

Response ID ANON-PA1N-7G3M-E

Submitted on 2015-08-04 15:57:26.570702

Issues

In order for us to analyse the results of this consultation we will need some further information about you and / or your organisation. This will be used to help us analyse responses, but will not be published.

Organisation Name (if applicable):

Macpherson (Scotland) Ltd

Surname:

Adamson

Forename:

Alison

Postal Address:

[REDACTED]

Postcode:

[REDACTED]

Phone:

[REDACTED]

Email:

[REDACTED]

What issue / issues would you like to be investigated by the Inquiry?*[300 words maximum]

What issue / issues would you like to be investigated by the Inquiry:

Alternatives (no.11 issues)

A) The CEC should have taken advice from the experienced Cities such as Nottingham, for details on how to keep businesses and residents informed during construction. Edinburgh suffered humiliation as the dates for completion were regularly changed, usually at short notice.

B)There was a lack of information given to businesses affected. Their role in liasing for major economic events such as the Festival,Rugby, Christmas & Hogmanay meant businesses were unprepared.

C)Local funding provided was inadequate and given out without proper scrutiny and allocated to businesses that were not on the tram route.

D) Failure in providing simple contacts for information relating to emergencies (such as water ingress, a common occurrence) and reliable timescales for forthcoming construction events.

Evidence

Questions about you:In order for the evidence to be analysed and taken forward by the Inquiry we will need some further information about you and / or your organisation.Please note that all evidence submitted to the Inquiry may be published at any point during the Inquiry or when the Inquiry Report is issued. If you are responding as an organisation your full details will be published.If you are responding as an individual your name will be published, but your address will only be published if the Inquiry considers this to be relevant to the evidence submitted.

Organisation Name (if applicable):

Macpherson (Scotland) Ltd

Surname:

Adamson

Forename:

Alison

Postal Address:

[REDACTED]

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(note, this is the basement of [REDACTED] for map purposes)

Postcode:

[REDACTED]

Phone:

[REDACTED]

Email:

[REDACTED]

Are you responding as an organisation or an individual?

Organisation

Does your evidence relate to a particular period of time?

Yes

If yes, what period?:

The entire start to finish period.

Does your evidence relate to a particular event or activity?

Yes

If yes, please explain what the event / activity was.:

(Please note, I am currently putting a file together with photographs, leaflets, newsletter and email evidence. I cannot submit this all online due to my limited technical knowledge. I shall deliver this in person to the Inquiry Office at a later date. Ref: Tel call to your office.)

However, my evidence relates to the following points.

The failure of CEC and Contractors in allowing our customers safe access to our business premises during the entire tram construction project. Even when there was no construction work being carried out, we were unable to get the barriers removed to allow easier local access.

There was marketing funding made available but poorly administered, given to businesses that were not on the tram route and proper scrutiny of public money was ignored. Marketing initiatives were controlled by senior Council officials and employees with favorable sub-contractors being allocated to provide expensive, but unsuccessful marketing campaigns whilst ignoring the needs of the most severely affected businesses on the construction route. I have accounts to show this example, including the unnecessary expenditure for wine for a fashion show running into hundreds of pounds of public money. This was not a business on the route!

Initial financial assistance for businesses was allocated by TIE assuming a 2011 completion date. The further financial assistance for "Hotspots" for small businesses as described by TIE was never administered to the small businesses that thought they would be eligible to apply for. With the demise of TIE, all direct financial assistance disappeared. The administrators of the initial financial package (either £3,000 or £4,000 depending on turnover) were never asked to pay out anything more after TIE was wound up. (Cowan & Partners, Leith) I know that as a business, we were the very last of the businesses to receive a payment. Some businesses never got the details of this funding and I only found out about it by accident, reading the Edinburgh Evening News! I have a copy of the original leaflet describing the payment package.

My photographic evidence will show the extent of the major Health and safety breaches local to me during the construction period. How pedestrians were put in dangerous situations due to the failures by CEC and Contractors. How lack of proper signs meant that people were left without clear directions on how to cross a road, for example and how these failures contributed to the drop in footfall within our area as the general public lost confidence. This obviously had an economic impact on businesses directly.

When electricity cables were severed by workmen to our business, we had no internet or telephone access for nearly a week involving a misunderstanding with BT. If the cable had not been severed, that situation would not have happened. When the road/pavement was dug up to create new drainage, water was pouring into our storage area, but the Contractors blamed us for not "tanking" the area. The neighbouring restaurant had a major sewage flood caused by a collapsed drain that had been fractured by a mechanical digger. (The contractors denied liability) but we have since been experiencing dampness, which I believe is related. I do not have the funding to investigate this properly.

We had inadequate street lighting due to huge areas of electrics being disconnected during power cable re-locations and tram electrical wire fitting. (Yet funding was provided to give Christmas lights to shops off the tram route.)

Throughout the process, meetings to update traders were called, but also cancelled at short notice. I personally contacted 40 local traders to attend a meeting that was cancelled only hours before it was due to start. There was a general feeling that no-one was getting information to help plan ahead for major events and future marketing events could not be planned due to the uncertainty of promised completion dates.

Despite highlighting concerns and reporting problems, there was a general feeling that we were being ignored. I had repeatedly reported the dangers of cyclists on pavements, where pedestrians were put in further danger as they were barricaded in by 6 foot metal fences, but it took a public petition to the Council before anyone listened! (Instigated by myself and backed by locally based businesses.)

My photographs showing dangerous pavement areas were sent to the Scottish Parliament's Roadworks Commissioner, but even they were ignored. They just

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advised that "the Council had been informed."

I have discovered that a senior National business organisation, that is founded to help businesses, is now headed by one of the recipients of some of the marketing funding allocated by the Council. This means that that association is unlikely to provide impartial advice by association. (The accounts evidence and emails can provide the evidence.)

The main problem we encountered in trying to plan anything was there was an unwillingness of any official to give a date to aim for. This left everyone in limbo.

Nottingham has a new tram line in construction now. Having spoken to a business there, it is quite clear that Edinburgh businesses have been neglected in terms of financial and local Council support throughout the construction process. Nottingham has a financial package to help small businesses, including payment of 70% of loss of projected profit based on pre-tram construction income. They also have additional funding for the most vulnerable small businesses so that delays will not force them out of business. Edinburgh had nothing. Many businesses were unable to hold on any longer and closed their doors forever. For those of us that managed to hang on, we hope that this Public Inquiry will reveal the real losers in this over budget, over complicated mode of transport that created such a mess during its construction. Edinburgh's reputation has been tarnished.

We are particularly interested in:• How you found out about what was happening, and how informed you were throughout the project• What did you think would happen• What actually happened• What were the effects if any, on you (or your organisation) at the time of the project• What if any, were the on-going or longer-term effects on you (or your organisation). Please write your evidence here.

We are particularly interested in:

The abbreviated response is that our business suffered a huge financial burden during the construction process. The costs may never be recovered and the business (along with all our neighbouring businesses) had great difficulty in encouraging customers back into the area again. The new traffic systems introduced to accommodate the trams has now created no car areas and extra difficulties for parking and we don't see any benefits as a result of the tram being introduced in this area.

The hard copy evidence that I shall provide will address these points in the best way I can present them to you.

Do you have any documents which you think it would be useful for the Inquiry to see?

Yes

Details of documents:

Photographs, emails, newsletters, leaflets.

Upload documents:

No file was uploaded

Upload documents:

No file was uploaded

Upload documents:

No file was uploaded

Upload documents:

No file was uploaded

Upload documents:

No file was uploaded

Are you content for the Edinburgh Tram Inquiry team to contact you again in relation to this evidence?*

Yes