

122 – FACTS or FICTION???



Sue Bruce, the Chief Executive of the City of Edinburgh Council has been talking about the Tram Project in a speech at an environmental conference in the City.

The text of the *report* of her speech is here: <http://tinyurl.com/7rwqx4u>

Residents opposed to the Tram project (as designed and being forced through) have got in touch about a number of points including her reference to a 20% modal shift—jargon for the percentage of car journeys that won't be made in future because drivers will leave the car at home and travel by tram.

1) Sue Bruce: *“The tram which has brought about much controversy in Edinburgh is going to contribute quite substantially to the city’s ability to reduce its carbon footprint and make a sea change in people’s attitude to car travel.*

“The original business case for the tram anticipated a 20 per cent modal shift, particularly from private car drivers to public transport including the tram.

Fact: The 2007 business case review in respect of all of Phase 1 said that in 2011 the number of car trips ‘WITHOUT Tram’ would be 195.50 million per year and WITH Tram; 195.29 million – 0.21 million fewer.

By 2031 WITHOUT Tram the estimate was 257.50 million car journeys and WITH Tram 257.67 Million. 0.17 million higher.

Indeed by 2031 the Figures of car journeys WITH Tram are actually higher than WITHOUT a tram system in the Council's own business case.

Residents accept that with such a large project and so many changes in the plan and revisions of Business cases and project predictions the situation is a complex one—however it is simply impossible to quote a 20% modal shift on the basis of the evidence and DSue Bruce should be required to explain exactly the basis upon which she made that statement.

Sue Bruce was wrong to say what she did and disingenuous to say it in the way in which she did.

2) Sue Bruce *“The motivation for that from the City of Edinburgh Council is many fold: **to reduce congestion;** to be a more environmentally sensitive city; and to encourage mass transit in the city.”*

Fact: The tram project is **creating massive congestion**, and it was always predicted to do this, the council always knew it would do so. They also always knew that the increased congestion would be transferred to many tens of thousands of households (hundreds of thousands in terms of people right across the City—not only in areas close to the tram line or a few particular ‘hot spots’.

This increased congestion, (see note 1), will not end when the ‘Tram works’ end, but would increase over a period of decades as the effects of the tram wove themselves into the ongoing fabric of the transport system of the city. See ref 1 below.

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3) Sue Bruce: *“The tram which has brought about much controversy in Edinburgh is going to contribute **quite substantially** to the city’s ability to reduce its carbon footprint and make a sea change in people’s attitude to car travel.*

The fact of that matter is that **the tram will have a negligible impact on the City’s carbon footprint**, according again to her Council’s own reports it will have a small reducing effect in the long term., impossible to describe as ‘quite substantial’. See ref 2 below

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In view of the emerging realisation of the precise impact upon iconic views of the city—and the photographs and videos tourists and visitors will take back with them, it is interesting that Sue Bruce or any of the many advocates of this blighted project have *never* mentioned this impact.

But in the main feasibility and foundation report, **The Scottish Transport Augmentation Report 2003 (STAG 2003)**, the 243 page report packed with information that made up the baseline predictions upon which the project planning was founded one finds (emphasis ours) :

Visual amenity

*Varying range of visual impacts (mainly OLE) all along the route. **Most significant in the New Town where iconic views are affected**, World Heritage Site and Conservation Areas - Major adverse*

This is yet another factor many people are only just waking up to as the giant poles carrying the OLE (Overhead Line Equipment) march across the city centre—but it is one the council have been very aware of for many years (since of course 2003) but upon which they have remained consistently silent.

‘Major Adverse’ is the report’s way of saying the visual appearance of the city will be wrecked.

Taken together the three points mentioned, and the one that is never mentioned, paint a picture of a disastrous project bringing blight and decay , illness and even premature deaths for no real discernible advantage in any form.

The council are left ploughing forward towards this catastrophe only because they have already spent so much money on it.

Sue Bruce should be prepared to stand up on behalf of her administration and justify the statements in her speech in the judge led 'Leveson style' inquiry that ought to be established now, not in years time when it will be too late to do anything.

The two references show pollution rises long after the tram starts; it isn't a day one hit, and certainly does not 'get better' but is a progressive worsening over many, many years. The pollution here rises because congestion rises, and it is all worse with the tram than it would otherwise be.

The tram is the thing making it worse and although this seems incredible to ordinary people, when the facts clearly show it then denial becomes delusion. Delusional beliefs are no basis for spending what is now well over £1,000,000,000 of public money to create health problems, traffic problems, and commercial problems and generally wreck the city.

The present administration appears unable to change the collective bureaucratic mindset that thjs tram must be built at any cost which is why an immediate inquiry offers the only chance to change.

NOTES:

Ref 1: On the subject of reducing congestion and making the city environmentally sensitive
The original 'Scottish Transport Augmentation Report- 2003 (STAG 2003) says (emphasis ours) :

"In 2011 there will be an increase in properties near roads with improved air quality compared to the 'do minimum' and more properties will benefit from roadside improvements than from degradations in roadside air quality, for both pollutants. In 2026 a greater number of households will be near roads with worse PM₁₀ concentrations than better (due to predicted increased congestion in 2026), but with improved or unchanged NO₂ compared with the do minimum.

- 70,200 households with increase in **PM₁₀** in 2011 (134,500 in 2026)
- 174,000 households with decrease in **PM₁₀** in 2011 (112,050 in 2026)
- 77,950 households with increase in **NO₂** in 2011 (139,550 in 2026)
- 177,250 households with decrease in **NO₂** in 2011 (119,100 in 2026)

(STAG 2003 is assessing impacts of the original proposal called phase 1--- The line to Leith and Newhaven, with the line from Granton due South to Murrayfield.).

What is being compared (in this enormous 2003 study) is the situation after the entire **phase 1** was to have opened in 2010(!) compared to the situation if **no tram** was built (they use the term '*do minimum*' to mean 'no tram system built'. The predictions compare the baseline of what the situation was pre 2003 with what could be expected in 2011 and 2026 both 'with tram' and 'without tram'..

The INITIAL impact (2011) with tram is better compared to pre-2003 but by 2026 the impacts are worse and worsening.

The numbers of households experiencing WORSE levels of BOTH major marker pollutants RISE so much that by 2026 more are worse than are better..

The numbers of Households seeing BETTER levels of BOTH Major pollutants FALL.

There are MORE households WORSE OFF in 2026 than there are Households better off.

The council have tried to pretend this rise happens because 'traffic levels will rise anyway' but this is either incompetence, disingenuousness or plain lying –the report is specifically comparing two futures, one with tram and one without--- any rises in traffic are equivalent.

Ref 2: On the subject of the total impact of the tram on the City's carbon footprint the STAG 2003 report, stated:

*Global emissions — CO₂ There will be a **small reduction in CO₂ emissions in the long term - Minor positive***

And it has to be borne in mind the single track system we have ended up with will result in a far smaller positive impact on CO₂ emissions than the minor improvements to this hypothetical global metric.