

Transport Committee meeting June 2012



Councillor Lesley Hinds convened the first meeting of the new committee in the Dean of Guild Room this morning at the City Chambers. Although she admitted at the end that it had overrun against her personal estimate of how long it would last, the councillors got through the long agenda in just under two and a quarter hours.

We spoke to Councillor Hinds after the meeting to discuss a couple of the important topics under discussion today:-

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Councillor Joanna Mowat who represents the City Centre ward, and who is a veteran of the Transport Committee from the last administration had tabled a variety of motions this morning. The first was to insist on some transparency about the Tram Project. It read as follows:-

“Committee recognises the Council decision to take the tram to St Andrew Square in August last year and calls for:
1 a report detailing progress on parts of the route;
2 costings for the detailed design of the St Andrew Square – York Place
additional section; and
3 work programmes detailing when each section of track is to be completed.”

It was agreed that the committee will bring forward such detail to the next meeting. Councillor Mowat also tabled a motion demanding some action on increasing recycling in the city. She wants to have automated recycling bins which might pay a small amount to the people depositing the rubbish, which

is an idea from Norway and some other European countries. It was agreed that the committee will investigate this.

✘ Then she proposed a motion to assist the Northumberland Street residents return their street to some calm. There had been a deputation by the Northumberland Street residents association at the beginning of the meeting and their concerns about safety arising from the increased traffic, lack of traffic lights and the cobbled surface had been aired. The group also claimed that the street is now used as a short-cut to avoid the traffic lights to both north and south of the street, and this makes it dangerous to cross safely, particularly at the Howe Street end where there are often large delivery vehicles. A road safety audit will not be carried out in the street to determine ways to improve road safety. The residents have suggested a traffic island at the junction with Howe Street, or stopping up the road with bollards at one end as some methods of improving the New Town street.

We spoke to her after the meeting:-

[listen to 'Interview with Councillor Mowat ' on Audioboo](#)

There were two other deputations this morning, a deputation from Suntrap about the garden which they run at Gogarbank, and a deputation about the Seafield Stench.

Suntrap's future as a garden for people with learning difficulties and mental illness has been thrown into some doubt owing to the proposal that the owners of the land, National Trust for Scotland and Oatridge College have decided to sell.

Suntrap have made some investigation into funding options such as the Lottery Fund and they are also working with other charity partners like St Columba's and Alzheimer's Scotland to find a way to buy the land and continue their work. A campaign called Save our Suntrap (SOS) was set up in June 2010 to try

and keep the garden open for public use. This long running campaign was simply asking the council for their practical help, not financial assistance as they realise that the council would not be able to commit any further funds to this cause, although one of the proposals made by National Trust for Scotland was to sell the land at Millbuies (only a part of Suntrap) to the SOS campaign for £400,000.

The council agreed to help with advice and lobbying but could not commit any funds to the proposed purchase of the land so that the work there can continue.

The deputation about the Seafield Waste Water Treatment works was very clear and succinct. It was explained:-“There seems to be an attitude that Leith will provide the least resistance being a working class area. Seafield is one of the biggest in Europe. It has non-standard plant and has serious structural problems.”

The problem of smells at Seafield is perhaps not something you will know about, unless you live in the area. A plan to get rid of the smell had been adopted and has been monitored. An incident in March meant that the smell reoccurred. After lengthy discussion it was agreed to monitor the problem for a further period and then reconvene with full information to hand to decide what route to take. The Greens were disappointed that further monitoring will be done as they take the view that the plan has already failed and some other way needs to be investigated. But council official Mark Turley was adamant that he did not consider that enough strong evidence had yet been gathered, and more time was needed.

Cycling featured high on the agenda today. The council have already confirmed they will spend 5% of their transport budget on improving matters for cyclists and they are to have briefing sessions with organisations like SPOKES to find out what the priorities should be. Cycling also featured on the discussion about parking at Waverley Station and the formation of shared footways on the route between Bo'ness/Hopetoun.

There were seven new councillors present at the meeting this morning:- Councillors Bagshaw, Lunn, Gardner, Walker, Booth, Doran and Barry.

We spoke to Councillors Bagshaw and Booth both Green Party members who had presented a couple of amendments to some of the council motions today. (Unfortunately as is all too common at these meetings the amendments presented at the meeting are not always circulated to press.)

[listen to 'Interview with Green Councillors Booth and Bagshaw' on Audioboo](#)