

EDINBURGH TRAM (LINE ONE) BILL COMMITTEE

Tuesday 10 January 2006

Session 2

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EDINBURGH TRAM (LINE ONE) BILL COMMITTEE

1st Meeting 2006, 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

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Jane Sutherland

LOCATION

Committee Room 3

Scottish Parliament

Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill Committee

Tuesday 10 January 2006

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:43*]

Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill: Consideration Stage

The Convener (Jackie Baillie): Good morning and welcome to the first meeting in 2006 of the Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill Committee. I wish everybody a happy new year. Before I turn to the first agenda item, I note the committee's regret that the oral evidence session that was to take place today with the promoter, Transport Initiatives Edinburgh and the Minister for Transport and Telecommunications has had to be postponed for reasons that are outwith the committee's control. We look forward to taking that oral evidence at a later date. Only after that session and robust financial scrutiny will the committee be in a position to report on its deliberations. I will of course update committee members as soon as we have a date for the meeting—I simply note that our report cannot be finalised until we have had the meeting.

The first agenda item is consideration of additional written evidence that the promoter has provided in response to requests from the committee at committee meetings. Members will recall that, throughout oral evidence taking, the promoter's witnesses have given commitments to provide additional written information on a range of issues. As we have yet to report our final view on objections, at this stage I will simply seek members' agreement to note the promoter's responses and ask members to consider whether further written information is required. The committee will consider the merit or otherwise of the content of the responses when we consider our draft report on all outstanding objections. Do members agree to consider the promoter's responses that are contained in paper ED1/S2/06/1/1 as part of the evidence on objections?

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): I have a comment on the evidence presented on the need to have motorised axles to deal with steep gradients, although this may to a degree be irrelevant to our further deliberations. The promoter's statement is pretty wishy-washy in that it refers to increases in cost but not to the level of increase. If the promoter produces a report that tells us about an increase in cost, it should at least

give an indication of the percentage increase—whether that is 2 per cent or 60 per cent. That would be relevant to any report that we ultimately produce.

The Convener: So you seek an amplification of the points that are made in paragraph 8 of paper ED1/S2/06/1/1.

Phil Gallie: I do not expect a precise figure, but a reasonable approximation would be helpful.

The Convener: The promoter's argument would be that the cost is influenced by the availability of different tram designs. However, it is reasonable to ask for the approximate percentage rise that would be involved. Subject to our receiving that information, do members agree to consider the promoter's responses in paper ED1/S2/06/1/1 as part of the evidence on objections?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: I also seek members' views on alternative alignments for the tramline that the promoter has proposed for the Ocean Terminal and Haymarket areas. Members will recall that we agreed that those alternative alignments have merit. Following the close of the objection period, all the objections to the proposed alternative alignments have been withdrawn. However, there are still three objectors to the current route at Haymarket: Haymarket Yards Ltd, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland and CGM (Edinburgh) Ltd, which all support the proposed alternative alignment. In my view, the promoter's evidence sets out clearly the advantages of the alternative alignments over the current route. Having considered the evidence, do members agree to support the promoter's proposed alternative alignments in the Haymarket and Ocean Terminal areas?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: With the alignments agreed, a suitable amendment to reflect that decision will be lodged at phase 2 of consideration stage. I hope that our decision will give sufficient comfort to Haymarket Yards, ICAS and CGM to enable them to withdraw their objections.

In a similar vein, the objectors British Transport Police and BRB (Residuary) Ltd have agreed with the promoter draft amendments that address their concerns. The objectors are therefore willing to withdraw their objections on the basis that the agreed draft technical amendments are made to the bill. The promoter has confirmed in writing that it is willing to make those amendments. As members will recall, the committee received evidence from the promoter, BRB and British Transport Police on the purpose of the amendments. On that basis, I am content to support the amendments. Are members like-minded?

Members *indicated agreement.*

10:49

The Convener: Excellent. I hope that that offers BRB and British Transport Police sufficient comfort to enable them to withdraw their objections.

Meeting continued in private until 11:59.

We will now move into private to consider issues papers for our consideration stage report. As members will recall, we agreed on 5 December to consider such papers in private, as they will greatly assist our discussions but may not reflect the committee's final views.

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