

Transport Committee TRO votes shambles---- vital votes put off until November because Legal advice has councillors too worried to vote.

PRESS RELEASE –

- **Residents were left stunned as vital transport Tram meeting ends in shambles**
- **The meeting was over before it started—because Councillors are apparently now to be given legal training and instruction in order to understand the advice they are being given by lawyers!**
- **Who is running the Edinburgh? Lawyers or elected representatives**

Residents left a vital Transport Committee meeting at Edinburgh City Chambers stunned after discussion of the Traffic Regulation Orders, and their attempt to have Shandwick Place re-opened ended before it began.

Yet more legal advice from Lawyers for the Council/TIE appears to have resulted in councillors being told they could face personal legal action as the trams project spirals further into chaos.

Because of this advice the meeting heard a motion that all TRO decisions should be put off until November---and that councillors would receive legal instruction designed to help them understand the advice pouring from the Lawyers responsible for the project.

Residents had been expecting to put a compelling presentation to the meeting showing how simply returning Shandwick Place to general traffic could bring great benefits, and how easy it would be to do.

But as things turned out they never got the chance as yet another meeting ended with democratic debate silenced for 'Legal Reasons'.

Allan Alstead, one of the residents in a packed public gallery that emptied within seconds, said outside: "It seems farcical that virtually every aspect of this major public project is now being closed down by Lawyers advice.

"It's possibly a bit late in the day for councillors to suddenly be getting worried over the effects and consequences of their decisions at this stage of the process. What is significant is that TIE and those in charge of the project have tried to conceal this for them."

But I suppose it indicates our message is now getting through--- the pollution issue is a most serious one; and until now it appears as if the plan of Officials from TIE and CEC was to simply try and ignore, or hide, this message.”

“This shows councillors are, in effect, becoming really concerned, and who could blame them? They don’t want to be left personally liable and carrying the can for blunders by the council as a whole.”

“If this is a sign that the council are finally coming round to recognising this is something that must be faced up to and dealt with properly then I suppose it will be a good thing--- but it is just one more use by faceless officials of ‘Legal reasons’ to stifle debate and force the project through regardless, then that is a different matter.”

Another resident **Ashley Lloyd**, due to present the scientific evidence, said: “If this whole project has got to the stage where councillors feel they cannot judge the issues then that in itself shows something is very wrong with the process.”

“I feel sorry for the ordinary councillors trying to find a clear way through the torrent of legal advice coming from the Lawyers, as it all it seems to achieve is greater distance between the parties who should be working together to find a solution.”

“Of course they need to be sure they don’t have personal liability in this --- but that understandable caution shouldn’t be allowed to get TIE and the Council as corporate bodies, off the hook over the shambles the project has descended into.”

“We are remaining very focussed on the bad and harmful effects of traffic short-sightedly and casually squeezed down the streets in which we live, knowing that what we are seeing then tens of thousands more people will see down the line.”

“But that doesn’t mean we are unaware of all those aspects that spring from the same lack of clear planning and decent management that has failed to see and confront the problem of air quality impacts; the crisis enveloping the funding around the entire scheme for instance.”

“Nobody can blame councillors for feeling worried—but that it has got to this stage where the meetings of democratically elected representatives cannot go ahead time and again because of ‘Legal reasons’ you do have to start to worry about what kind of democracy we now have.”

ENDS.