

Lord Hardie to chair Trams Enquiry



Last week the First Minister announced that the Scottish Government were instructing a judge-led enquiry into the Edinburgh Trams project.

This week at First Minister's Questions Alex Salmond confirmed that the judge who will be in charge of proceedings will be Lord Hardie.

The First Minister said:-“Last week I announced a judge led enquiry into the Edinburgh Tram Project. Today I can confirm the enquiry will be chaired by the former Lord Advocate and senior judge Lord Hardie. The terms of reference of the enquiry which have been agreed with Lord Hardie will be to enquire into the delivery of the Edinburgh Trams project in order to establish why the project incurred delays, cost more than originally budgeted for and delivered significantly less than was projected through reductions in scope. Lord Hardie will establish the enquiry immediately and we look forward to a swift and thorough enquiry.”

A graduate of the University of Edinburgh, Andrew Hardie was Lord Advocate from 2000 to 2012 when he was first appointed by the First Minister, the late Donald Dewar. Born in Alloa, he is now 68 years old with a long legal career behind him, including leading the preparation for the prosecution team at the original Lockerbie trial, although he did not participate in the trial as he was by then appointed Lord Advocate.

He was granted a life peerage in 1997 when the Labour Party were elected to government at Westminster.

The tram project has culminated in the opening of the tram

route to fare paying passengers on 31 May 2014. The council first entered into the contracts for building the tram lines and supplying the vehicles in June 2008. At that point the council envisaged that the tram, then called the Edinburgh Tram Network, would be up and running by summer 2011. Now the tram has been delivered but it is three years late, has cost a third more than the £545m price first anticipated and the line runs for 14km from Edinburgh Airport to York Place rather than the network first dreamed of.

In 2008 the tram project was run by **tie** Ltd a council owned subsidiary who agreed with the contracting company that any price increases would be paid 'as a series of incentivisation bonuses over the life of the contract' to help reduce the risk of delay to the programme of works. The first contract also included a payment of £3.2m which became payable by the council when they decided not to proceed with Phase 1b of the network.

It is clear that at 2008 the council thought they had a firm grip on the contract, which did not however turn out to be the case.



By August 2011 the project was in crisis and the council decided one week to stop the tram at Haymarket, and the following week reversed that decision. If the tram had stopped at Haymarket the Lib Dems said they believed it would have turned the tram into a loss-making enterprise immediately. [The final vote](#) at the second meeting depended on the SNP group who (having abstained the previous week) voted along with the LibDems to ensure that the tram would go all the way to St Andrew Square.

At the time the vote was taken the Labour group leader at the time, Councillor Andrew Burns, who is now the Council Leader, said he would not be surprised if the price of £776m was

exceeded and he called for a public enquiry then.

