

## When is a commitment to openness not a commitment to openness?

### When it needs to be worked out later?

**From:** Mark Turley  
**Sent:** 18 June 2011 14:30  
**To:** Sue Bruce (Chief Executive)  
**Cc:** Dave Anderson; Susan Mooney; Andrew Mackie; Alastair Maclean

My understanding is that when you met with the Moray Feu residents you gave a commitment to openness but not a specific commitment re raw data. [REDACTED] is, I understand, arguing that the Tram Sub Committee (at a Special Meeting to discuss this issue) gave a commitment to providing raw data but that is not our understanding, nor does the Committee minute suggest that.

- The residents who have long objected to the traffic displacement catastrophe now being created by the flawed tram project were very encouraged after a meeting last summer in the Waverley Court HQ of the City of Edinburgh Council.
- Alongside Council CEO Sue Bruce and her chief confidante David Anderson were Marshall Poulton of Traffic, Dr Andrew Mackie of the Scientific services department and Vic Emery, of TIE, still at that time a meaningful part of the process.
- The meeting ended with residents leaving feeling greatly encouraged by a commitment to openness given freely across the table by the person right at the top---Chief Executive Sue Bruce.

So the recent FOI request that produced the email from which the extract above is taken came as more than a little shock. A 'Commitment to openness' either means what it says on the tin or else it surely means nothing at all.

Of course Mr Turley is a member of the council but he is also Head of Services for the Community whose role is defined on their website as:

**Services for Communities department  
Overview**

*We all want Edinburgh to be a great place to live, work, visit, study and invest (sic). Services for Communities (SfC) plays a key role in this by providing services that help the city stay:*

- *Clean*
- *Green*
- *Safe*
- *Well-housed*
- *Beautiful and well-maintained*
- *Moving efficiently*
- *well-informed and well-engaged*

*Many of these services are delivered through neighbourhood teams in response to the needs of their local residents. Since this way of working was introduced in 2006 there have been dramatic improvements in performance and customer satisfaction. (Underlining by us)*

That heart warming mission statement doesn't mention 'splitting hairs' or 'trying to find a way round problems we don't want to get drawn into'.

This email extract is just one of a whole raft in emails recently brought into the open under the FOI legislation, in which senior officers of the council discuss and debate the best way to try and shut up the local residents whose views they don't agree with, many others can be seen at the website [www.edinburghtramfacts.com](http://www.edinburghtramfacts.com)

'Openness' simply has to mean what it says, and the irony of trying to find subtle ways to avoid it after proclaiming it must be lost on Mr Turley.

Sooner or later the penny has to drop that pushing on with the tram as presently envisaged is pushing on with pollution creation that is unnecessary. It does not have to be this way, changes to the tram can be made, and the Business case is destroyed anyway, the tram can be changed and something can be done..

But until Ms Bruce and her colleagues realise this, then 'openness' will remain an empty concept however many times they pledge their allegiance to it. **Ends**