

Wednesday, 25 March 2015

Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AM
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport
Welsh Government
5th Floor Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Dear Minister

Transport for Cardiff and the Valleys and Cardiff City Region

I have written to you in the past to support both the Metro and the policy of City-Regions, and would like to share with you now a Cardiff Civic Society document that brings both of these topics together. CCS has been contributing to the Cardiff LDP recently through our attendance at the hearings examining the soundness of the Deposit LDP, and the attached document summarises the issues that have yet to be resolved.

Whilst I understand that you will be unable to comment on these issues, there is one investment that is key to resolving the impasse that we foresee; the approval of the Metro project is the only way Cardiff can grow without facing unacceptable traffic congestion. We have shared this summary and our conclusions with our AM, Mark Drakeford, and believe we have his full support. I have copied the First Minister on this letter because of the importance of Cardiff LDP to Wales as a whole, in that it draws together so many planning, economic, social and regeneration issues together that seem to require cabinet level support and drive.

The determination of the possible routes for Metro lines is a vital component of three major developments in Cardiff that will deliver the jobs and growth priorities of Wales, the large housing developments in the NW of the city, the design and operation of the Central Square transport interchange, and the connectivity of the Enterprise Zone to the rest of the city. A firmer commitment to implementation of the Metro than is contained in the Draft National Transport Plan will give business the confidence to invest in the Capital.

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The routes that are critically important to the success of these developments are:

1. The Cardiff bay to city centre link.
2. The access routes into and out of Central Square.
3. The route from RCT (Talbot Green) past Creigiau and Radyr through to the city centre, linking the strategic sites C and D and RCT strategic site 8.

Without knowing these routes, and the mode of transport chosen (tram we suggest) the developments above cannot be done sustainably, and the opportunity lost as retro-fitting rail into established developments will be at best inefficient and at worst impossible. The City has been selling the Metro heavily as part of the economic and jobs growth package, and lack of information at this important stage of the LDP will compromise the business case for inward investment into Cardiff. We are convinced that Cardiff Council understand this, but they only have until end April to respond to the 150 plus action points your inspector logged during the hearings, and lack of information on the Metro project will restrict their ability to plan Cardiff and the region's growth accordingly.

Since attending the hearings and summarising these issues, we have listened to the Budget proposals which appear to give support to the Capital City Region and the Metro. The devil is always in the detail, but this is encouraging news, and we congratulate the Welsh Government for taking this important step in pushing the Metro forward. We have also input the attached commentary into the consultation of the Draft Transport Plan for 2015.

The objective of this letter is to request that the Metro project is approved, or at least those key elements of it referenced above, and the essential details are published before the end of April to allow the Cardiff LDP to include them in the final version to be ratified by your inspector. Regrettably, delay beyond this date would make the LDP all but obsolete as the delivery agreement dates need to be observed. Alternately, action could be taken to delay the ratification now. Planning applications that are approved based on an LDP without Metro routes will effectively deny us the opportunity of the rail based mass transit system so desperately needed by the city.

I look forward to your reply on this pressing matter.

Yours Sincerely



David Eggleton, LDP team Cardiff Civic Society

Copy to First Minister, Mark Drakeford AM

Attachment - Cardiff Civic Society commentary on LDP Hearings