The first witness is Dr Gorman, who will address the issue of the Western general hospital. My view is that, for the next four witnesses, the rebuttal witness statements by Barry Cross and by Dick Dapr , on integration with bus services, with the exceptions of paragraphs 3.11 and 3.13, should not be considered further, as they address an issue that the committee has agreed that it does not wish to revisit. Members will recall that we examined integration with buses during the preliminary stage and agreed at our meetings on 13 and 19 September that we did not wish to take any further evidence on the matter. I therefore direct all parties to refrain from questioning the witnesses on that issue. I remind members that we are discussing rebuttal witness statements and not evidence in chief.

Alison Bourne: Dr Gorman, could you briefly describe your role in Lothian NHS Board?

Dr Dermot Gorman (Lothian NHS Board): I am acting deputy director of public health in NHS Lothian. I am a public health medicine consultant with a wide range of responsibilities, which include public health aspects of transport policy and inequalities in health.

Alison Bourne: In connection with paragraph 3 of your witness statement, where do the patients come from who attend the Western general?

Dr Gorman: As you know, the Western general is a large hospital with more than 600 beds. It is increasingly becoming a regional centre. In the past year—2004-05—42 per cent of the 50,000 or so in-patients came from outside Edinburgh. About 23 per cent of the 150,000 or so out-patient attendances were also from outside Edinburgh.

Alison Bourne: Paragraph 5 of your witness statement states that during the consultation NHS Lothian, despite having expressed a preference to TIE for having a tram stop on Crewe Road South, accepted the Roseburn corridor option as the "least bad" option. What do you mean by "least bad"?

Dr Gorman: I mean just that. The business end of the hospital and all the main buildings—the nursing college, the Medical Research Council and the university buildings—are at the front of the hospital, on Crewe Road South. The hospital has increasingly become configured to reflect that. Therefore our preference was for a tram stop on Crewe Road South.

The two proposals in the public inquiry were both unsatisfactory in relation to meeting that need. My colleague Mr Penman, who was involved at the time, may be able to give you a

fuller report on the option that we would have preferred. Neither proposal is ideal for us in relation to meeting the aspiration of enabling patients, staff or whoever to get from the tram to the hospital as easily as possible.

Alison Bourne: Following the consultation period, when did NHS Lothian next hear from TIE about the tram scheme?

The Convener: I do not want to interrupt, but I am trying to be helpful. I am aware that this information is in the witness statement rather than the rebuttal statement. The purpose now is to focus on areas that are still in dispute and are therefore in the rebuttal statement. The committee is particularly keen that the witnesses should focus on that.

Alison Bourne: I would like to raise with Dr Gorman a few points that came out of the meeting last week. Is that okay?

The Convener: The meeting last week?

Alison Bourne: The evidence that was taken from Mr Cross at the meeting last week.

The Convener: Okay, as long as the questions are brief.

Alison Bourne: Mr Cross stated last week that TIE had been in discussions regarding trams at the Western general and that TIE had written to NHS Lothian on the subject. Has NHS Lothian responded to that letter?

Dr Gorman: Yes. I have the letters here. There was a letter from Mr Howell, the chief executive of TIE, dated 29 August. My chief executive, James Barbour, responded to that letter on 9 September.

15:15

Alison Bourne: Could you advise the committee of the purpose of TIE's letter, its terms and NHS Lothian's response?

Dr Gorman: TIE's letter reminded us that we were coming to this meeting. It claimed that there would be no difference in the bus service around the Western general, which is one of the issues that concern us, and it highlighted the possibility of a bus linkage to the hospital. It suggested that we might wish to write to the clerk to withdraw from the committee's inquiry. Mr Barbour wrote back confirming that our preferred option remains a tramline down Crewe Road South with a dropping off point at the Western general entrance—at the front door, if you like. We felt that, given the implications for the NHS, it would be best if the NHS was represented at the committee, and we did not wish to withdraw.

Alison Bourne: Are you aware that, contrary to what was stated previously to NHS Lothian, a tram stop on Crewe Road South is, in fact, technically feasible.

Dr Gorman: I understand that that is in the documentation.

Alison Bourne: In the promoter's statements of August 2005, it was revealed that there is now a proposal to construct a new pedestrian link and access from the Drylaw tram stop to within the grounds of the Western. Has the promoter signed any legal or enforceable agreement with NHS Lothian with regard to the delivery of those pedestrian improvements?

Dr Gorman: Not that I am aware of from my position in NHS Lothian.

Alison Bourne: What are your thoughts on the pedestrian access proposal?

Dr Gorman: Again, I can only repeat that the hospital is focused towards the other end of the site. I repeat that we want something that can be of maximum use. Given the public money that is being spent on a scheme such as this, we would like the project to support one of the major public enterprises in that part of town. We feel that that would be best done by having an entrance or a stop where it would be of most use for our purposes.

Alison Bourne: Do you feel that people with mobility problems or people who are coming for treatment at the Western would have any problems with the location of the tram stop at Drylaw?

Dr Gorman: You will know that the hospital is increasingly a regional centre, notably in respect of the Edinburgh cancer centre and cardiology. Patients and visitors tend not to be very fit, so easier access is very much to their advantage. The same is true for staff in making choices about their personal travel arrangements. We always encourage staff to travel in a sustainable way, so we want the public transport that is most useful to them. It would be helpful to have the tram stop near to where our staff work.

Alison Bourne: Would the distance from the main buildings remain an issue with that pedestrian access?

Dr Gorman: I think so. The distance is an issue, as is any interchange to a bus link.

Alison Bourne: In the promoter's July 2005 statements, mention is made for the first time of the proposal for feeder buses to the Western to be provided from the tram stop at Crewe Toll. It appeared from Mr Cross's evidence last week that there were few details about those buses and how they would operate. Is that your impression?

Dr Gorman: There is information that there would be a willingness to have such buses, but there have not, to my knowledge, been detailed discussions about the specifics or how long such a service would last.

Alison Bourne: So you have not seen any legal or enforceable agreement that TIE has entered into with a bus operator with regard to the delivery of feeder buses for the duration of the tram scheme.

Dr Gorman: I have not, no.

Alison Bourne: What are your thoughts on the feeder bus proposal?

Dr Gorman: Again—I do not wish to repeat myself—given the sort of clientele that the NHS has going to that important national site, the idea of having to change modes of transport is not one that we would find attractive.

Alison Bourne: Given your answer, is it still NHS Lothian's view that the measures are considered to be just proposals and that there is, to date, no guarantee?

Dr Gorman: As I said, there is no legal guarantee, but I believe that our colleagues in TIE are acting in good faith when they say that the measures are possible.

Alison Bourne: You have more or less answered my next question. The promoter suggests that the proposed improvements will somehow be better than the provision of a tram stop on Crewe Road South would be. Does NHS Lothian agree with that?

Dr Gorman: I cannot see how they would be better from the perspective of NHS Lothian.

Alison Bourne: At last week's meeting, the promoter advised that no discussions had taken place on the possibility of running trams directly through the Western general site or on the possibility of providing a travelator from Crewe Road South to the main buildings. Would NHS Lothian be interested in discussing those possibilities with the promoter?

Dr Gorman: We are always interested in discussing what would be the best transport option. As everyone realises, transport is a big issue for the NHS; most hospitals in Scotland have problems with it.

Alison Bourne: The promoter also advised that it has not consulted NHS Lothian on the location of a possible tram stop on Crewe Road South. The location that is discussed is slightly further up from the main in-out loop. Would you be happy with that location, or would you like the proposed stop to be pulled closer to the in-out loop?

Dr Gorman: It might be better to address that question to my colleagues who are more familiar with the site.

The Convener: Ms Bourne, I have given you huge latitude because new information came up at the previous meeting, but none of the issues that you have discussed is in the rebuttal statement.

Can we get to the point on the wider issues that you are raising?

Phil Gallie: Convener, I seek clarification on an issue. It seems that, given the evidence last week, TIE made a direct approach to the Western general hospital to ask it to drop its objection. Is it possible for the committee to see that letter?

The Convener: The Western general hospital is not an objector, but I am sure that, in the interests of clarity, the promoter would want to circulate the letter to committee members. That said, what TIE asks people to do is a matter for TIE. The fact that NHS Lothian has provided witnesses suggests that it wants to pursue its objective on the matter. Is that a fair comment, Dr Gorman?

Dr Gorman: I am happy for the correspondence to be shared.

Helen Eadie: Another new piece of information that was given last week and which may not have been passed on to NHS Lothian was that the bus from the tram stop might not go simply to the hospital, but throughout the hospital complex. That might give a different perspective.

The Convener: The promoter will undoubtedly develop that point, but, at this stage, I am keen to make progress on what is in the rebuttal statement. We have explored the issues that were raised at the previous committee meeting. None of those issues is in the rebuttal statement.

Alison Bourne: I am a bit confused, convener. To which rebuttal statement are you referring?

The Convener: I am referring to the rebuttal statement from the promoter to statements by D Gorman, S Spence, A Penman and A Bourne.

Alison Bourne: I thought that I was supposed to be addressing the witnesses on their witness statements.

The Convener: No, we are not considering the witness statements; we are examining the rebuttal statements by the promoter. We assume that the promoter is content with the bits that it has not rebutted. Any matters that are still in dispute are rebutted by the promoter. Therefore, I am looking at the promoter rebuttal by Barry Cross to statements by K Woolnough, P Craik, D Gorman, C Nicol and A Bourne and at the promoter rebuttal by Dick Dapr  to statements by D Gorman, S Spence, A Penman and A Bourne. You should focus on those rebuttals. We already have the witness statements in writing. As I point out at the start of every meeting, we give written evidence and oral evidence the same weight. You can assume that we have that written evidence. It might be helpful to have a little bit of background, but we already have a lot of the information that you are discussing from the written statements.

Alison Bourne: Could I have a few moments to find those rebuttal statements?

The Convener: Absolutely. I will suspend the meeting for a few moments.

Malcolm Thomson: If I may, convener, I point out that I am happy for the two letters that have been discussed to be given to the committee. I point out that the reply from Lothian NHS Board, to which Dr Gorman referred and which is dated 9 September, was not received by TIE until yesterday, which explains why Mr Cross did not have it when he gave evidence on the subject last week.

The Convener: That is a helpful clarification. We will photocopy the letters during the suspension.

15:26

Meeting suspended.

15:30

On resuming—

The Convener: That was a helpful break. Shall we resume questioning, Ms Bourne?

Alison Bourne: I have no more questions for Dr Gorman.

The Convener: Okay. Before I bring in committee members, I invite Mr Thomson to ask questions.

