PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE

9th Meeting, 2006 (Session 2)

Wednesday 17 May 2006

The Committee will consider the following new petitions—

PE959 Petition by Eddie Jackson, on behalf of Borderline Theatre Company, calling on the Scottish Parliament to urges the Scottish Executive to act urgently to ensure the continuation of Borderline Theatre Company’s innovative touring and lifelong learning programme.

PE960 Petition by Claire McCready calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to ensure that cranial abnormalities of babies, such as deformational plagiocephaly/torticollis, are properly recognised and treated by evaluating babies at birth and at 6 weeks; that appropriate advice is available to parents, including repositioning advice; and that cranial remoulding therapy is available free of charge from the NHS.

PE961 Petition by Sally Richardson calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to introduce legislation to provide greater protection and increased powers for local communities in respect of the ownership and use of common good land.

PE962 Petition by Julie Logan calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to ensure the Planning (Scotland) Bill, currently being considered by the Scottish Parliament, provides greater protection for listed buildings and conservation areas and greater community involvement, including consideration of alternative community proposals, in the decision making process.

PE963 Petition by William Forbes calling on the Scottish Parliament to consider alternatives to Strathclyde Passenger Transport’s proposal for a Glasgow Airport rail link in order to obtain a suitable comparison in matters of cost, design, contribution to the local economy, environmental impact, congestion relief and social inclusion of the local areas affected.
Public Petitions Committee – a template for public petitions

Should you wish to submit a public petition for consideration by the Public Petitions Committee please complete the template below. Please refer to the Guidance on submission of public petitions for advice on issues of admissibility before completing the template. You may also seek advice from the Clerk to the Committee whose contact details can be found at the end of this form.

Details of principal petitioner:
Please enter the name of person and organisation raising the petition, including a contact address where correspondence should be sent to, email address and phone number if available.

| Eddie Jackson |
| Producer     |

Text of petition:
The petition should clearly state what action the petitioner wishes the Parliament to take in no more than 5 lines of text, e.g.

The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament considers and debates the implications of the proposed Agenda for Change legislation for Speech and Language Therapy Services and service users within the NHS

Petition by Eddie Jackson, on behalf of Borderline Theatre Company, calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to act urgently to ensure the continuation of Borderline Theatre Company’s innovative touring and lifelong learning programme.

Additional information:
Any additional information in relation to your petition, including reasons why the action requested is necessary, should not be included here. However, it may be appended to the petition and will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition. Please note that you should limit the amount of any additional information which you may wish to provide in support of your petition to no more than 4 sides of A4.
Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition:

Before submitting a petition to the Parliament, petitioners are expected to have made an attempt to resolve their issues of concern by, for example, making representations to the Scottish Executive or seeking the assistance of locally elected representatives, such as councillors, MSPs and MPs. Please enter details of those approached below and append copies of relevant correspondence, which will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition.

Borderline has made contact and had meetings with Scottish Arts Council representatives and has written letters to local MPs and MSPs.

Petitioners appearing before the Committee

The Convener of the Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the Public Petitions Committee to speak in support of their petition. Such an invitation will only be made if the Convener considers this would be useful in facilitating the Committee's consideration of the petition. It should be noted that due to the large volume of petitions it has to consider, the Committee is not able to invite all petitioners to appear before the Committee to speak in support of their petition.

Please indicate below whether you request to make a brief statement before the Committee when it comes to consider your petition.

I DO request to make a brief statement before the Committee

I DO NOT request to make a brief statement before the Committee

Signature of principal petitioner:

When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Guidance on submission of public petitions, the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below. Other signatures gathered should be appended to this form.

Signature ..

Date 26th APRIL 2006

Please note that any additional information, copies of relevant correspondence and additional signatures should be appended to this form and submitted to:

The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee,
The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186    Fax: 0131 348 5088
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
Public Petitions Committee – a template for public petitions

Should you wish to submit a public petition for consideration by the Public Petitions Committee please complete the template below. Please refer to the Guidance on submission of public petitions for advice on issues of admissibility before completing the template. You may also seek advice from the Clerk to the Committee whose contact details can be found at the end of this form.

Details of principal petitioner:
Please enter the name of person and organisation raising the petition, including a contact address where correspondence should be sent to, email address and phone number if available

Claire McCready

Text of petition:
The petition should clearly state what action the petitioner wishes the Parliament to take in no more than 5 lines of text, e.g.

