

Leith Walk / Tram / City Centre Programmes Exploratory Working Group

Meeting at SusTrans Offices 31 October 2014

Agenda

- 1) **Welcome & Introductions** – this meeting is of the Oversight Group which is pulling together different strategic linkages for work programmes in East Central Edinburgh, and overseeing a design sub group and a business case subgroup relating to how a tram line could be integrated with the range of existing and planned programmes of construction, public realm and transportation in the East End.

The purpose of the oversight group is to ensure the designs of the many overlapping programmes knit together successfully, to create a successful sense of place (including York Place, Leith Street, Picardy Place, St James, Leith Programme and the Edinburgh Tram), whilst examining if a potential tram line extension would be a viable prospect if delivered.

- 2) **Design Sub Group update report.**

Karen Stevenson provided the following report. The design sub group has met 4 times since the last oversight group, examining each section of Leith Walk up to Picardy, Leith Street and York Place. It has included technical expertise and representatives of SusTrans, CEC roads, cycling, planning, neighbourhood, Trams and Lothian Buses, traffic modellers and urban designers. This is a very brief summary and sets out the thinking in broad terms. There is a considerable amount of information behind all of these options not articulated here.

The sub group has completed the following:

- Undertaken an analysis of Leith Walk/ Picardy Place (using SWOT analysis) to establish the weaknesses and threats to the street/ place.
- Used this information to establish a set of Objectives under the 6 qualities of street design set out by Scottish Government Policy.
- Considered design options for the following sections (at least 6 or 7 for each- including a range of tram solutions- single track/ located on one side of the street etc):
 - The lower part of Leith Walk (the narrowest section)
 - The tram stop/ street at Mc Donald Road
 - Picardy Place – tram stop
 - Leith street
- Reviewed all of the designs/ options against the objectives (scoring them)
- Sifted the options down to 1 or 2 tram scenarios around which there are a number of street solutions for various users, including;
 - Lower section of LW- central running tram with either centre pole or catenary
 - Tram stop, McDonald Road- centre running tram with centre platforms or side split platforms
 - Picardy Place- offset tram with centre or side split platforms- all against the building line established for the development site.
 - Leith Street- reducing traffic lanes, introducing segregated cycle route, simplifying junctions/ bus stops and gaining pedestrian space.

This work allows the Council to understand the extent to which the street could change (where the impacts may be) and the decisions that will be required to underpin the options.

The design is still at options stage and there is considerable merit in moving forward with further sessions of the group to try and draw the design solutions to a conclusion and allow the detail to be developed, keeping the momentum going and the same people involved. The next meeting will be held on 18 Nov to focus on Picardy Place. The session will consider the options in the context of traffic data and levels and will look at the key connections with York Place and Leith Street. Further meetings will allow the group to consider the tram in Leith Walk and further explore stops and O.L.E. arrangements etc.

- 3) The main output of the Oversight Group will be to inform a committee report for 2 Dec 2014 which will outline for Elected Members the options for providing an extended tram line to various points north of its current terminus at York Place. The robustness and integrity of the design process have been of great importance in examining the design impacts and wider transport impacts of an extended tram line. One example of that was that the access arrangements for St James cannot be considered in isolation – when examining access for St James it can only be done meaningfully looking at Leith St, Picardy & York Place in the round.
- 4) Consultation and information sessions with local communities are recognised as being crucial to this group. Iain MacPhail is briefing New Town & Broughton Community Council on a regular basis, and Ian Buchanan/Anna Herriman maintaining regular contact with community councils in Leith. This will be maintained, as will access to these minutes for these groups.

5) **Next Steps:**

- Design Sub Group to continue to meet, next meeting 18 Nov as in bullet point 2, above.
- The outputs from the design sub group to be included in Alasdair Sim's report for 2 Dec committee as an annex to that report (the report described in bullet point 4, above).
- Iain MacP / Ian Buchanan continue to liaise and inform with NTBCC and Leith CC's. Consultation would and could only begin after Elected Members have received report on 2 Dec and give their considered response to it. The design discussions, and the approach have focussed on keeping all spaces adaptable and flexible in design – not a "fait accompli" or a done deal, there will be room to influence the final design. A period of consultation would be required before any decisions could be taken forward. Important to recognise that any consultation could only begin after Elected Members determine the 2/12/14 report.
- Colin Smith agreed to send round a list of key milestones between Nov & Feb.
- Budgets/Financial Implications & Governance matters all addressed and contained within Alasdair Sim's report for committee on 2/12/14.
- Finance matters include cognisance of impact on Business Case of the variety of options.