Malcolm Thomson: Dr Gorman, am I right in assuming that you are here as a representative of NHS Lothian rather than as an individual?

Dr Gorman: I am here to represent NHS Lothian.

Malcolm Thomson: Am I right to say that NHS Lothian originally objected to line 1 because of property that was owned down Leith Walk and that that objection was withdrawn once the matter was resolved?

Dr Gorman: That was something to do with the old primary care trust and the car park.

Malcolm Thomson: Yes.

Dr Gorman: Yes, I understand that that happened.

Malcolm Thomson: Am I right to say that NHS Lothian has never objected to the alignment down the Roseburn corridor?

Dr Gorman: That is my understanding, but the question might be better directed to Mr Penman, who was involved at the time. I understand that the public inquiry was about the Roseburn corridor and the other route along the road, and those

were the two things that we commented on. As I said earlier, the option that was chosen was the least bad option, so we did not object.

Malcolm Thomson: Is Mr Barbour, who is the chief executive of NHS Lothian, aware of your presence here today and of what you planned to say to the committee?

Dr Gorman: I am sure that he is.

Malcolm Thomson: Did NHS Lothian approach group 33 and ask to be part of its team today, or did someone in group 33 invite NHS Lothian—and you in particular—to attend?

Dr Gorman: I believe that the committee invited us to attend.

Malcolm Thomson: So you are here today at the invitation of the committee rather than on behalf of group 33.

Dr Gorman: Yes. The invitation came from the committee.

Malcolm Thomson: Who do you think organised the invitation for you?

Dr Gorman: I would think that the clerk arranged it.

The Convener: Are those questions relevant, Mr Thomson?

Malcolm Thomson: With respect, they are. I want to explore NHS Lothian's attitude to the option and in particular its attitude to whether the feeder bus link to the stop at Crewe Toll, as proposed by the promoter, is preferable to a stop on Crewe Road South, or vice versa.

The Convener: I am happy for you to do so, but I do not necessarily consider the process by which the invitation was sent to be a substantive issue in your line of questioning.

Malcolm Thomson: I want to explore the extent to which NHS Lothian is concerned about the matter. In due course, I will submit that it was not sufficiently concerned to object and in a moment I will come to whether it will be prepared to contribute financially. In other words, I want to assess the weight that it attaches to the importance of a stop on Crewe Road South.

The Convener: Notwithstanding what Dr Gorman said earlier, I understand that the witnesses are here as individuals and are not representing NHS Lothian.

Malcolm Thomson: That is why I asked the question, and that was not the answer that I was given.

The Convener: Indeed.

Dr Gorman: I understand that the question was whether I had objected as an individual. I have not

objected and would not be here if I were not an employee of NHS Lothian. Does that clarify matters?

Malcolm Thomson: That is an important point.

The Convener: I understand that and the point that Malcolm Thomson is trying to make. Okay. Please be brief.

Malcolm Thomson: Have you had access to Mr Barry Cross's witness statement? Do you know what precisely the promoter is proposing by way of a feeder bus?

Dr Gorman: No, I cannot say that I know the entire details of it.

Malcolm Thomson: But you say in your statement that it is less satisfactory than a tram stop on Crewe Road South. I presume that you know what the proposal is.

Dr Gorman: I know the difference between a bus and a tram, and I know the difference between the various geographies and the relative convenience of travelling by one mode of transport versus travelling by more than one.

Malcolm Thomson: The evidence of Mr Cross last week was that, if someone chose to go to the Western general hospital by a combination of tram and feeder bus, the feeder bus would be of the same frequency as the trams at the Crewe Toll stop. Someone would alight from the tram, board a feeder bus and be taken not just to the front door of the Western general hospital, but into the premises. The bus would take them to the front door of the Anne Ferguson building, at the very least. Were you aware that that is the proposal?

Dr Gorman: These issues have been talked about. Different people would want to go to different places at the site. A bus that went round to different places would be a good thing.

Malcolm Thomson: For someone with a physical disability, would it be preferable to have a bus that would deliver them to individual buildings on the site, rather than to have a tram that dropped them on Crewe Road South?

Dr Gorman: I guess that it would depend on their specific physical disability, their choice of transport mode and whether they wished to change modes of transport.

Malcolm Thomson: Does one go uphill as one enters the Western general hospital from Crewe Road South?

Dr Gorman: It is certainly downhill as one goes out, so yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Might someone in a wheelchair be very pleased to be taken to an individual building on the site by a feeder bus?

Dr Gorman: We do not have many visitors in wheelchairs who travel to the hospital on any form of public transport. However, in that situation the answer would be yes.

Malcolm Thomson: And someone on crutches, perhaps?

Dr Gorman: Yes, perhaps.

Malcolm Thomson: Is this something that you have really thought about in detail?

Dr Gorman: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Is it still your position that NHS Lothian would rather see a tram stop on Crewe Road South than a tram stop at Crewe Toll and a feeder bus of the type that I have described?

Dr Gorman: That view is clearly articulated by Mr Barbour in his letter.

Malcolm Thomson: Whose view are you giving us: yours or Mr Barbour's?

Dr Gorman: That is the standard view among the senior management of NHS Lothian.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you know whether Mr Barbour knows the details of the feeder bus?

Dr Gorman: He is well apprised of them.

Malcolm Thomson: His letter was written on 9 September, but the statement of the details of the proposal was made by Mr Cross only last week, so how is that possible?

Dr Gorman: I am sorry. I thought that, when you mentioned Mr Cross, you were talking about the letter that he wrote to us—well, it came from Mr Howell—about the interchange. That is the second page of the letter of 29 August.

Malcolm Thomson: Mr Cross set out explicitly in his evidence last week the details of the feeder service that is proposed and the nature of the guarantee that is being offered by the promoter. Do I take it that, until today, you were not aware of his evidence to that effect?

Dr Gorman: No. I have not studied it.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you know whether Mr Barbour is aware of it?

Dr Gorman: I cannot tell you that.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you aware of any proposals to reconfigure the internal roads and car parks at the Western general site?

Dr Gorman: I am probably not the best person to answer that question in detail. There are always moves afoot to improve the infrastructure of the hospital. We have particular problems with parking, as people may be aware.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you know whether the option that involves Crewe Road South and

Craigleith Road, which is being proposed by group 33, is more expensive than the Roseburn corridor option, which is being proposed by the promoter?

Dr Gorman: I have read that that is the case.

Malcolm Thomson: So you know that it is more expensive.

Dr Gorman: I have read that.

Malcolm Thomson: And that the operating costs are likely to be higher.

Dr Gorman: I have read that also.

Malcolm Thomson: Has NHS Lothian considered whether it might make a contribution to that increased cost if it wishes the tram to go down Crewe Road South?

Dr Gorman: Not to my knowledge.

Phil Gallie: Would you expect the patients who you represent to get the maximum advantage from the massive amount of public investment that is being put into a public utility?

Dr Gorman: We would like that to happen.

Phil Gallie: In that case, given that, if it goes ahead, the tramline will be funded by public expenditure, why should more public expenditure be sought from the NHS?

Dr Gorman: I would not think that it should be.

Phil Gallie: The bus service that was referred to in last week's evidence has not been picked up on so far. Has NHS Lothian or anyone at the Western general received detailed information from Mr Cross or any other person about what is proposed?

Dr Gorman: I cannot speak for everyone in NHS Lothian. I was party to a meeting with Mr Cross, who showed us detailed maps and plans of what is intended.

Phil Gallie: Is there anything in writing?

Dr Gorman: In the material that you got from Mr Cross, there are three diagrams. I cannot speak for everyone in NHS Lothian, but I do not believe that there is more in writing than the letter of 29 August.

Phil Gallie: At this point, then, there is nothing concrete other than the fact that the tram is going up the Roseburn corridor and your preference would be for that tram to stop at the front door of the hospital.

Dr Gorman: Yes.

Phil Gallie: Perhaps, if you are lucky, you will receive some correspondence.

Rob Gibson: What is the proportion of patients, visitors and staff who come to the hospital on public transport?

Dr Gorman: That question might be better addressed to someone else.

Rob Gibson: I will deal with that issue later, then, as I think that it might be germane to some of what we are talking about.

Helen Eadie: Dr Gorman, you have heard that, last week, we first heard the proposal for a feeder bus that goes directly into the hospital campus. Will you comment on that proposal? Also, will you comment on the concern that some people have voiced that the bus to the hospital might be removed by the operator after a short period—perhaps six months, a year or two years—because of the operating costs? That is relevant because, hopefully, the massive public expenditure will ensure that the tram runs for many, many decades.

Dr Gorman: I understand from speaking to representatives of TIE that, if the tramline were to go along the proposed route, there would be linkages such as the one that you mention. I assumed that they would be sustained for a long period. I do not know the intricacies of how buses and public transport are funded.

Helen Eadie: Would it be a good development if there were to be a bus operating within the hospital campus?

15:45

Dr Gorman: If the tram did not serve the hospital in as useful a way as we would like, buses serving the hospital would be a very good thing.

The Convener: I have a couple of follow-up questions. From my own part of the world I am aware of the need to link hospitals with where people are. You described the Western general as a national resource. Are you aware of the catchment area from which people come?

Dr Gorman: Yes, we have pretty good information on that. The Edinburgh cancer centre is based there, as are cardiological services which, in the main, serve south-east Scotland. Some national specialist care is also given.

The Convener: You commented that there was difficulty in changing modes of transport. Given the hospital's wider catchment area, is it not the case that people need to take more than one form of transport to access the Western currently?

Dr Gorman: When they come by public transport that is generally so.

The Convener: That is helpful to know. If the committee has no more questions, Ms Bourne, do you have any follow-up questions for Dr Gorman?

Alison Bourne: On the duration of feeder bus services, Mr Cross said last week that TIE has yet to have discussions with Lothian Buses to ensure

that there is a longevity guarantee. That says to me that it has not discussed with Lothian Buses for how long the buses will be available. Dr Gorman, what are your thoughts on that? Would you still prefer to see a tram stop on Crewe Road South?

Dr Gorman: Without repeating myself, yes, that is our position. In the short discussion that I had with TIE, there was an assumption that the link buses would be there forever.

The Convener: On the basis that there are no further questions, I thank Dr Gorman for giving evidence. You are released if you wish to leave.

The next witness is Vince Casey, who will also address the issue of the Western general hospital.