The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament considers and debates the implications of the proposed Agenda for Change legislation for Speech and Language Therapy Services and service users within the NHS

Petition by Claire McCready calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to ensure that cranial abnormalities of babies, such as deformational plagiocephaly/ torticollis, are properly recognised and treated by evaluating babies at birth and at 6 weeks; that appropriate advice is available to parents, including repositioning advice; and that cranial remoulding therapy is available free of charge from the NHS.

Additional information:
Any additional information in relation to your petition, including reasons why the action requested is necessary, should not be included here. However, it may be appended to the petition and will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition. Please note that you should limit the amount of any additional information which you may wish to provide in support of your petition to no more than 4 sides of A4.
Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition:
Before submitting a petition to the Parliament, petitioners are expected to have made an attempt to resolve their issues of concern by, for example, making representations to the Scottish Executive or seeking the assistance of locally elected representatives, such as councillors, MSPs and MPs. Please enter details of those approached below and append copies of relevant correspondence, which will be made available to the Public Petitions Committee prior to its consideration of your petition.

Various e-mails to Andy Kerr, Jack McConnell & Scottish Executive regarding current lack of legislation and advice/treatment for Plagiocephaly. Contact with MSP (Margaret Smith) who in turn submitted 5 questions to the Scottish Parliament. Various e-mails to other MSPs including all members of the Cross Members Group on Children and Young People. Have received reply from Scottish Executive but no action has been taken. Reply received from Directorate of Healthcare Policy and Strategy (Dr Rosie Ilett, Head of Child and Maternal health Unit).

Petitioners appearing before the Committee
The Convener of the Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the Public Petitions Committee to speak in support of their petition. Such an invitation will only be made if the Convener considers this would be useful in facilitating the Committee’s consideration of the petition. It should be noted that due to the large volume of petitions it has to consider, the Committee is not able to invite all petitioners to appear before the Committee to speak in support of their petition.

Please indicate below whether you request to make a brief statement before the Committee when it comes to consider your petition.

I DO request to make a brief statement before the Committee
X

I DO NOT request to make a brief statement before the Committee

Signature of principal petitioner:
When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Guidance on submission of public petitions, the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below. Other signatures gathered should be appended to this form.

Signature ........................................................................................................................................

Date ................................................................................................................................................

Please note that any additional information, copies of relevant correspondence and additional signatures should be appended to this form and submitted to:

The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee,
The Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186 Fax: 0131 348 5088
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
This petition is being submitted to the Scottish Parliament on behalf of concerned parents of children suffering from Plagiocephaly and is supported by Headstart4babies

www.headstart4babies.co.uk

This petition is being submitted by concerned parents of babies suffering from deformational plagiocephaly (flat head syndrome) and is being supported by Headstart4babies (the only U.K. Charity giving free advice on Plagiocephaly), and is aimed primarily at the NHS Scotland and Scottish Executive. We are asking that the following 4 points are considered.

1. The NHS modifies their current legislation to include mandatory evaluation of babies (at birth and 6 week check-up) for plagiocephaly and torticollis. Should torticollis be present, the baby should then be treated by a physiotherapist urgently. Should signs of plagiocephaly be present then parents should be advised of repositioning techniques and further assessments arranged. These techniques should include:-
   a. Supervised tummy time when baby is awake.
   b. Ensuring that the baby does not spend prolonged time with his/her head resting against hard surfaces (e.g. Car seat, buggy, under play gym on floor)
   c. When baby is placed to sleep on his/her back (as advised by SIDS "Back to Sleep" leaflet), parents should be advised to ensure that the baby's head is placed to the left one night then right the next and then to the middle, to avoid prolonged pressure on one part of the skull.

2. The Scottish Executive/NHS Scotland update their current leaflet on Cot Death "Back to Sleep" to include information on Plagiocephaly and preventative measures (i.e. repositioning).

3. Funds should be made available for a medical trial to take place with unresolved cases of Plagiocephaly (babies around 6 months of age) using cranial remoulding treatment (helmet). The helmet is individually moulded to the baby's exact head shape via a short casting session, and is worn for 23 hours a day. The helmet fits snugly to the unaffected area and leaves space around the flat spot so that any growth is channelled into the area which needs to 'round out'. Therefore, leaving baby with a more symmetrical head shape and facial asymmetry is also improved.

