

Leith Walk Central Community Council have their say on trams

Leith Central Community Council has had its say on the planned extension of the tram line to Newhaven.

Their submission runs to 10 pages and it expresses their serious concerns about the design philosophy and the readiness of the project.



Community Councillors say they are not reassured by the council that mistakes from last time round will not be repeated.

They also say they want to be sure that there is sufficient planning to ensure that Leith Walk is not fatally compromised by the council's desire to extend the tramline.

There is a tight timeline for the project and the community

council say there are numerous points as yet unresolved. They have in particular pointed out that tender documents were finalised and sent out before the close of the consultation. The community council says this puts a lot of pressure on everyone.

Harald Tobermann, Convener of Leith Central Community Council, said : "Given that the Tram Act allows for commencement of tram works as late as May 2021, we cannot see any reason for rushing into this project before the vital questions raised by our submission have been fully answered. It seems the tight project timetable has been set by councillors with an eye to the next local elections. While this may be normal political instinct, it should not be allowed to eat into the time needed for proper planning.

"Having failed Leith Walk so spectacularly during the 2007-2010 effort to build a tram route and the subsequent painfully slow remediation efforts, we insist that any further attempt to insert major infrastructure into one of Edinburgh's premier streets is focused on the highest possible quality of planning, execution and final outcome.

"The tram extension along Leith Walk is not just an exciting civil engineering assignment, like the Borders railway where the biggest non-engineering challenge consisted of moving rare species. proceeding with an insufficiently planned tram extension right through the heart of our community risks undermining an ecosystem made up of a rich mix of communities, businesses, cultural spaces, cafes, pubs and restaurants together with plenty of spontaneous meeting spaces supporting a very densely packed population that is by any measure a highly successful and sustainable example of 21st century city living.

“Failing to plan properly, is planning to fail spectacularly.”