Alison Bourne: Mr Casey, I am a bit confused about the difference between the types of buses that have been talked about. My understanding of last week's evidence was that the buses that are being offered to the Western are feeder buses from Crewe Toll to the front door of the Western general hospital. Separately, there might be the possibility of introducing shuttle buses that would go round various locations on the site. However, I had the feeling that the proposal had not been examined in any detail. Helen Eadie pointed out the proposal that the promoter recently mentioned of sometime in the future running a shuttle bus from either Crewe Toll or Craighleith that would go around the hospital site stopping at a number of locations. Do you see any difficulty with such a proposal?

Vince Casey: It would really depend on the size of the bus. There are some fairly severe restrictions on some of the routes through the hospital due to the size of the road.

Alison Bourne: Some of the promoter's witnesses have suggested that it might be possible for NHS Lothian to reconfigure its site. Is that likely to happen?

Vince Casey: Reconfigure as in—

Alison Bourne: "Reconfigure" is the word that was used. There would require to be structural alterations to buildings to allow sufficient room for buses to manoeuvre round the site. Is that likely to happen?

Vince Casey: No.

Malcolm Thomson: Mr Casey, I ask you the same question as I asked Dr Gorman: are you here today giving evidence as an individual or as a representative of NHS Lothian?

Vince Casey: Because of my role within the Western general, many parties come to see me about all sorts of things. I would say that I am here as an individual, because of my knowledge of the site.

Malcolm Thomson: If I ask you about the relative merits of a feeder bus and a tram stop on Crewe Road South, will I hear your personal view rather than the party line of NHS Lothian?

Vince Casey: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: In that case, I will ask you the question. I will describe the competing proposals. The promoter's proposal is that the tram should use the Roseburn corridor and stop in the vicinity of the Western general hospital, so that people could cut across and walk to an entrance on Telford Road or find their way round to the front door on Crewe Road South, or stay on the tram to a stop near Crewe Toll junction, from where a linking feeder bus would take them to Crewe Toll roundabout, along Crewe Road South and to the front door of the hospital and the front door of the Anne Ferguson building. The bus might also be able to be driven further round the internal roads of the hospital to deposit visitors, patients and staff at individual buildings. The bus would also pick up people and take them back to the Crewe Toll stop, from where they could resume their tram journey.

The competing proposal is not to take the tram along the Roseburn corridor, but instead to take it along Crewe Road South, where it would have a stop. Alighting passengers would have to change mode to walking and walk into whichever bit of the Western general hospital they were going to. What is your view of those two options?

Vince Casey: My personal feeling from knowledge of the site and the surrounding area is that I would far rather leave a tram on Crewe Road South and walk the short distance to the main buildings of the Western general.

Malcolm Thomson: You might have to walk more than just a short distance to the oncology unit, for example.

Vince Casey: The oncology unit is in one of the first buildings that one hits after coming off Crewe Road South.

Malcolm Thomson: What about the magnetic resonance imaging and computed tomography scan unit?

Vince Casey: That is just slightly further than the oncology unit. The furthest building from Crewe Road South contains the neuroscience and regional infectious disease units. Those two specialties are the only ones that are based anywhere near Telford Road.

Malcolm Thomson: Will you enlighten us on the distance to the MRI and CT scan unit from the main entrance on Crewe Road South?

Vince Casey: From Crewe Road South, the distance is about 100m to what I call the old out-patients building. After that, a reception area is

reached. About another 30m up the corridor is the MRI scanner.

Malcolm Thomson: That may be all well and good for an able-bodied person, but what about someone who has a mobility problem?

Vince Casey: I appreciate fully what you said earlier. I have yet to see anybody come up from Crewe Road South in a wheelchair or on crutches.

Malcolm Thomson: Not all people with mobility difficulties use crutches or a wheelchair.

Vince Casey: I appreciate that, but those are the examples that you gave before.

Malcolm Thomson: I appreciate that. For the people with the infirmities that you do see, would it not be easier to be carried to their ultimate destination on the grounds in a feeder bus, rather than having to make their own—perhaps painful—way?

Vince Casey: Yes, but that would involve changing from one transport mode to another. In winter, that might happen in heavy rain or snow.

Malcolm Thomson: Does that not provide all the more reason to be on a cosy bus rather than out in the rain, snow and sleet?

Vince Casey: There are arguments for both options.

Malcolm Thomson: You concede that arguments go both ways.

Vince Casey: Yes.

Phil Gallie: It has been suggested that you speak as an individual rather than as a voice of NHS Lothian. The correspondence that has been referred to shows that TIE wrote to Mr James Barbour, who is the chief executive of NHS Lothian. In his reply, Mr Barbour declined to ask you to withdraw from involvement. Instead, he made the point that you would argue “our” evidence—NHS Lothian’s evidence. He goes on to say that it is important that NHS Lothian is “represented directly” and that NHS concerns are “properly expressed”. It seems to me that you, along with your colleagues, are the voice of NHS Lothian on this issue.

Vince Casey: I have not had sight of the letter to which you refer.

The Convener: The member has made his point. When asked, Mr Casey said that he was giving evidence as an individual. That contradicts the evidence of Dr Gorman and the letter that Phil Gallie cited. I am sure that we will explore the issue with other witnesses.

Helen Eadie: Like the convener, I believe that transport is the biggest issue that we face in the national health service in Scotland. It is important

that we recognise the distinction that Phil Gallie has highlighted. Mr Casey, you said that you are giving evidence as an individual and expressed the view that there should be a service to Crewe Road South, because of the difficulties that exist. However, if you were here today as an NHS representative, as we think you are, would you give the same advice to the committee and to your superiors in the NHS?

Vince Casey: Definitely.

Rob Gibson: What is the proportion of staff to visitors accessing the hospital?

Vince Casey: It is about 30 per cent staff to 70 per cent visitors, patients and university users.

Rob Gibson: I want to establish the number of patients, as opposed to visitors, because patients may be less able than others. Can you break down further the figure of 70 per cent?

Vince Casey: Not at this time.

Rob Gibson: We will try to get that information from someone else. Perhaps with a bit of thought you could break the figure down for us and provide us with an answer in writing.

The Convener: That would be helpful.

Alison Bourne: Would people who suffer from the kind of mobility problems to which Mr Thomson referred tend to arrive at the Western general by public transport or by small NHS buses?

Vince Casey: They would probably come by ambulance or in some of the smaller private cars that work for the Scottish Ambulance Service.

Alison Bourne: Does that explain why you have not tended to see people with such problems?

Vince Casey: Probably.

The Convener: As there are no further questions for Mr Casey, I thank him for giving evidence.

The next witness is Alan Penman, who will also address the issue of the Western general hospital.

Alison Bourne: Would you say that the issues of transport and access to NHS facilities, including the Western general, have been exacerbated over the past few years? Are they likely to get worse in the future, unless they are addressed?

Alan Penman (Lothian NHS Board): Transport and parking are among the biggest problems that we face. Most recently, that has been illustrated with a vengeance at the Edinburgh royal infirmary. The Western general site does not lend itself to high parking levels, which means that the surrounding streets are heavily used by cars. At the moment, public transport facilities to the Western general are not bad, but they do not

cover all parts of the town. The point has been made that if someone travels to the Western general from any distance at all, they are likely to use one, two or more modes of transport.

The problem will definitely get worse. It is extremely difficult to prise staff, patients and visitors out of their cars, regardless of how good the public transport system is. One begins to see a change in the pattern of travel either to work or to hospital as a visitor or patient only when the costs or the length of time involved become prohibitive.

16:00

Alison Bourne: The promoter's statements suggest that many of the buildings at the Western general are not really on Crewe Road South. What is your view on that?

Alan Penman: There is no doubt that the main entrance to the hospital is on Crewe Road South. That is where most staff, patients and visitors access the site. Telford Road is used by a minority of people, no matter whether they walk or come by car, bus, bicycle or whatever.

Alison Bourne: Would a tram stop at Drylaw on the Roseburn corridor still be quite a considerable distance from the main people-dense areas of the hospital?

Alan Penman: Yes. At the moment, patients, visitors or members of staff with mobility problems would not necessarily think about using that location. However, they might well do so, if a shuttle were provided and if it and the tram were the best combination available to them.

Alison Bourne: Would that option be more attractive than simply having a tram stop on Crewe Road South?

Alan Penman: No.

Alison Bourne: In your statement, you say that staff are moving outside Edinburgh because of other problems. Would they be more likely to use the tram if they were able to come into Haymarket, for example, and then travel directly to Crewe Road South on tramline 1?

Alan Penman: Yes.

Alison Bourne: Would that be more likely than if they had to change between different modes of transport?

Alan Penman: Again, we come back to the mindset that goes with getting to work. Staff want to get to work as quickly as possible by the easiest possible route.

Alison Bourne: So convenience is a major factor.

Alan Penman: Absolutely, particularly for staff who work unsocial or long hours and who might

start and finish in the dark.

Alison Bourne: Thank you, Mr Penman.

Malcolm Thomson: Mr Penman, do I take it that you are attending the meeting as a representative of NHS Lothian?

Alan Penman: I am indeed. I am in no doubt about that.

Malcolm Thomson: Excellent.

Why did NHS Lothian not object to the Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill?

Alan Penman: Three years ago, in my previous role, I had preliminary discussions with TIE about the possible routes. At that point, it was made absolutely clear to me that Crewe Road South was not technically feasible and therefore not an option.

Malcolm Thomson: Did you ever get a map out and apply your mind, even casually, to whether that statement was right or did you just take TIE's word for it?

Alan Penman: In so far as I was technically able to interpret the routes, I concluded for myself that TIE was probably right at that point.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you and NHS Lothian now know that the additional capital cost of using the Crewe Road South route instead of the Roseburn corridor would be of the order of £22 million?

Alan Penman: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you also know that, as a result, the patronage figures are likely to be lower and the running costs higher?

Alan Penman: I understand that that projection has been put forward.

Malcolm Thomson: Does NHS Lothian have a view on whether that would be money well spent and would achieve the benefit that was highlighted when I discussed in detail with Mr Casey the alternatives of, on the one hand, having a tram stop on Crewe Road South and, on the other, using the Roseburn corridor and having a stop with a feeder bus at the Crewe Toll junction?

Alan Penman: As far as NHS Lothian is concerned, extending the tramline to Crewe Road South is the best option. We acknowledge the additional cost that would be involved.

Malcolm Thomson: Has NHS Lothian considered offering to contribute to that cost?

Alan Penman: No. That would not be an appropriate use of NHS moneys.

Malcolm Thomson: Would NHS Lothian consider spending money on improving vehicular transport on its own site?

Alan Penman: I mentioned earlier that the Western general is a difficult site in terms of access and egress. That is continually being reassessed in terms of what we can do to improve the situation for patients, visitors and staff.

