



Halcrow report *Edinburgh South Suburban Railway - Supplementary Assessment*

Note to CEC TIE Committee for its meeting on Tuesday 10th February 2009

Dear Members of the Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

I know that you have a busy agenda tomorrow and I start work just after noon.

I hope, therefore, that this brief(ish) e-mail will convey to you our disappointment at the report before you regarding the Edinburgh South Suburban Railway.

I've pasted in below two e-mails: one detailing the closing of CRAG's petition to the Scottish Parliament on this matter and the other a letter I've sent off to the "Evening News".

These will give you the gist of our views. It is also worthwhile - though, I'm sorry to say, a little time consuming - looking through the submissions by various parties to the Scottish Parliament at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/petitions/petitionsubmissions/sub-07/subIndexForPE1080.htm>. Our website also has much information of interest - <http://www.reopenthesouthsub.org.uk/>.

We remain of the belief that the South Sub. can play a useful role in improving public transport provision within our increasingly congested city. If this is via dual-voltage electrically powered tram-trains - and Halcrow stand by their figure of 1,432,000 passengers per annum to Gogar via Edinburgh Park - then so much the better.

Of course, electrifying the South Sub. is a worthwhile thing to do in its own right - all the other lines around (and which all connect in to the South Sub.) are either now or shortly will be electrified at 25kV AC. It makes sense not to have this gap in the network - a gap which would necessitate continued diesel haulage of freight trains over hundreds of miles of electrified track and which would not allow for future electric passenger trains to use the South Sub. in the event of planned engineering works and out-of-course disruption between Waverley and Murrayfield.

It goes without saying, therefore, that in calculating benefit-cost ratios (BCRs), the costs of electrification should not be factored in on the back of any project to restore local passenger services.

Moreover, many projects do not factor in all the costs to their BCRs. CRAG remains supportive of the Edinburgh tram project as in the long-term it will be of great benefit but is only too well aware that if the disruption costs of its construction had been included in the the calculation of its various BCRs over the years then these would have been somewhat diminished. Re-introducing local services on the South Sub. can be achieved with hardly any disruption to the life of the city - and that surely has to be a huge benefit which should be factored into BCRs.

By insisting that no trains shall be permitted to serve Edinburgh alone and that all resources should be directed at increasing the number and length of trains serving commuters from outwith the city, the Scottish Government does a disservice to the taxpayers of the nation's capital. Blackridge

will benefit - Bingham must not. I could go on - please see my letter to the "Evening News" below for some examples of journey times for Edinburgh communities from the 1961 British Railways timetable.

In the end, then, I have this nagging sense that, for all the blizzard of statistics facing you on this matter, they somehow miss the point - not seeing the wood for the trees. And that commonsense point of improved connectivity and journey times across the city will continue to provide the basis of the comprehensive public and political support still being demonstrated for the South Sub..

Yours sincerely

Lawrence Marshall
Chair
Capital Rail Action Group
50 (3F1) King's Road
Portobello
Edinburgh EH15 1DX
Tel.: (0131) 669 1336
<<http://www.capitalrail.org.uk/>>
<<http://www.reopenthesouthsub.org.uk/>>

e-mail of 7 February 2009 regarding closure of petition by Scottish Parliament:

Dear All,

further to my e-mail of 23 January 2009 forwarding to you CRAG's further response to the Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee, please now find below the result of the committee's further "consideration" on 27 January 2009 of CRAG's petition calling for the re-introduction of local passenger services on the Edinburgh South Suburban Railway.

It might occur to you, given the brevity of the verbatim transcript, that "consideration" is too generous a word for what transpired! No mention, for instance, of the possibility of tram-trains nor even a station at Portobello as suggested in our further response (available with all the other submissions regarding our petition at <<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/petitions/petitions submissions/sub-07/subIndexForPE1080.htm>><http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/petitions/petitions submissions/sub-07/subIndexForPE1080.htm>).