4. When the trial is completed and proven successful. Cranial remoulding treatment (helmets) should then be provided free of charge from NHS Scotland where necessary.

Should points 1 & 2 be adhered to, this in turn will reduce the number of cases dramatically. Therefore, cranial remoulding (helmet treatment) should in turn be unnecessary in the majority of cases.

What is Plagiocephaly?

Plagiocephaly is a disorder in which the back or one side of a baby's head is flattened. The number of babies suffering from plagiocephaly has dramatically increased since the "Back to Sleep" campaign was introduced. Great Ormond Street Hospital estimates that plagiocephaly affects 50% of babies under the age of one to some extent. It can be caused by lack of amniotic fluid in the womb during pregnancy, but more commonly after birth, (positional plagiocephaly). The main causes of positional plagiocephaly are torticollis (stiffening of neck muscles) and prolonged periods of time spent resting with baby's head in one position on a firm, flat surface. Because baby's heads are soft to allow for the incredible brain growth that occurs in the first year of life, they are susceptible to being "noulded" into a flat, abnormal shape.

What is Torticollis?

Torticollis is a condition that causes the tightening of muscles in the neck. Babies affected by torticollis find it almost impossible to turn their head in both directions. This in turn can be a huge contributing factor towards positional plagiocephaly a baby suffering from torticollis will always lie with their head facing the same side.

What advice is currently given to parents?

Where plagiocephaly is suspected or even diagnosed, many Health Visitors, GPs, Midwives and Paediatricians consistently advise parents that the head will round out in time, or the child's hair will grow in hiding the deformity and misalignment of ears. This advice is not true in all cases and is unacceptable to the majority of parents. Rarely are parents advised to reposition their baby or even told that the condition has a name.
This petition is being submitted to the Scottish Parliament on behalf of concerned parents of children suffering from Plagiocephaly and is supported by Headstart4babies

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PLAGIOCEPHALY/TORTICOLLIS

www.headstart4babies.co.uk

Headstart4babies are giving their full support to this petition. Headstart4babies is the only U.K. charity to provide free advice for parents of children affected by plagiocephaly (also known as flat head syndrome). Headstart4babies can put families in touch with other families in their area affected by plagiocephaly. They can also arrange for a free consultation with a professional Doctor in London who can treat plagiocephaly with cranial remoulding (helmet) treatment should it be required (Please note that the cranial remoulding (helmet) treatment is not free of charge – cost £1700). Headstart4babies can be contacted by e-mail at info@headstart4babies.co.uk

www.torticolliskids.org

This is a website which gives advice and information on torticollis. The website also gives simple exercises which will improve your babies tightening of the neck muscles and therefore help your baby have fuller range of head movements.
Public Petitions Committee – a template for e-petitions

Should you wish to submit an e-petition allowing signatures to be gathered online on the Public Petitions Committee e-petitioner web pages please complete the template below. Before submitting your e-petition please consult the Guidance on submission of public petitions for advice on what is and is not admissible. You may also seek advice from the Clerk to the Committee whose contact details can be found at the end of this form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details of principal petitioner:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please enter the name of person and organisation raising the petition, including a contact address where correspondence should be sent to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Richardson,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text of petition:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The petition should clearly state what action the petitioner wishes the Parliament to take in no more than 5 lines of text, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament considers and debates the implications of the proposed Agenda for Change legislation for Speech and Language Therapy Services and service users within the NHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petition by Sally Richardson calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to introduce legislation to provide greater protection and increased powers for local communities in respect of the ownership and use of common good land.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period for gathering signatures:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please enter the closing date for gathering signatures on your petition, which we would usually recommend is a period of between 4-6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing date: 5 May 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a template for e-petitions, July 2004
Additional information:

Please enter any other information relating to the issues raised in your e-petition, including the reasons why the action requested is necessary. The text entered in this field should not exceed 2 pages. However, you may wish to provide further sources/links to background information.

The sale of Common Good and council-owned land and public buildings.

Existing legislation covering local government procedures does not ensure sustainable management of public assets and Common Good land. Management of Common Good land was passed to local government from the old Burghs in 1975, but many continue to dispose of these community assets inappropriately. New procedures are needed to ensure that Common Good Land and usable publicly owned buildings can, as a first priority, be retained and re-used by the public either directly through community organisations and trusts or through continued local authority management.