Whether the tramline goes via the Roseburn corridor, Telford Drive or Crewe Road South, it is likely that further assessment will be made of the improvements that may or could be made or that could be afforded within the Western general site.

Malcolm Thomson: The question was whether it would be a proper use of NHS Lothian funds to improve the roads, car park configuration and the provision of vehicular transport to enable patients, visitors and so on to move about more easily within the site.

Alan Penman: It would be a proper use of NHS funds within the site but not outwith it.

Malcolm Thomson: If a feeder bus were to be provided by the promoter, as Mr Cross described and as I set out in my question to Mr Casey, would you be prepared to advise your bosses at NHS Lothian that this is a possible opportunity to improve vehicular access within the site?

Alan Penman: If I have picked you up correctly, Mr Thomson, you are suggesting that the route involving a Crewe Toll stop is the best option.

Malcolm Thomson: I am suggesting that if that option came to pass and a feeder bus served the site every few minutes, would you see that as an opportunity to improve vehicular access within the site so that such a feeder bus could serve more of the buildings more easily and quickly?

Alan Penman: If that option—which I would regard as the second-best option—came to pass we would accept it and look to maximise the benefits. I imagine that that would include looking at how we could configure or make the best use of shuttle services within the Western general site.

Malcolm Thomson: On a completely different topic, are you aware of plans to bring new services to the Western general or to take existing services away from it?

Alan Penman: My understanding is that there are always both sorts of plans. The use of a hospital such as the Western general is constantly being reassessed. For example, in recent years, we have seen a significant rise in the use of day surgery. There are likely to be further improvements, increases and changes to the range of services that are provided on site.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you aware of any impending changes that are of sufficient probability that the committee ought to be made aware of them?

Alan Penman: I am not aware of any, but I am sure that Dr Gorman would be able to answer the

question.

Malcolm Thomson: Thank you, Mr Penman.

The Convener: Does any committee member have a question for Mr Penman?

Phil Gallie: Do you see an advantage for the Western general of a new tramline even if it were to use the Roseburn corridor?

Alan Penman: Yes, but not without shuttle services. There is no doubt that there would have to be shuttle services.

Phil Gallie: Does the fact that some advantage may accrue to the Western general form the background to why NHS Lothian did not make an objection to the tramline 1 scheme?

Alan Penman: Yes, on the basis that if a tramline down Crewe Road South was not technically feasible, the second-best option ought to bring some overall benefit to the Western general.

Phil Gallie: Thank you.

Rob Gibson: The plan shows quite a lot of staff car parking around the site. As we have heard, a fair number of staff travel to the site by car. Given the health board's attempts to try to alter its staff's pattern of travelling to work, would you expect more staff to use the tram route to the hospital, if it were instigated?

Alan Penman: That is a difficult question to answer. I will explain why. At the moment, almost 50 per cent of the Western general's staff live within 3 miles of the hospital. It could be argued that it is technically possible for them to walk to work, but most of them do not. In the future, the pattern will undoubtedly include a far higher proportion of staff who come from much further away. That is a demographic issue. As staff retire and they are replaced by younger staff, a higher proportion of staff will live outwith Edinburgh and they will rely—or attempt to rely—even more heavily on car use. I do not envisage that the tram would make great inroads into car use by staff.

Rob Gibson: There are other variables, of course. There could be road charging and so on. Are you attempting to remove more cars from the roads by encouraging staff to use public transport?

Alan Penman: Yes. We developed policies with the city council when we developed the new Edinburgh royal infirmary and those policies have been extended to all staff in NHS Lothian. We have a number of policies that attempt to encourage staff to get out of their cars—to walk, to take public transport, to cycle and so on. They have had some impact, but I set that against the fact that an increasing proportion of the people who work in Edinburgh live outwith Edinburgh.

Rob Gibson: We could pursue that point at length, but that is enough to get a flavour of it.

Helen Eadie: Mr Penman, you make an interesting point. What is your impression of the number of staff who have difficulties, given the shift patterns that you operate? People who live in more rural areas or north of the Forth might have difficulties because some public transport options are not available early in the morning. Are many of your staff in that situation?

Alan Penman: Yes. A fair proportion of our staff work 12-hour shifts. They are the staff who are most likely to have parking permits for sites such as the Western general and the royal infirmary.

Helen Eadie: Did it come as a surprise to you when you learned—only in the past month—about the suggested shuttle bus? Do you think that there ought to have been a conversation about that at a much earlier stage?

Alan Penman: I would have expected to see the proposal on the table a long time ago.

Helen Eadie: Thank you.

The Convener: I think you have answered this question, Mr Penman, but I ask it for the sake of clarity. I understand absolutely that NHS Lothian's preference is for the Crewe Road South route, but are you saying that if you were presented with the option of trams going down the Roseburn corridor and feeder buses to the hospital, as opposed to the option of nothing at all, you would choose the former because it is an improvement to the transport network?

Alan Penman: Yes.

The Convener: Thank you.

Ms Bourne, do you have any follow-up questions for Mr Penman?

Alison Bourne: My understanding is that NHS Lothian did not object to the Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill originally because it was told that a route on Crewe Road South was not technically possible.

Alan Penman: That is correct.

Alison Bourne: Also, because your property does not bound the limits of deviation of tramline 1, you could not show a clear, adverse, direct effect. Is that correct?

Alan Penman: Yes.

Alison Bourne: Will you confirm that you have had no discussions with TIE about the possibility of a travelator from the tram stop in Crewe Road South—if it were relocated there—to the main buildings of the hospital?

Alan Penman: No—you could argue that that would be the responsibility of NHS Lothian. It

would be an internal shuttle.

Alison Bourne: Do you consider that in a scheme costing as much public money as this one, the provision of a direct, easy, convenient tram stop for the Western general hospital should have been a given?

16:15

Alan Penman: If technically feasible, yes.

Alison Bourne: Thank you, Mr Penman.

The Convener: Thank you, Ms Bourne. There being no further questions for Mr Penman, I thank him for giving evidence this afternoon.

The next witness is Chris Nicol, who will also address the issue of the Western general hospital.

Alison Bourne: Mr Nicol, I am interested in the points that you made about people's willingness to suffer the inconvenience of changing their mode of transport from buses to trams.

Chris Nicol (Capital City Partnership): I can only offer an opinion. However, I spoke to people in north Edinburgh about their use of public transport and quite a few of them told me that they found it difficult getting on and off buses; changing from one mode of transport to another would, I imagine, increase that difficulty. There would be particular difficulties for people with children in pushchairs and those on a stick or with mobility problems.

Alison Bourne: Which do you think would be more attractive for the group of people in the socially deprived areas in the north of Edinburgh that you surveyed: a tram stop on Crewe Road South, one at Crewe Toll with feeder buses or the stop at Drylaw with pedestrian access?

Chris Nicol: Whichever made it easier for them to access services. The study did not look directly at the tram; it looked at accessing health care services. That was a major problem in all its guises in Lothian. Whichever one the people in our north Edinburgh survey could use and access easily would be the one that, I would argue, they would accept.

Alison Bourne: Would it be fair to say that the tram stop that gave the easiest and most direct access to the hospital and which did not involve changing mode of transport or having to walk long distances would probably be the best outcome for them?

Chris Nicol: I think that that would be the case. The issue would still need to be highlighted, as north Edinburgh residents are on relatively low incomes. The additional cost, possibly, of a feeder bus is something that they would have to factor into their travel costs to the hospital.

Alison Bourne: Thank you.

Malcolm Thomson: Mr Nicol, where and how did you find the 410 people for the survey?

Chris Nicol: They were approached on the streets of north Edinburgh.

Malcolm Thomson: Just at random in north Edinburgh?

Chris Nicol: At random. There was a rough quota system to try to ensure that we got some semblance of the age and gender spread of the area. However, as you see from the table, it did not quite work out like that. What I mean by that is that we were quite happy with the table. We wanted to focus on people who were using health services; therefore, the overrepresentation by the elderly and females was good for our study.

Malcolm Thomson: Do I take it that the survey was not conducted in proximity to the Western general hospital?

Chris Nicol: No, it was not.

Malcolm Thomson: How did you choose the 22 people for the in-depth interviews?

Chris Nicol: They were people who had used health services in the past year. Fifteen of them had used the Edinburgh royal infirmary. Part of the background for the interviews was our focus on people's use of health services.

Malcolm Thomson: Broadly speaking, what proportion of Edinburgh was covered by this survey? Does north Edinburgh cover a quarter of the city?

Chris Nicol: This is the north Edinburgh social inclusion partnership—SIP—area; its population is 15,700. It is a socially deprived area in the vicinity of the Western general hospital.

Malcolm Thomson: And it was within that area that you chose your 410 people?

Chris Nicol: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: So you did not catch people from other areas of Edinburgh, which is most of the city, who also use the Western general hospital?

Chris Nicol: That is correct.

The Convener: I would like to ask a question about geography. Would I be correct in saying that some of the communities in West Pilton and Drylaw would actually be better served, which would satisfy the social inclusion objectives, by the Roseburn corridor from its starting point rather than by the alternative route from Crewe Road North and then to Crewe Road South? I am looking at the map and the differences between the promoter's line and that alternative route.

Someone is going to bring you a copy, which is helpful. I understand entirely your point about people from disadvantaged areas accessing health services. Although that is satisfied by having a stop at Crewe Road South, it is not satisfied by the location of the starting point. The promoter's line is actually closer to West Pilton and Drylaw—but arguably not to Pilton. What are your thoughts on that?

Chris Nicol: The transport link is not to the hospital, but to other areas of the city.

The Convener: So you have no concerns that although the alternative routes would link into the hospital at the end point, their starting point is further away from some of the communities you have mentioned.

Chris Nicol: The difficulty is that, as far as I am aware, the local population has not been asked directly about this issue. It did not form part of the study that I did. If we wanted to take the matter further, I would perhaps like to go back and ask people about it.

The Convener: I was just curious.

Phil Gallie: If you look at the map and consider the location of West Pilton, the configuration of the streets and the access to the Roseburn corridor, might it not be better for people to get to Crewe Toll by road? The road shows proximity to West Pilton, but it does not show accessibility.

Chris Nicol: That is a fair point. The access links go into some of the main arteries in the area and across on to the promoter's route—that might not be the easiest option.

Alison Bourne: The tram stop that is mainly designed to serve the SIP area is located on the West Granton Access Road, which runs parallel to the Roseburn corridor. Do you think that many of the people who live to the east of the Roseburn corridor who have to go over the footbridge over the West Granton Access Road will use that tram stop?

