

117 –Is this the real thing or just a fantasy?



Two recent developments highlight the increasingly bizarre disconnect between the world in which the Council administration seem to live and the real world of the people of the city

On the one hand a recent press release from the Council seems a bizarre retreat into a fantasy world of showbiz glitz with Madonna as the economic saviour of the city, while the other is, literally, a wake up call for the ordinary people whose interest the Council is supposedly meant to serve.

For some residents listening to the bulldozers and heavy Lorries at work through the night outside their front doors some lyrics from another group that reached the very top of the pop world might just spring to mind:

*“Is this the real life?
Is this just fantasy?
Caught in a landslide,
No escape from reality..... **”*

The **real life** is that more and more residential will experience night time road repairs because the City's main traffic routes are now increasingly passing their doors, and the congestion and upheaval from ordinary day time repairs is impossible to contemplate.

The **fantasy** is the bizarre recent story from the administration that the devastation spreading from the effects of the project across the city will best be addressed by a PR stunt so flimsy it almost defies belief.

The **landslide** is that avalanche of effects now becoming increasingly clear that spring from the flawed tram project; from hundreds of millions of extra borrowing, even so still probably not nearly enough, to the endless noise, congestion and disruption to worst of all, the increased illness and deaths that follow increases in traffic pollution.

For the Council, however much they seek refuge in outdated PR stunts, there really is **no escape from reality**; whether it is the financial realities, the realities of deadlines to complete work beginning to slip and worst of all despite the indefensible attempts to manipulate the data upon which accurate measurement of the pollution depends; the realities of breaking the statutory EU limits..

THE FANTASY WORLD INHABITED BY THE COUNCIL PLANNERS

Madonna and her fans dancing to the rescue of the city's beleaguered small shops in a flash mob event**

<http://www.scotsman.com/edinburgh-evening-news/madonna-to-solve-city-tram-chaos-1-2300131>



THE REAL WORLD AS INHABITED BY EVERYONE ELSE

All night road works for people living along Queensferry Road, across the Dean Bridge, on the approach to the City centre.



Dr Ashley Lloyd who took the picture and has campaigned for many years to bring to attention the devastating effects of the tram project's lack of attention to health issues above all, says: *"The plain fact is more and more streets, including smaller residential ones are becoming key traffic routes as the displacement of traffic gets under way."*

"This makes night time working in those streets inevitable, because if it were to be done in the day the resulting congestion would be catastrophic."

"The weight of traffic that makes day time working illustrates the reliance on residential streets to take the vehicles being displaced from what were the main arterial routes."

"The people living alongside this road won't be the last across Edinburgh to find their nights being subjected to the noise and upheaval of road works"

"It is typical of the way the Council have managed the people of the city in respect of the project that they have known such repairs done at night are inevitable, but typical also that they have never shared this knowledge with anyone in consultation meetings."

"The council are increasingly desperate for people to continue to believe that the upheavals and increased traffic are temporary, and that once the tram track is laid and the tram running, everything will return to normal."

"This is not true and they know it because their reports have told them all along that the traffic displaced by the on road sections of tramway must go somewhere. If it does not the commercial and business life of the city upon which everyone depends would suffer even more than it is."

"The original report projected traffic post-tram getting steadily worse because of the tram's need to have traffic free roadways for two decades---so the problems being seen now are nowhere near as bad as they will become."

"These will extend over large areas of the city that are miles from a Tram line as traffic percolates across more and more areas to avoid the roads that become blocked more often."

"All sorts of bad effects flow from this, not least the inevitable increases in illness and even earlier deaths, but these continue to be officially denied even though in emails between officers they recognise the new risk of exceeding statutory EU limits for pollution in residential streets that were formerly not even being managed for air quality."

“If the Council plan to restrict commercial thoroughfares to only Council-licensed vehicles continues, then more and more residential areas will suffer the consequences of becoming 24 X 7 HGV shortcuts- the nosiest and most polluting vehicles on our roads. is recognised that the City may already be exceeding statutory EU limits as a result of traffic increases really only just beginning.”

“That unfortunately isn’t fantasy—it’s a fact.”

“The over riding need in the city right now is for a Judge led inquiry in order to properly open up the whole project to discussion, free of spin and gimmicks, and get at the facts, with the aim of changing it for the better.”

** Queen’s ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ lyrics - for anyone with it on the tip of their tongue

** Flash Mob event a rather tired PR stunt from the very early years of the century designed to achieve nothing other than to generate publicity – in this case to pretend something is being done when in fact nothing of substance is.

Ends