

Fergus Cochrane
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

05 June 2008

Dear Mr Cochrane,

following the decision of the Public Petitions Committee on 19th February 2008 to continue consideration of Petition 1080 until after publication of the “Review of the reintroduction of Passenger Train Services on the Edinburgh South Suburban Railway” by Halcrow Group Limited, please find below the response by CRAG to the three submissions received by you subsequent to the publication of this report

Lawrence Marshall
Chair
Capital Rail Action Group

1080/L – City of Edinburgh Council:

This submission consists of the report by Council officers to the Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee of the City of Edinburgh Council held on 6th May 2008 – followed by the Halcrow report itself. It was sent to you immediately upon being released into the public domain and before the committee had actually met to consider it.

Please find with this letter a copy of the briefing paper prepared by CRAG for consideration by councillors at this meeting. I would be grateful if you could make this available to members of the Public Petitions Committee as an important background document – and if you could also ensure that it is published on the Committee’s website along with this submission from CRAG.

1080/M – Scottish Government:

Again this submission was sent to you without reference to the actual outcome of the meeting of the City of Edinburgh Council’s Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee of 6th May 2008.

It is thus factually inaccurate when, written two days after the committee had met, it states in paragraph 3 that “on the basis of the information available, the City of Edinburgh Council concluded that re-opening of the ESSR does not fit with Scottish Ministers’ overall transport priorities as it fails to promote sustainable economic growth and faces considerable operational and capacity constraints at Edinburgh Park and between Waverley and Haymarket stations.”

See submission 1080/N for a correct minute of the conclusions arising from the meeting of 6th May 2008.

Moreover, with respect to Edinburgh Park, Halcrow had concluded no such thing – they indeed state (paras. 7.2.8 and 7.2.9) that “a heavy rail service between Newcraighall and Edinburgh Park via the ESSR operating at two trains per hour ... should ... be compatible both with the objectives of sustaining freight capacity on the ESSR and of ensuring that there is no detriment to the reliability of the rest of the network.”

1080/N – City of Edinburgh Council:

I am grateful to the City of Edinburgh Council for having now provided the members of the Public Petitions Committee with an accurate record of the proceedings of the Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee meeting of 6th May 2008.

In unanimously refusing to endorse the officer recommendations in the report before them and in instead agreeing the motion detailed in this submission, councillors in effect determined that it was not their view that rail capacity within Edinburgh should be exclusively dedicated to services to/from places outwith the city. They therefore unanimously reaffirmed the Council's "commitment and support for reopening the South Sub" and instructed the Director of City Development "to produce a further report on the ESSR" addressing the points listed in the agreed motion.

CRAG welcomes this support from the City of Edinburgh Council and looks forward to officers at all levels now working to meet the committee's aspirations expressed most clearly as a result of due democratic deliberation and decision-making.