Chris Nicol: Our assessment is not especially based on our experience with that road; it is based on the experience of other roads that are used heavily in other SIP areas in Edinburgh. In Craigmillar, for example, the break falls quite nicely on Niddrie Mains Road, which is very busy, so people tend to use the facilities on one side of the road rather than those on the other side of the road. If traffic on the road you mention were to pick up, that could be a problem.

Alison Bourne: In your opinion, and given that your report highlights the problems that people from the north of Edinburgh face in accessing health facilities, would it be reasonable to assume or conclude that people who live in socially

deprived areas in other parts of the city would have problems accessing the Western general?

Chris Nicol: It is probably fair to say that. It takes folk in north Edinburgh the best part of an hour to an hour and a quarter to access the royal infirmary by bus. I imagine that the access problems would be difficult for people from Craigmillar or south Edinburgh coming in the reverse direction, too.

Alison Bourne: If people were able to get a bus to the city centre and then change to the tram, would that be an improvement for them?

Chris Nicol: As opposed to changing on to a second bus?

Alison Bourne: Assuming that there was a tram stop on Crewe Road South, which took them directly to the hospital.

Chris Nicol: One of the advantages of the tram that has been highlighted is its speed. One of the problems that people highlight about using buses is the time they spend sitting on the bus while they are in pain or while they are trying to entertain the children. Anything that made the journey quicker might offer an advantage.

The Convener: There are no further questions for Mr Nicol. Thank you very much for giving evidence this afternoon. I now propose to have a short break to enable another shuffling of chairs, after which Alison Bourne and Dr Bastin will take their places at the table.

16:24

Meeting suspended.

16:29

On resuming—

The Convener: Before we commence taking oral evidence from Ms Bourne and Dr Bastin, they will need either to take the oath or make a solemn affirmation.

ALISON BOURNE and DR MARK BASTIN took the oath.

The Convener: The first witness is Alison Bourne for groups 33, 34, 35 and 47. She will address the issue of the Western general hospital. As group 47 does not have a questioner, Ms Bourne will be able to make a brief opening statement to address any issues that arise from the promoter's rebuttal of her group 47 statement. The promoter will then be able to cross-examine Ms Bourne, after which I will make a closing statement on behalf of group 47. I encourage the witness to keep her statement brief and remind her that she must concentrate on issues in dispute from the rebuttal statements from group 47 only.

Kristina Woolnough: I think that it is group 34 as well.

The Convener: I will take them separately in order to be helpful. Does that help or not?

Kristina Woolnough: No, I have a composite set of questions.

The Convener: Excellent, then I shall take groups 33 and 34 together.

Kristina Woolnough: That would be helpful, thank you. I hope, bearing in mind the number of new points—they were certainly new to us—that were raised last week, that I will not stretch the convener's famous latitude too much. I am trying to be charming.

The Convener: You are trying very hard.

Kristina Woolnough: I have learned to butter up the convener since last week.

The Convener: It does not work.

Kristina Woolnough: On 19 September, Mr Cross stated that the promoter has treated Lothian NHS Board as an objector, which was also said earlier on, and has held discussions with NHS Lothian. Is that your understanding of the case?

Alison Bourne: My understanding is that NHS Lothian representatives will appear as witnesses for group 33. As far as I am concerned, I have not been approached by the promoter to discuss any recent proposals. To my knowledge, no other objector whom I represent today has, either.

Kristina Woolnough: There has been no attempt by the promoter to discuss with you issues about the Western general hospital.

Alison Bourne: No—apart from the information that I received in the promoter's rebuttal statements.

Kristina Woolnough: The promoter stated in rebuttal and last week that the Craighleith Road option was considered prior to sifting, but was rejected. Do you have any comments about that?

Alison Bourne: Yes. The Craighleith Road option was not mentioned in the Anderson report and it was not mentioned in work package 1. Objectors suggested that route at the meeting with Councillor Burns on 3 November. I cannot find any trace of Craighleith Road having been considered prior to sifting. My understanding is that if it had been identified prior to formal sifting, it should have been listed somewhere in the documentation. I also gave a deputation to the full council at the end of 2003 and mentioned that the Craighleith Road option had not been identified, but nobody from the promoter's team stood up at that point and contradicted me.

The promoter, the City of Edinburgh Council, provided comments on work package 1 in

December 2002 that suggested that it was not terribly satisfied with the options that had been assessed around the Western general and that it wanted a rigorous examination to be made to see what other options could be identified. However, I cannot find any trace that anything was done until objectors suggested the Craigleith Road route nearly a year later.

Kristina Woolnough: Mr Oldfield responded to questioning about the Western general on 19 September. He said that the Telford Road option was a viable option that could have been included in the final alignment. Do you have any comment on that?

Alison Bourne: I stress that none of the objectors suggests that the tram should run on Telford Road because we do not feel that that is the best option for the Western general. However, the point about the Telford Road option is that in offering that option to the public during the consultation, the promoter accepted that a little more journey time, a little more in construction and operating costs and the alleged drop in patronage would have been justified in order to provide what it saw as being better access to the hospital. We now have a difference of opinion about how much more of a journey time and how much more in construction costs would be justifiable in getting the social benefits that would derive from the stop at the front of the Western general.

Kristina Woolnough: With regard to the Western general, a number of the promoter's witnesses last week stated that the Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road option is not so desirable because it is longer. That point is similar to the one that you just made. Do you have any comment on that?

Alison Bourne: The Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road option is longer, but I also understood from last week's evidence that several of the alternative alignments that have been put forward by other objector groups are shorter, but have not been assessed properly. The Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road option is physically longer, so I do not dispute that there would be a little bit more journey time; what we are disputing is the amount.

In recent weeks the promoter suddenly decided for some reason that trams on junctions on that route would not get maximum priority. As far as I am concerned, the difference that has always existed between the journey time on the Roseburn corridor and the journey time on Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road is two minutes 56 seconds—that is with giving the tram maximum priority at junctions. I do not see that anything has changed; I do not accept that the junctions on Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road would be any more difficult than any others on the route of tramline 1, where the tram seems to get priority.

Kristina Woolnough: I am questioning you on behalf of group 34. One of the routes that went to the front door of the Western general was also a short route, as you have just described.

Alison Bourne: Yes.

Kristina Woolnough: I have a number of questions about longer journey times and junction delays. I do not know whether you feel that we have covered that enough.

The Convener: By way of guidance, I am not going to be flexible about wide-open questions such as that. I am giving you considerable leeway; do not abuse it.

Kristina Woolnough: Right. I will be specific. On the Western general, the promoter has stated that the Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road option would have a longer journey time. What is your view of that?

Alison Bourne: We think that the majority of the public would accept it because it would go past the Western general hospital.

Kristina Woolnough: Mr Oldfield stated on 19 September that the junction delay on Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road is two minutes 47 seconds. What is your view on that in relation to the tram serving the Western general?

Alison Bourne: I will try to keep this brief. I have written it all down, because it is technical stuff and I hate dealing with it on the hoof. I have written it down to be brief, but I will try to be even briefer. As I said before, my understanding was that the difference in run time between the Roseburn corridor and Craigleith Road has always been two minutes 56 seconds. Last week Mr Oldfield said that total junction delay—the new junction delay—now accounts for an additional two minutes 47 seconds. That would give us a total combined extra journey time of five minutes 43 seconds. However, Mr Oldfield's rebuttal statement of 12 August gives a difference in journey time of six minutes 55 seconds. The previous page of the same rebuttal statement says that there will be an overall increase in journey time of eight minutes. In his rebuttal of my paragraph 121 he gives a figure that works out as seven minutes seven seconds. We have three different figures for a total journey time—there is a difference of two minutes 17 seconds—being given by one of the promoter's witnesses on 12 August. I do not understand why, if the junction delay has been modelled properly, there should be any variation.

Kristina Woolnough: You said all that without breathing. Well done.

The Convener: We are impressed.

Alison Bourne: I could have said a lot more. If we accept that there is junction delay and we assume that it is the five minutes 43 seconds, which would give the difference in journey time, there is also the additional point that the promoter has now added another tram stop on Craigleith Road, which I understand would account for 39 seconds there. In my mind, the tram's getting maximum priority on Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road should give a difference in journey time of about two minutes 57 seconds. I cannot see any reason why the tram should have to suffer a delay to the extent of the extra junction delay that has been thrown in at the last minute.

Kristina Woolnough: Mr Oldfield added to the composite confusion about time by informing us last week that the dwell time at tram stops will be 25 seconds, which is an additional 14 seconds. What is your view of that?

Alison Bourne: I am surprised that dwell time at tram stops is counted as delay; I would have thought that a requirement that trams stop at tram stops is integral to a good public transport system. Mr Oldfield gave us a total of 25 seconds dwell time and 14 seconds acceleration, which amounts to a 39 seconds delay at each tram stop. If each of the 22 tram stops on tramline 1 suffers a delay of 39 seconds, that will result in a total delay of 14 minutes and 18 seconds. That is a substantial part of the run time.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you feel that those new pieces of information are a distraction from the fact that the stop at the Western general on Crewe Road South is the most desirable option?

Alison Bourne: Yes. Arguments are being put forward to discredit any alignment that differs from the promoter's preferred alignment, but the same arguments do not appear to be applied to the rest of tramline 1. That is what I am trying to say.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you include in that the issue of junction delay?

Alison Bourne: Yes.

Kristina Woolnough: Last week, Mr Turnbull made a number of statements about the signalisation of the Crewe Toll roundabout that might have contributed to Mr Penman's being told that the alignment was technically not feasible. Do you wish to rebut Mr Turnbull's comments on that?

Alison Bourne: Last week, the promoter said that the signalisation at Crewe Toll roundabout had been previously considered. However, my understanding is that that was for a bus priority scheme. The sequencing of the traffic lights would be difficult because the bus would not have the maximum priority that could be given to a tram. All the lights could turn to red to allow the tram through. To my knowledge, the promoter has not

considered giving the tram maximum priority at Crewe Toll by turning all the lights to red for the tram.

Another thing to point out is that the council's documentation, including the system aspirational objectives for the tram scheme, states clearly that the tram should be given maximum priority at junctions, that the needs of mobility-impaired and socially deprived passengers should be prioritised and that key generators should have easy and direct access. However, in last week's evidence, it became apparent that TIE did not discuss Crewe Toll roundabout with the council. I am confused; despite the council's clear aspirational objectives, TIE seems to have assumed that the council would not be prepared to try to meet those objectives at Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road.