Common Good Land and other heritable and movable public assets have been sold off to private interests without any public notification or any opportunity for local communities to object or propose alternative uses. Common Good Land which is to be sold should be declared to be such when the proposed sale is reported to the Full Council Committee for approval, but at least 2 recent sales in Edinburgh which included Common Good Land have been recommended to committee for sale with no reference made to their status.

There is no formal opportunity for public objections to such sales, and local authorities sell Common Good Land without a requirement to consider if these assets can be retained for use in the delivery of public services and so ensure they continue to be used for public benefit, as in many cases the original bequests to the Burghs required. Common Good Land is all too often sold off to raising funds for general expenditure, which means those assets are lost to future generations. This is both economically and socially unsustainable, and the good management of assets should support existing communities and ensure income, services and opportunities for future generations.
Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting an e-petition:

Before submitting a petition to the Parliament, petitioners are expected to have made an attempt to resolve their issues of concern, by for example, making representations to the Scottish Executive or seeking the assistance of locally elected representatives, such as councillors, MSPs and MSPs. Details of those approached should be entered.

Bill Cunningham (Councillor, Holyrood Ward)
Trevor Davies (Councillor & Convener of Planning, City of Edinburgh Council)
Sarah Boyack MSP
Mark Ballard MSP

Comments to stimulate on-line discussion:

Please provide at least one comment to set the scene for an on-line discussion on the petition, not exceeding 10 lines of text.

The purposes and intentions of the people who donated Common Good Land in the past should be respected. It was given to the community in perpetuity, and those donors would be appalled to see it being sold off for executive flats, bland office blocks, and thus permitting the destruction of the character of part of the Royal Mile, Scotland's most famous and important street. Not only must this project be blocked, but Parliament must ensure that nothing like this can be proposed in the future.

Petitioners appearing before the Committee

The Convener of the Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the Public Petitions Committee to speak in support of their petition. Such an invitation will only be made if the Convener considers this would be useful in facilitating the Committee's consideration of the petition. It should be noted that due to the large volume of petitions it has to consider, the Committee is not able to invite all petitioners to appear before the Committee to speak in support of their petition.

Please indicate below whether you request to make a brief statement before the Committee when it comes to consider your petition.

I DO request to make a brief statement before the Committee
I DO NOT request to make a brief statement before the Committee

a template for e-petitions, July 2004
Signature of principal petitioner:

When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Guidance on submission of public petitions, the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below. Other signatures gathered should be appended to this form.

Signature ........................................................................................................................................

Date ...........................................................................................................................................

For advice on the content and wording of your e-petition please contact:

The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186       Fax: 0131 348 5088
E-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

Note
Completed e-petition forms should also be sent to petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
Public Petitions Committee – a template for e-petitions

Should you wish to submit an e-petition allowing signatures to be gathered online on the Public Petitions Committee e-petitioner web pages please complete the template below. Before submitting your e-petition please consult the Guidance on submission of public petitions for advice on what is and is not admissible. You may also seek advice from the Clerk to the Committee whose contact details can be found at the end of this form.

Details of principal petitioner:
Please enter the name of person and organisation raising the petition, including a contact address where correspondence should be sent to.

Julie Logan

Text of petition:
The petition should clearly state what action the petitioner wishes the Parliament to take in no more than 5 lines of text, e.g.
The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament considers and debates the implications of the proposed Agenda for Change legislation for Speech and Language Therapy Services and service users within the NHS

Petition by Julie Logan calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Executive to ensure the Planning (Scotland) Bill, currently being considered by the Scottish Parliament, provides greater protection for listed buildings and conservation areas and greater community involvement, including consideration of alternative community proposals, in the decision making process.

Period for gathering signatures:
Please enter the closing date for gathering signatures on your petition, which we would usually recommend is a period of between 4-6 weeks

Closing date: 5 May 2006
Additional information:

Please enter any other information relating to the issues raised in your e-petition, including the reasons why the action requested is necessary. The text entered in this field should not exceed 2 pages. However, you may wish to provide further sources/links to background information.

Protection for Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas

The Mountgrange "Caitongate" proposals demonstrate some clear weaknesses in protection for listed buildings and for conservation areas. The systems of protection and consultation need to be made more robust in legislation, and should also require greater weight to be given to proactive plans and proposals from heritage bodies and community groups to enable greater local participation and local democracy.