Lawrence

* * * * *

Public Petitions Committee Official Report **27 January 2009**

Col 1405

Scottish Parliament

Public Petitions Committee

Tuesday 27 January 2009

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 13:06*]

* * * * *

Col1450

Edinburgh South Suburban Railway (PE1080)

The Convener: The next petition is PE1080, by Lawrence Marshall, on behalf of the Capital Rail Action Group. I understand that additional material has been received and circulated to members. The petition is about the introduction of local passenger transport services on the Edinburgh south suburban railway.

Robin Harper: I have to declare an interest: I have been a member of the Capital Rail Action Group for many years.

The City of Edinburgh Council has said clearly that it does not intend to reopen the south sub line, and reopening the line is not a Government priority either, but the issue will not go away. If the committee thinks that we have taken the petition as far as we can, obviously we have no option but to close it. However, I would like to record my sadness about that, and I am speaking not only for myself when I say that the issue will not go away—CRAG will not stop campaigning for the south sub.

The Convener: I understand what Robin Harper says about the campaign, which will probably find other strategies or opportunities to try to influence decisions.

Many members would be keen to support transport projects in their constituencies, but the Government has announced its strategic transport projects review. We have heard what Robin said and we accept that we should close the petition—

Robin Harper: I have not said that we should close the petition.

John Wilson: I recommend that we should close the petition.

The Convener: Okay. John Wilson recommends that we close the petition, and I feel that that would be the broad view of committee members.

Members *indicated agreement.*

The Convener: Robin Harper has put his views on record.

Public Petitions Committee Minutes of Proceedings

PE/S3/09/2/M

2nd Meeting, 2009 (Session 3)

Tuesday 27 January 2009

Present:

Robin Harper

Mr Frank McAveety (Convener)

Jamie McGrigor (Committee Substitute)

Christina McKelvie (Committee Substitute)

Nicol Stephen (Committee Substitute)

John Wilson

Also present: Jackie Baillie and Margaret Curran

Apologies were received from Bashir Ahmad, Bill Butler, Nigel Don, Marlyn Glen, Nanette Milne, John Farquhar Munro (Deputy Convener).

The meeting opened at 1.06 pm.

4. Consideration of current petitions: The Committee considered the following current petitions

—

<<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/petitions/docs/PE1080.htm>>PE1080 Petition by Lawrence Marshall, on behalf of the Capital Rail Action Group, calling for the re-introduction of local passenger services on the Edinburgh South Suburban Railway.

The Committee agreed to close the petition on the grounds that following the findings of the recent study commissioned by the City of Edinburgh Council and SESTrans, the Scottish Government has made it clear that the re-introduction of passenger services on the Edinburgh South Suburban Rail line would not be cost effective, nor in line with its priorities.

—

letter of 7 February 2009 to "Evening News":

Dear Sir,

it is indeed disappointing (News, February 5) that the latest work by Halcrow on the prospects of re-introducing local passenger services on the South Sub. is negative in its conclusions. Given the tenor of the previous Halcrow report last year, however, this is not a great surprise.

What is more surprising is the variance with the study undertaken by Atkins of 2004.

These are two of the UK's leading transport consultancies, after all.

What's beyond dispute, however, is the fact that the South Sub. offers connectivity into and across the city with journey times that no other transport mode can deliver: 10 minutes from Morningside to Haymarket, 5 minutes from Portobello to Waverley, 9 minutes from Craigmillar to Morningside and 10 minutes from Newington to Gorgie - to name but a few options available to Edinburgh folk until the closure of the service in 1962.

It seems rather unfair that the Scottish Government refuses to fund improved mobility for the people of Abbeyhill, Bingham and Craigmillar while Edinburgh taxpayers are helping to bring renewed rail services to the people of Armadale, Blackridge and Caldercruix.

Such is the huge public support for the South Sub. amongst the many communities who would benefit from it and their political representatives of all parties and at all levels that one certain prediction is that this is one issue which will continue to feature in debates about improving Edinburgh's future transport provision.

Yours sincerely

Lawrence Marshall

Chair

Capital Rail Action Group

50 (3F1) King's Road

Portobello

Edinburgh EH15 1DX

Tel.: (0131) 669 1336

<<http://www.capitalrail.org.uk/>>

<<http://www.reopenthesouthsub.org.uk/>>