Kristina Woolnough: I want to ask quickly about the pedestrian access that is now proposed on Telford Road, which will reduce walking distance from the Roseburn corridor. Will that option help people to access the Western general?

Alison Bourne: The improved pedestrian access from the stop on the Roseburn corridor will encourage more people to use that stop because it will reduce the walking time a little, but I still have concerns about the location of that tram stop. The stop will be fairly remote and cut off from the general road network, so it will be difficult to integrate. There will still be a considerable distance from the tram stop on the Roseburn corridor to the main hospital buildings. People will also be required to cross Telford Road, which is a dual carriageway.

Kristina Woolnough: On 19 September, Mr Cross responded that the tram stop on Crewe Road South is the closest location possible to the Western general's main building entrance. Do you agree with that?

Alison Bourne: I went out and had a look. The suggested location appears to be the part where the gradient is steepest. I cannot see why the tram stop could not be pulled back a little closer to between the inner loop accesses.

Kristina Woolnough: Are you suggesting that the promoter deliberately located the stop at a difficult place on Crewe Road South for the sake of its modelling?

Alison Bourne: I would not like to say whether it did so deliberately. All that I am saying is that I think that the tram stop could be positioned in a more convenient location, closer to the Western general.

Kristina Woolnough: I presume that that would improve the patronage figures for the objector alignments.

Alison Bourne: It would improve the walk distance as well.

16:45

Kristina Woolnough: Mr Buckman's rebuttal of your witness statement discussed new patronage figures for the Roseburn corridor option and the Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road option. Will you summarise your response to him?

Alison Bourne: I have written down some information, which I will read out, because there are some quite big discrepancies in Mr Buckman's rebuttal and I want to get my facts right.

Table 4 of Mr Buckman's rebuttal shows significantly reduced local patronage and through-patronage figures but, when I compare the new figures with previous figures, I am confused. I have never been given daily boarding figures for tram stops on Crewe Road South or at Craigleith on our alternative alignment, so all that I have to work with are the annual figures that the promoter has provided.

In the Craigleith options report, annual local patronage for Crewe Road South was given as 790,000 in 2011 and 990,000 in 2026. Table 4 of Mr Buckman's rebuttal states that annual patronage for Crewe Road South will be 360,000 in 2011 and 560,000 in 2026. I am completely at a loss to understand why there has been such a dramatic and sudden drop in local patronage when the catchment area has not changed. The most striking difference is in through patronage. In the Craigleith options report, the loss in annual through patronage was alleged to be 1.2 million in 2011 and 800,000 in 2026.

In response to my paragraph 324, Mr Buckman stated that each additional minute of journey time would result in a reduction in through patronage of about 150,000 passenger journeys a year. On that basis, if the run time on Craigleith Road were to increase substantially, as the promoter's witnesses suggest, I would have expected there to be a correspondingly greater reduction in through patronage, but according to Mr Buckman's table 4, that is not the case. It would appear that, even with the increased journey time, the reduction in through patronage would decrease substantially, as the figures now show losses of only 550,000 in 2011 and 600,000 in 2026. I cannot explain what has happened.

Kristina Woolnough: In summary, you have concerns—

The Convener: We have excluded discussions about patronage because the committee feels that it has sufficient evidence on that. I have given Ms Bourne the opportunity to put her points on the record. I do not intend to allow Kristina Woolnough to ask any more questions on the matter.

Kristina Woolnough: Okay. Let us move on to consider issues that relate to Mr Cross's rebuttal. The promoter suggests a new interchange at Crewe Toll and the provision of feeder buses to serve the Western general. Is that good enough?

Alison Bourne: First, we do not see why priority passengers such as elderly or infirm people or people who suffer from mobility problems should have to change modes of transport. As I said earlier, a key promise was that the tram scheme would serve the hospitals and the schools. In my mind, it is clear that if people will have to get on a feeder bus to get to the Western general, the tram will not serve that hospital.

My second point is about the through-ticketing system. I have not seen any details of how that will work, but I have studied the through-ticketing system that is in operation at present and have noticed that, when someone changes between a Lothian Buses bus and a FirstBus bus, that incurs a premium. I have no details of whether catching a tram and then changing to a feeder bus will involve payment of a premium.

I was struck by the lack of detail in the rebuttal statements about the feeder buses and, in particular, for how long they will be guaranteed. Last week, Mr Cross was extremely vague about what kind of guarantee we are being given. Although I phoned the council and spoke to several different departments, I am afraid that I could not find anyone who could tell me anything about the feeder bus or for how long it would be provided.

The Convener: Mr Vanhagen, do you have anything to say on the group 35 objections?

Richard Vanhagen: I have nothing to add.

The Convener: Ms Bourne, do you have any brief comments to make on behalf of the group 47 objectors?

Alison Bourne: No—I tried to deal with the points of all the groups.

Malcolm Thomson: Ms Bourne, I have a question on that last point. Mr Cross said last week that there would be no charge for using the feeder bus for someone who had alighted from the tram. Have you any basis whatever for contradicting that?

Alison Bourne: As I say, I have seen no details of how the through-ticketing system is going to operate; however, the current through-ticketing system seems to involve a premium. It seems that there are no details available of how through-ticketing would be applied.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you questioning Mr Cross's word, which he gave under oath last week?

Alison Bourne: I am not sure that he gave any details about that under oath last week; he just said that it would cost the same as a normal through ticket.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you suggesting that that is wrong?

Alison Bourne: No. It probably will cost the same as a through ticket. What I am saying is that I do not have details of how the new through-ticketing scheme is going to work.

Malcolm Thomson: Let us return to something more basic. You are here to give evidence as an objector in group 33.

Alison Bourne: I am here on behalf of four objector groups.

Malcolm Thomson: I will come to the others in a minute; let us start with group 33, please. Your objection is within group 33.

Alison Bourne: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Am I right in understanding that group 33 comprises a number of objectors who all live in the same geographical area?

Alison Bourne: Yes—we all live in Groathill.

Malcolm Thomson: That is the basis of the grouping of group 33.

Alison Bourne: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: You are also here as a witness in respect of groups 34 and 47.

Alison Bourne: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Does it follow that all the objectors in group 33 are not of the same view about things—in other words, that you have all got your own objections?

Alison Bourne: Do you mean with regard to the Western general hospital?

Malcolm Thomson: No—I mean generally. In reading the objections and statements, I find that various objectors in group 33 make quite different points.

Alison Bourne: That is probably quite likely. However, as far as the Western general hospital is concerned, there is a strong feeling within the group.

Malcolm Thomson: Have you formally canvassed that? Have you had a meeting and a vote on who supports the Western general route?

Alison Bourne: Everybody is pretty clued up. As the lead objector for group 33, I tend to deal with the people who live on my side of the Roseburn corridor. I liaise with Ian Hewitt, who deals with the people who live on his side of the Roseburn corridor. I hope that, between the two of us, everybody is fully liaised with.

Malcolm Thomson: All the people in group 33 would be directly affected by the Roseburn corridor route.

Alison Bourne: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Your proposal—which is supported by other objectors—is the Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road route, which runs along two sides of the triangle.

Alison Bourne: That route is supported by group 47, I think. I am representing other groups on the issue of the need to serve the Western general hospital; however, they propose alternative alignments.

Malcolm Thomson: That is what I was coming to next.

Alison Bourne: Sorry.

Malcolm Thomson: You are an objector in group 33, and we have just established what the group 33 position is and what your position is within that group.

Alison Bourne: Group 33 suggests the alternative alignment of Crewe Road South and Craigleith Road.

Malcolm Thomson: Precisely. Group 34 also favours Crewe Road South but has an alternative alignment after that from the group 33 proposal.

Alison Bourne: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Group 34 proposes that the tram travel north, straight across Flora Stevenson's roundabout, up Orchard Brae, turning left on to Queensferry Road, travelling across the Dean Bridge and turning right into Drumsheugh Gardens, left into Palmerston Place and back on to Shandwick Place with another left turn.

Alison Bourne: I believe so.

Malcolm Thomson: However, your evidence to the committee today is not in support of the group 34 alignment.

Alison Bourne: It is probably helpful to explain that there has been a very strong feeling among objectors up and down the proposed tramline about the need to serve the Western general hospital. The different groups have chosen alignments that they think will best address that need. The main point on which I am representing those groups concerns the Crewe Road South stretch and the need to serve the Western general hospital directly. From there, it is a matter for the other groups to decide which alignment they prefer.

Malcolm Thomson: So, as far as group 34 is concerned, you are giving evidence in support of part of their case, but one should not necessarily take it from that that you support the rest of their proposed alignment. Is that correct?

Alison Bourne: I support any alignment that would put a tram stop on Crewe Road South and which would serve all the key generators along there.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you saying that you are completely open minded about whether, having served the Western general hospital, the route should go along Craigleith Road or along the route that I have just described?

Alison Bourne: I shall be perfectly frank with you, Mr Thomson. I am not a technical person and I am quite uncomfortable with having to specify a route at all. It is my stance that the promoter, in saying that it would provide easy and direct access to the hospital, should have identified the route itself. We are all quite uncomfortable about having had to specify any route, because we think that that should have been done. The other reason why we are uncomfortable is that we do not want to recommend a route that may not be the best. We are not technical people and I am not in a position to say that Craigleith Road is absolutely the best route that could serve the Western general. It might be that group 34's alignment is the best route, but the key point is that the objectors feel strongly about the need to serve the hospital.

Malcolm Thomson: You have heard Mr Cross's undertaking in relation to the provision of a feeder bus.

Alison Bourne: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Can we agree, at least, that that is an improvement on the original proposal by TIE?

Alison Bourne: I agree that it is a definite improvement on the proposal to cut 30 per cent of buses, with there being no feeder bus.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you accept that the undertaking that there should not be any reduction in the existing bus service and promotion of the feeder bus are both improvements?

Alison Bourne: On the previous situation?

Malcolm Thomson: Or at least on what you perceived the previous situation to be.

Alison Bourne: They are. I have reservations, however, because the details are so sketchy.

Malcolm Thomson: I take it that you regularly attend the community liaison group meetings.

Alison Bourne: I do.

Malcolm Thomson: Has the feeder bus been discussed by TIE at those meetings?

Alison Bourne: No.

Malcolm Thomson: Not at all?

Alison Bourne: No, because the subject of the Western general was not allowed to come up at those meetings.

Malcolm Thomson: Was the first you knew about the feeder bus from reading Mr Cross's witness statement?

Alison Bourne: That is correct.

Malcolm Thomson: You had been having discussions with Lothian NHS Board, though.

Alison Bourne: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Had you been discussing a feeder bus with people from NHS Lothian?