The existing system allows local authorities and developers to exclude the public from the decision-making process. The system is skewed in favour of inappropriate development, as developers generally have the capacity to employ professional teams to carry out subjective studies and reports, whereas members of the public and community groups have limited resources and are rarely given sufficient time to examine all background reports relating to development proposals. In particular, many recent applications have been recommended by the City of Edinburgh Council for approval despite objections from heritage bodies and from the public.

This case and other recent examples demonstrate that there is a need for tighter control over how local authorities conduct developments contrary to their own Development Plans. Recently, the demolition and redevelopment of offices on George IV Bridge was agreed by the City of Edinburgh Council despite objections from Historic Scotland, even though current planning policies and guidance favours the re-use or adaptation of buildings over demolition. The demolition of the New Street bus depot was also supported by the City of Edinburgh Council despite local plan policies which require demolition to be assessed against proposed rebuild. Nothing of this sort was done.
Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting an e-petition:

Before submitting a petition to the Parliament, petitioners are expected to have made an attempt to resolve their issues of concern, by for example, making representations to the Scottish Executive or seeking the assistance of locally elected representatives, such as councillors, MSPs and MSPs. Details of those approached should be entered.

Bill Cunningham (Councillor, Holyrood Ward)
Trevor Davies (Councillor & Convener of Planning, City of Edinburgh Council)
Sarah Boyack MSP
Mark Ballard MSP

Comments to stimulate on-line discussion:

Please provide at least one comment to set the scene for an on-line discussion on the petition, not exceeding 10 lines of text.

Time and again the City of Edinburgh Council has approved construction projects and demolitions that go against not just the character of the City, but also against listed status, World Heritage status, conservation areas, their own planning guidelines, advice from conservation bodies, the feelings of the local community, and public opinion more widely in the city. The current planning laws make all these supposed protections virtually worthless, and must be changed before Edinburgh and other cities in Scotland have their built environment degraded beyond recognition.

Petitioners appearing before the Committee

The Convener of the Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the Public Petitions Committee to speak in support of their petition. Such an invitation will only be made if the Convener considers this would be useful in facilitating the Committee's consideration of the petition. It should be noted that due to the large volume of petitions it has to consider, the Committee is not able to invite all petitioners to appear before the Committee to speak in support of their petition.

Please indicate below whether you request to make a brief statement before the Committee when it comes to consider your petition.

I DO request to make a brief statement before the Committee

I DO NOT request to make a brief statement before the Committee

da template for e-petitions, July 2004
Signature of principal petitioner:

When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Guidance on submission of public petitions, the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below. Other signatures gathered should be appended to this form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For advice on the content and wording of your e-petition please contact:

The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186    Fax: 0131 348 5088
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

Note
Completed e-petition forms should also be sent to petitions@scottish.parliament.uk
Public Petitions Committee – a template for e-petitions

Should you wish to submit an e-petition allowing signatures to be gathered online on the Public Petitions Committee e-petitioner web pages please complete the template below. Before submitting your e-petition please consult the Guidance on submission of public petitions for advice on what is and is not admissible. You may also seek advice from the Clerk to the Committee whose contact details can be found at the end of this form.

Details of principal petitioner:
Please enter the name of person and organisation raising the petition, including a contact address where correspondence should be sent to.

William Forbes MRICS

Text of petition:
The petition should clearly state what action the petitioner wishes the Parliament to take in no more than 5 lines of text, e.g.
The petitioner requests that the Scottish Parliament considers and debates the implications of the proposed Agenda for Change legislation for Speech and Language Therapy Services and service users within the NHS

Petition by William Forbes calling on the Scottish Parliament to consider alternatives to Strathclyde Passenger Transport’s proposal for a Glasgow Airport rail link in order to obtain a suitable comparison in matters of cost, design, contribution to the local economy, environmental impact, congestion relief and social inclusion of the local areas affected.

Period for gathering signatures:
Please enter the closing date for gathering signatures on your petition, which we would usually recommend is a period of between 4-6 weeks

Closing date: 8 May 2006

a template for e-petitions, July 2004
Additional information:

Please enter any other information relating to the issues raised in your e-petition, including the reasons why the action requested is necessary. The text entered in this field should not exceed 2 pages. However, you may wish to provide further sources/links to background information.

