



Cockburn Association Response to the Tram Extension Consultation

The Cockburn Association, Edinburgh's oldest civic society, is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the city's heritage, landscape, and quality of life. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the City of Edinburgh Council's consultation on the proposed tram extension, and we appreciate the constructive dialogue with the Future Trams Team throughout this process, as well as their commitment to public consultation.

The Cockburn Association remains committed to supporting a transport future that is sustainable, inclusive, affordable, efficient and sensitive to Edinburgh's unique historic environment. As the City faces the challenges of the housing crisis, and increasing congestion, and works towards the laudable ambition of Net Zero by 2030, it is vital that any transport solution alleviates these pressures and complements the city's existing asset base of spectacular heritage, civic amenities, existing transport networks and public green space.

As both a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and Scotland's capital, Edinburgh deserves a bold vision for the future, and one which seeks to address the City's challenges. Though we understand that the Future Trams Team have undertaken much detailed work in preparation of this consultation, we consider that the evidence base is as yet insufficient to explain and justify why an investment of such magnitude, and the inevitable years of disruption to resident and commercial communities is the best option for the City.

Given the far-reaching and multigenerational impact of this development, we have sought the views of our members on the proposed tram extension. Of those who responded, respondents supported the general principle of extending Edinburgh's transport network; however, concerns were expressed about the execution and governance of tram projects to date, with particular reference to the multiyear disruption on Leith Walk.

Any transport extension must be developed in close alignment with the City Mobility Plan, City Plan 2030, the Active Travel Action Plan, the 2030 Climate Strategy and the Local Place Plans. Together, these frameworks set out a shared vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and people-centred city, which capitalises on its historic and natural assets, and preserves and enhances them for future generations.

At this strategic stage, detailed design information, including street-level treatments, traffic management, pedestrian and cycling provision, and heritage impact assessments have yet to emerge. We therefore reserve detailed comment until these plans are available. Nonetheless, we emphasise that heritage, landscape quality, and local character must remain central to the design process.



We are aware of concerns about the capacity of South Bridge to carry modern trams and the need for independent assurance of its ability to accommodate such loads without risk to this Category A-listed structure within the World Heritage Site. These issues reinforce the importance of thorough engineering and heritage assessments before finalising any proposed routes

The Cockburn Association is committed to engaging constructively as the proposals develop. We offer our expertise in heritage, planning, and civic matters to help shape a transport system that enhances Edinburgh's sustainability, accessibility, and distinctive sense of place. We look forward to contributing to future stages of consultation and to continuing to advocate for a transport network that supports residents and local businesses while respecting the historic fabric of our city.

The Cockburn Association thanks the City of Edinburgh Council and the Future Trams Team for the opportunity to participate in this important consultation and welcomes further dialogue to ensure that future proposals deliver lasting benefits for Edinburgh's people, heritage, and urban environment.