Alison Bourne: I had not, until I read Mr Cross's statement.

Malcolm Thomson: Do I take it that you are unswayed by the argument that the feeder bus would be better for more people using the Western general than a tram stop on Crewe Road South would be?

Alison Bourne: I think—especially after hearing NHS Lothian's evidence today—that the best option for serving the hospital is the tram stop on Crewe Road South. I do not see why that cannot be possible. I do not accept the promoter's arguments about delay at the junctions and whatnot. That is the best option for the hospital, and I am not going to contradict what NHS Lothian has said. Having said that, if there is no way that that is possible, feeder buses should be welcomed.

Malcolm Thomson: Let us think, for the moment, only about groups 33 and 34. All those objectors are people who would be directly affected by the Roseburn corridor alignment.

Alison Bourne: Yes, but I find it quite ironic that representatives from NHS Lothian should have to appear as witnesses, because they were not affected and could not object themselves.

Malcolm Thomson: Perhaps we can discuss that at another time.

Alison Bourne: We are all affected by the current alignment.

Malcolm Thomson: The residents of Crewe Road South and the residents of Craigleith Road would all be directly affected by your proposals, and we do not know precisely what they think. Is that right?

Alison Bourne: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Similarly, the group 34 proposal would affect the world heritage site, the Dean Bridge and a residential area in the new town comprising Palmerston Place and Drumsheugh Gardens.

17:00

We do not know what the implications of and the objections to such an alignment might be. Similarly, we do not know whether Network Rail, which was an objector but has withdrawn its objection, might object again if it found that Palmerston Place was the closest that line 1 would go to Haymarket station. Do you accept that?

Kristina Woolnough: Convener—

The Convener: You may not interrupt at this point.

Alison Bourne: I accept the point that Malcolm Thomson makes. I am waiting for his question, so that I can answer it.

Malcolm Thomson: The question is, do you accept that we do not know how much opposition there would be to either the group 33 alignment or the group 34 alignment?

Alison Bourne: I do. As I have said, all the objectors are very uncomfortable about the situation. If the committee decides that it wants an alternative alignment to serve the Western general, fortunately it is for members rather than for me to decide what that alignment should be. Clearly, any tramline will affect residents somewhere. I am here to talk about the Western general. It is not for me to decide where the tramline eventually goes.

Malcolm Thomson: You are speaking on behalf of residents affected by the Roseburn corridor alignment.

Alison Bourne: I am speaking on behalf of the objector groups to which I referred previously.

The Convener: Kristina Woolnough now has the opportunity to ask any follow-up questions in relation to groups 33 and 34.

Kristina Woolnough: Ms Bourne, you have helped us by saying that you are here as a witness on the Western general, on behalf of objector groups, and that you are not here to discuss route selection and other aspects of the issue.

Alison Bourne: That is correct.

Kristina Woolnough: I would like to confirm the remit for the community liaison groups that Mr Thomson has kindly brought up for us. It states:

"As the Council is now promoting tram Bills based on its preferred route for each line, it is no longer appropriate to discuss with the Community

- alternatives to the route shown in each Bill".

Is that your understanding of the groups' remit?

Alison Bourne: Yes. I tried on several occasions to raise the issue of alternatives to the proposed route, but that was not allowed.

Kristina Woolnough: Is it fair to say that other objectors at meetings of the community liaison

groups also tried to discuss different alignments and serving the Western general, but that discussion of those issues was disallowed?

Alison Bourne: Yes.

The Convener: Mr Vanhagen, do you have any follow-up questions for Alison Bourne on group 35? You are not required to ask any, if you do not wish to.

Richard Vanhagen: My problem is that I would like to make a statement, rather than ask a question.

The Convener: You have a good degree of self-awareness.

Richard Vanhagen: I am grateful to Alison Bourne for her efforts in making this case. Group 34 has discussed the issue of the Western general and is unanimous in its support of the proposal. We have canvassed—

The Convener: You do not need to make a statement. We understand what you mean.

Richard Vanhagen: We are 100 per cent with the objectors.

The Convener: Alison Bourne may make some brief closing remarks on behalf of group 47, if she wishes.

Alison Bourne: I am absolutely exhausted. I have no statement to make, other than to ask the committee to give the matter serious consideration, as I am sure it will.

The Convener: As there are no further questions for Alison Bourne, I thank her for giving evidence.

That concludes evidence on group 47. I ask Mr Thomson to take up to five minutes to make any closing remarks that he may have on the evidence relating to the group.

Malcolm Thomson: I am somewhat taken by surprise at this turn of events. I was anticipating that we would move on to the next witness. Please allow me a moment to consider what I would like to say.

The Convener: Absolutely.

Malcolm Thomson: I have nothing to add to what I have already said in relation to group 47.

The Convener: Given that no representative of group 47 is able to attend, I will read out a closing statement on behalf of the group. I make it abundantly clear that the views expressed in the statement are those of group 47 and are not necessarily to be ascribed to me or the committee. The statement reads:

"Dear Convener and Committee,

Thank you for allowing this to be read out. I apologise for not being able to attend due to heavy work commitments. I,

and many others along our street, believe that the route along Trinity Crescent and Starbank Road is totally unsuitable for the tram but unfortunately we do not have the time, money or resources that TIE have, to fully, and in more detail, express our beliefs.

I am sure you are aware from reading my own statements, and others, along Trinity Crescent and Starbank Road that we are some of the closest, if not the closest—at 4.2 m for me—to the proposed tram line. I would have thought that because of such close proximity to the proposed tram line TIE would have given far more consideration to local needs and had more detailed plans. TIE have very few details, not only on the cosmetics of the tram infrastructure but also on the actual physical means by which the tram will work in such a confined space. It seems that the way of thinking is: 'Get the tram through first, worry about local issues second.' The Seafront Residents Association have been attending CLGs—

I take it that that is community liaison groups—

"for over a year and a half and TIE have failed to give reassurances that the tram will benefit rather than hinder the lives of residents. We have asked for more details on parking, servicing bays and how and when the communal bins will be emptied. These questions have only been answered with rough ideas and I was told such issues would only be fully resolved 'later' in the detailed planning stage. These few 'simple' details could not only become difficult for residents, but also become a major obstacle for the tram. How can the tram not be delayed when a bin lorry, emptying the large bins, is in front of it, on a shared alignment, for three quarters of a kilometre? We have asked if services, such as this, will be carried out at night, but again no definite answer has been given. In parts of Croydon, particularly for those close to a tram line, parking and servicing for residents and businesses did become far more difficult because of the parking and loading restrictions set in place.

Currently at night Trinity Crescent and Starbank Road is extremely quiet, however sleep disturbance is likely with the high possibility of extra noise from service vehicles and maintenance being carried out, out of tram hours. I have to say that noise and other issues are not based on guess work but from friends who have stayed next to the Croydon tram line and contacts made in the Hyson Green area of Nottingham. They have conveyed to me that the noise from wheel squeal, tram bells, announcement speakers on tram platforms along with the nuisance of vibration, particularly in Hyson Green, is at times unbearable. Andy Wood from TRANSDEV acknowledges the problem of vibration at the Nottingham location and puts it down to there not being a floating track slab in place. Steve Mitchell of ERM stated, in a CLG 23/3/05, that residents would 'probably feel "some" vibration'. TIE have said they aspire to having a floating track slab but there is nothing in writing to guarantee this will happen.

TIE have said, at a CLG, that patronage figures are merely an average and, again, more accurate patronage figures will appear at the detailed planning stage. Here we have two fears: if the figure in 2026 of 564 passengers boarding per hour in rush hour is correct, at this section of the route, then we will be flooded by people coming into our area purely using the area to access the tram system. As mentioned in my previous statement there are not enough people living in the area to support those patronage figures, nor is there room for future development since there is no land. Therefore, one must assume, based on our survey during rush hour of nine people currently boarding at this point and three alighting, which clearly contrasts with TIE's figures, that people have travelled into the area. To an area

that has no businesses, there is no benefit to having thousands of people simply passing through. The second fear is that if the actual patronage figure is lower than stated there must surely be a financial worry to the fare box.

In short there are many 'details' that TIE need to finalise before Royal Assent is given as well as much work required to convince residents of Trinity Crescent/Starbank Road that the tram will be beneficial to them and that the area is not just to be used as a transport corridor. If the tram system is to go ahead then all the l's need to be dotted and the T's crossed before millions is spent on it. We believe there are routes that can serve Edinburgh residents far better than those proposed. Information gained from the Freedom Of Information Act show that even Andy Wood, of the operators TRANSDEV, has concerns regarding the Trinity Crescent and Starbank Road section of the route; it is an area of low population density.

Yours sincerely

Antony C White

Seafront Residents Association"

The final witness today will be Dr Mark Bastin, who will also address the Western general hospital for group 34.

Kristina Woolnough: I have about seven questions, so we will not be long. I am referring to the rebuttal of Dr Bastin by Andrew Oldfield. I take it that that is correct.

The Convener: Yes.

Kristina Woolnough: By way of introduction, Dr Bastin, you work at the Western general hospital, and you are here in an individual capacity. You are not here as a resident whose property abuts the tram alignment, although you live close by.

Dr Mark Bastin: Indeed, yes. I have been working at the Western general hospital for the past eight years since I moved up from England—I hope the fact that I am English will not prejudice the committee's understanding of my evidence. I work in clinical neurosciences; if members take a look at the pamphlet containing the map of the layout of the Western, I work in the little pink building right in the bottom left-hand corner, which is the magnetic resonance imaging section.

Our centre has an international reputation for stroke research. We deal with stroke, aging, brain tumours and lots of other neurological conditions. In fact, my office is right on the very edge of the pink section, right by one of the little arteries or roads that connects the different parts of the Western. As I have been sitting in that office for eight years, I think that I am well able to talk about the transport needs of the Western.

Kristina Woolnough: By way of clarification, could you also explain why your department is located where it is and illuminate us as to the location of the infectious diseases department? The promoter has talked about reconfiguring the Western general hospital.

Dr Bastin: The committee will have a fairly clear idea of the layout of the Western from previous NHS evidence. Crewe Road South serves the front of the hospital. The infectious diseases department is at the back of the hospital. It is on the edge of the hospital, rather than in the centre of it, for a reason, although I do not suggest that you would pick up a disease if you walked past it. MRI and CT use a very high magnetic field; it is contained in the building, but we are on the edge of the hospital because we need to contain the effect that we have on surrounding structures.