The Glasgow Airport Rail Link is needed and should be supported however this should not be done slavishly without questioning the issues which the rail link will raise.

The SPT state that their objectives in promoting their Bill are:

POLICY OBJECTIVES OF THE BILL

4. The policy objectives of the Bill are:
   □ To stimulate economic growth in the West of Scotland by developing the capacity and capability of the national and regional rail network
   □ To contribute to a sustainable basis for the future growth of Glasgow and Prestwick Airports in terms of government and regional objectives for airport surface access;
   □ To support the sustainable regeneration of the M8 corridor and Ayrshire / Inverclyde corridors by developing rail capacity;
   □ To improve social inclusion and accessibility by connecting areas of low car ownership and high deprivation within west Scotland to economic opportunities at Glasgow and Glasgow Airport;
   □ To provide a high quality, high capacity public transport service between Glasgow Airport, Paisley and Glasgow that will attract car and other users through offering a high quality, high reliability, safe, frequent service and competitive journey times; and
   □ To provide public transport services to Glasgow Airport and in the M8 and Ayrshire Corridors that integrate with the existing transport network and allow for the future development of enhanced interchange opportunities with bus, car, rail, cycling and walking.

If read closely the first three Objectives all say the same thing. It would certainly be hoped that by spending £160m in any area this would contribute to growth and by using this to introduce new railways it would certainly increase capacity. Whether it would be sustainable would be another matter. The Sydney Airport Rail Link went bankrupt two years after opening and even Manchester Airport Rail Link had to undergo a major investment review within the first ten years. Airport rail links can fail and cost the taxpayer for years after the initial investment. The SPT has over specified their plans by building capacity for two eight carriage trains to call at the Airport every fifteen minutes. Even on its busiest day, if every passenger used the train this capacity would never be used.

Similarly, the design adopted is the most expensive. The SPT consultants admit that the viaduct across St. James Park is more expensive than an embankment; the bridge over the M8 is lavish; the new platform at Central Station runs to some 300m; the promised mitigation proposals for St. James Playing Fields are exorbitant; BAA have got a new fuel storage depot, not to mention the new lifts, escalators and stairs only metres away from existing installations.

There is a mentality of throwing money at this particular problem, however the more expensive the project becomes the less viable it is and the greater the need for ongoing public support and subsidy.

In Objective 4, the SPT’s claims of social inclusion are grandiose in the extreme. Certainly, Glasgow as a city has comparatively low levels of car ownership but the SPT plan is to literally drive an express train through the areas within Glasgow and Paisley which are recognised as priority regeneration areas. Ferguslie; St. James; Ibrox; Govan, and Penilee are all areas which could have easy access to the airport, indeed Glasgow City Council has called for a new station at Ibrox as part of the airport investment – but this has been rejected by the SPT. For this Objective to be meaningful the rail link has to be opened up to the maximum possible passenger base. It needs to stop at the intermediate stops along the commuter line. It is interesting to note that BAA actually has offices outwith the airport campus at Hillington. How many more airport facilities could be decanted to points along the route if the commuter stations became “Airport Link Stations”?

a template for e-petitions, July 2004
Additional information (continued...)

In Objective 5, the SPT allude to the expected switch of car users to the new service. It should be noted that they include Paisley as part of the route, i.e. they expect car users to switch when journeying from Paisley to Glasgow. If they expect that to happen then surely the same would happen for the intermediate commuter stations. In fact the stations at Hillington, etc., (and the new station at Ibrox) would be attractive Park and Ride options for commuters travelling to the city or avoiding the colossal parking charges at Glasgow Airport. However, perhaps this is the problem; both the SPT and BAA have a vested interest in not encouraging intermediate commuter car parking. If the SPT truly think that a new rail service would attract a switch from the car and a contribution to the easing of congestion on the M8, then they are duty bound to attempt to take that ideal as far as possible. They may find, of course, that their new Shields Road Car Park does not operate at full capacity as a result.

Objective 6 is rather worrying. They speak of “future development of enhanced interchange opportunities”. It recognises that even after spending £160m we will have to wait for future improved opportunities. This is not acceptable. By planning the new service and thinking beyond what already exists these opportunities could and should be provided as part of this new investment. Simply by having half of the new service (two trains per hour) call at the intermediate stations, these interchanges can be created now. A new Ibrox Station would provide the best example, being situated above an important motorway junction; serving a major traffic generator of the stadium; allowing the Rangers car park to be used by commuters; interfacing with the national cycle routes in Bellahouston Park and the bus routes of Paisley Road West. The additional benefit being that removing the intermediate stops from the Inverclyde service for example would speed up trains to Gourock without spending a penny on that service.

