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Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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20 July 2012

Dear Maureen

Edinburgh Trams – ICI Committee Update

At the ICI Committee meeting on 9 May, during my discussion with Gordon MacDonald, I indicated that I would provide an update on the Edinburgh Trams.

In relation to the solution for the turn from St Andrew Square into York Place, there has never been an issue with this. In order to turn from St Andrew Square into York Place, because of the steep gradient, the existing road profile will be raised and realigned locally to give the tram a smooth horizontal and vertical alignment as it takes the corner. In light of recent press reports of a drop in footfall in Princes Street and Shandwick Place, I can report that information has been gathered by the City of Edinburgh Council from a number of local businesses in Shandwick Place to form a case study, which will be put forward to the Lothian Assessor in late July.

If the case study shows there has been a material change in circumstances, which is shown by comparing an area which is affected by tram works, such as Shandwick Place and a non-affected area such as Corstorphine, then the Lothian Assessor is duty bound to give relief to those affected businesses. In addition to this, the Council is working with local businesses in the West End in order to best use the available 'Open for Business' funding to help mitigate the impact of the trams and drive footfall to the area. I would also like to take this opportunity to report to the Committee, that Princes Street re-opened to buses, taxis and cyclists on 30 June a month earlier than originally programmed.

Finally, the completion date for the trams remains on programme, for an in-service date of summer 2014.

Kind regards



KEITH BROWN