The layout of the Western is very much front and back; one cannot really mix and match or move it all around. On the map the committee will see that there are grey areas marked “staff only”, towards Telford Road; the pamphlet shows that there is a loading bay next to the Anne Ferguson building, and that the mortuary is also at the back of the hospital—again, for a reason.

Kristina Woolnough: In Mr Oldfield’s rebuttal to your witness statement, he says that you were confused about the location of the tramway and the stop in relation to the Western general hospital. Why were you confused when you submitted your witness statement?

Dr Bastin: It is very difficult to keep track of the progress of the tram project. I try to download PDF files from the web but they take a long time to download at home. The location of the stop also seems to change during the course of the committee’s discussions, so it is quite difficult to monitor the changes.

Kristina Woolnough: Mr Oldfield said that an additional pedestrian access is going to be provided in the north-west corner of the site. You have described how that is very much at the back of the hospital, on Telford Road. Is that a solution to the alternative, which is to have a tram stop at the front entrance, on Crewe Road South?

Dr Bastin: It is not a very satisfactory solution. The front of the hospital is where most of the function of the hospital is located, where most of the patients are seen and where most of the staff go; you can understand that—it is a hospital, so the staff follow the patients. It is not really ideal, is it, to have people walking round the back, past the infectious diseases department and the mortuary?

Kristina Woolnough: So the Crewe Road South entrance, which is named as the main entrance, is also functionally the main entrance of the Western general hospital.

Dr Bastin: It is indeed.

Kristina Woolnough: We have heard from previous NHS Lothian witnesses that the Western general has a large catchment of non-Edinburgh patients. For what is it best known as a centre of excellence?

17:15

Dr Bastin: Apart from my section, which, as I said, deals with strokes, brain tumours and so on, the hospital has a well-regarded breast section. The Edinburgh cancer centre is very important; it includes a little grey building that is called the Wellcome Trust clinical research facility, which was set up to carry out research in the national health service. There are five such facilities located in centres of excellence throughout the United Kingdom—I think that the University of Cambridge has one and that there is one down in London. The Western general hospital is a centre not only for treating patients, but for cutting-edge, internationally competitive research, of which my work is part.

Kristina Woolnough: Are the hospital’s centres of excellence nearer the Crewe Road South entrance? In particular, I am thinking of the Anne Ferguson building and the breast centre.

Dr Bastin: Undoubtedly. I should also point out that all the signage in the hospital is based on the front of the hospital being at Crewe Road South.

Kristina Woolnough: Thank you, Dr Bastin.

Malcolm Thomson: Dr Bastin, am I right to say that you are an objector in group 34?

Dr Bastin: I am an objector. Basically, I object to the alignment, and my main objection is about using public money in a way that will not serve the community as well as it could.

Malcolm Thomson: I was about to say that your objection does not relate to an alternative route.

Dr Bastin: No. That is not my job. My job is to carry out internationally competitive research on brain tumours, strokes and so on. It is not to do what TIE should do and design a proper—

Malcolm Thomson: And that is why you are here as a witness.

Dr Bastin: Indeed. Whenever I mention the project at work, I receive positive feedback. People ask, “Why will the tram not serve the front of the hospital? Why will it pass by and serve the car park at Sainsbury’s at Craighleith retail park? Why will it not do what it should do and serve the community by serving the Western general?”

Malcolm Thomson: In your witness statement, you propose that the tram route should be amended because you want to

“entice drivers from their cars when visiting relatives”

and because the current stop is

“inappropriate for staff working late night/early morning shifts.”

You think that the proposed alignment on Crewe Road South would be more likely to achieve your aims than the promoter’s alignment would.

Dr Bastin: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you think that the feeder bus, which would collect people from the tram stop at Crewe Toll and take them into the main entrance and into the main car park and building area, would be an improvement on the promoter's original proposal?

Dr Bastin: No. As I have said, I have been in my office in the Western general for the past eight years and often—basically, every hour—I hear irate motorists beeping their horns right outside my office window, which is level with the little road that goes round past my office. Members will see from my witness statement that I have taken photos of the congestion that is part of life on the Western site. The roads around each of the little centres are small and clogged by traffic.

I do not know whether I am introducing new evidence, but what I am saying will probably interest the committee. Currently, illegally parked cars at the Western general get a little sticker—I have one here—stuck on their windows, which is great, but if people in an ambulance want to get past, a sticker on a car's window will not move the car and the ambulance will not get past. There are hundreds of stickers and quite a few cars with stickers on them. Members will notice from my witness statements that I went out one day and took a photograph of two buses trying to get past each other—I am sorry that I cannot blow up the photograph any bigger. Where will we stick the feeder bus? Will it go in the space in the middle? I do not think so. I have worked in the Western for the past eight years and have seen the problems that staff have with parking and that local residents have with members of staff parking on the roads. I feel that feeder buses would only add to congestion—they are a problem that is created by the fundamental issue of the poor alignment of the tramline.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you saying that there is no practicable vehicular access from Crewe Road South to the front of the Anne Ferguson building?

Dr Bastin: There is access. Cars can drive to the front of the Anne Ferguson building, but most of the area cannot be used for parking—ambulances deposit people there. The main problem is all the little roads round the edge of the site, which are clear on the map in the leaflet and which have lots of cars parked on them illegally. The pictures in my evidence show lots of cars parked on the double yellow lines, which leaves little space for ambulances to get past.

The Convener: We have copies of the statement with the photographs.

Dr Bastin: If you look at them carefully, you will see that the feeder bus will not really work. The current set-up of the Western general hospital

precludes a feeder bus that meanders along all the little roads dropping people off. The Western would need significant amounts of work on the access roads within it to allow a feeder bus to go in once every five minutes, or however often it is proposed that they chug down Crewe Road South.

Malcolm Thomson: Is there a difference between the practicability of accessing the area in front of the Anne Ferguson building and that of accessing some of the remoter parts of the site, such as your place of work?

Dr Bastin: Not especially. All the roads are pretty small. It is a place that is heavily congested at the moment.

The Convener: Before I bring in other committee members, I have a couple of questions. I listened carefully to what you said and looked at the photographs. It strikes me that there is an issue with bad parking facilities, irrespective of the alignment in the bill.

Dr Bastin: I could not agree with you more. I cannot understand why there is not an underground car park or somewhere for staff to park at the Western general site. It is fine to stop people travelling by car to the centre of town, but with a hospital, where there are sick and dying people and relatives who want to see them, the last thing that people want is to have to cope with the poor parking and travel arrangements that exist at the Western. To be frank, it is shocking.

The Convener: So you would say that work is needed on access internally, irrespective of any discussion about feeder buses.

Dr Bastin: Absolutely. I am pleased to be able to tell you that.

The Convener: On that basis, given that NHS Lothian acknowledges that arrangements within the hospital site are properly a matter for it, should it be encouraged to improve the access, irrespective of the alignment that is ultimately chosen?

Dr Bastin: Yes, almost certainly, but I cannot comment on the practicalities of that. As one of the witnesses said earlier, the hospital is a dynamic place—units are moved and new diseases come up. For example, a new surveillance building was built at the Western because of CJD. It may be possible to rejig the site and make the roads wider, but once that has been done and a new building is needed, I suspect that there might be problems.

The Convener: On the basis of the interests of the patient, your existing evidence is that improvements are required, irrespective of whether a tram or a feeder bus happens to come along.

Dr Bastin: That is right.

Helen Eadie: How many minutes does it take to walk from Crewe Road South to the stroke wards?

Dr Bastin: That is a good question. It probably takes me seven or eight minutes. However, that is easy for me because I am young and fit. I also know where I am going, which is a key point.

Helen Eadie: A major area of discussion in the NHS is increasing specialisation at centres such as your own. Do you think that, in the decades ahead, the number of people who travel to your centre will increase?

Dr Bastin: Yes, indeed.

Helen Eadie: Therefore the imperative is to have transport links par excellence.

Dr Bastin: I could not agree with you more. Indeed, your question provides me with a perfect opportunity to mention that we have received £7 million from Help the Aged to image the aging brain and to relate that to how people's intelligence changes as they get older. A huge number of people will come to the hospital. I am involved in grants for projects that will require volunteers to come to the centre for MRI scans. As time goes by, we will need more volunteers and people who have not yet contracted any diseases—although I should point out that aging is not disease; it is a condition that affects us all. As a result, we will need the best possible transport infrastructure, which, to my mind, can be provided only by a tram stop at Crewe Road South.

The Convener: As members have no further questions, I ask Ms Woolnough whether she has any follow-up questions.

Kristina Woolnough: I have three short questions.

I want to clarify a point that Mr Thomson asked you about. Although you are an objector in a group, your property does not abut the Roseburn corridor.

Dr Bastin: That is right.

Kristina Woolnough: So you believe that you are acting on behalf of others and in the public interest.

Dr Bastin: That is exactly why I am here. Frankly, I should be back at work analysing data and so on. However, I feel that this is a proper use of my time, because I am helping the public and—indeed—my colleagues, who have always wanted the tram route to go along Crewe Road South and to serve the front, not the back, of the Western general hospital.

Kristina Woolnough: The convener asked about the hospital's problems with parking, car access and so on. Would a tram that stopped on Crewe Road South attract people out of their

cars? After all, the promoter has made it clear that that is partly the aspiration behind its proposal.

Dr Bastin: Having such a stop must attract people out of their cars. People will use a tram that stops right outside a public building and allows them almost to fall on to the site. Having to use other buses or modes of transport would be a disincentive, and people will just decide to take the car.

Kristina Woolnough: From speaking to patients, carers and staff, do you think that the public perception is that the tram should be part of the solution for improving transport access to hospitals such as the Western general?

Dr Bastin: I could not agree more. Given that the amount of money being spent on this project could be spent on health care and so on, that must be part of that solution.

Kristina Woolnough: Thank you for your input. It is very helpful to hear from a real person rather than from the kind of transport geeks that we have become.

The Convener: I hope that you are not including committee members in that remark.

Kristina Woolnough: No. The committee is always exempt from my remarks.

The Convener: As there are no further questions for Dr Bastin, I thank him for giving evidence this afternoon.

That concludes this item on our agenda. We will now move to item 3, which is our private discussion of the oral evidence that we have heard today. Members will recall that we agreed to meet in private at the end of each oral evidence-taking session to consider the evidence that we have heard. Those discussions will greatly assist us in drafting our report at the end of phase 1 of the consideration stage.

I commend the objectors and the promoter for what I feel was a much more focused evidence-taking session. It has helped the committee enormously. If you wish to mull over the finer points of today's proceedings, tea and coffee are available to all as you leave—not that we want to encourage you to do so.

17:30

Meeting continued in private until 19:06.

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