The SPT plan is a poor copy of my own proposal, except it is over specified, badly planned, extravagant and insular in its approach to the communities most affected by the new railway. The SPT were given a grant of £3m to prepare their scheme yet there is no model, no real indication of what the thing will look like.

The SPT plan should be challenged by comparing it to my own. If nothing else I have a model! However I have also spent years working on the best possible solutions for each of the tasks the new railway would present. By better planning and stronger management a cheaper solution can be devised. One which not only presents better value for the taxpayer but offers a real contribution to alleviating traffic congestion and giving something back to the communities which are most affected.

For more information on my scheme please log onto my web site – www.glasgowraillink.co.uk a number of separate reports can be downloaded. The question of the Cholera Graves was addressed before the SPT even knew they were there; a demand based solution to the playing fields mitigation was devised; the bottleneck at Paisley Gilmour Street Station was identified; a sensible integration was devised; the congestion at Glasgow Central was addressed and, most important, a cost effective scheme capable of future expansion was planned years before the SPT put pen to paper.

An appraisal of my scheme is required alongside that of the SPT, if for no other reason than to give the public an assurance that the solution for a rail link to Glasgow Airport has examined every alternative and is not based on an approach of throwing money at the problem.
Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting an e-petition:

Before submitting a petition to the Parliament, petitioners are expected to have made an attempt to resolve their issues of concern, by for example, making representations to the Scottish Executive or seeking the assistance of locally elected representatives, such as councillors, MSPs and MSPs. Details of those approached should be entered.

Since 1990, I have been lobbying for a direct heavy rail link to Glasgow Airport. In 1992 the then Strathclyde Regional Council acknowledged my call in their major transport review “Travelling In Strathclyde”. In 1996 the SPT acknowledged receipt of my plans but they had no plans of their own. In 2002, the Scottish Executive acknowledged receipt of my plans and even appraised them but rejected the idea of an elevated route across St. James Park and my proposed location of the Airport Station – the very proposal which has now been presented to Parliament by the SPT.

All MPs; MSPs; local Councillors; Enterprise Companies; local authorities and other stakeholders in the areas affected by the rail link proposal have been contactec and presented with my plans.

In particular, despite the SPT’s claims of an extensive consultation of their proposal, I have never been invited to any meeting with them. Indeed, it appears I may have been excluded from meetings.

Comments to stimulate on-line discussion:

Please provide at least one comment to set the scene for an on-line discussion on the petition, not exceeding 10 lines of text.

The SPT proposal for a rail link to Glasgow Airport is badly planned with a resultant cost penalty being carried by the taxpayer. Their scheme is over specified, badly designed and misses a number of opportunities to deliver real long lasting benefits to the communities which will host the new railway. These wards are already identified as priority areas for regeneration but rather than direct the massive investment in a positive manner towards Ferguslie, St. James, Ibrox, Govan, etc., the SPT are helping others with BAA gaining £25m of new investment; Renfrewshire Council being promised extravagant replacement football pitches; Network Rail gaining railway infrastructure improvements and freight operators being absorbed of financial contributions. An alternative cost conscious proposal is required.

Petitioners appearing before the Committee

The Convener of the Committee may invite petitioners to appear before the Public Petitions Committee to speak in support of their petition. Such an invitation will only be made if the Convener considers this would be useful in facilitating the Committee’s consideration of the petition. It should be noted that due to the large volume of petitions it has to consider, the Committee is not able to invite all petitioners to appear before the Committee to speak in support of their petition.

Please indicate below if you do NOT wish to make a brief statement before the Committee when it comes to consider your petition.

I do NOT wish to make a brief statement before the Committee [ ]
Signature of principal petitioner:
When satisfied that your petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Guidance on submission of public petitions, the principal petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below. Other signatures gathered should be appended to this form.

Signature  

Date ................10th March 2006.........................................................

For advice on the content and wording of your e-petition please contact:
The Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348 5186    Fax: 0131 348 5088
e-mail: petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

Note
Completed e-petition forms should also be sent to petitions@scottish.parliament.uk

a template for e-petitions, July 2004