

EDINBURGH TRAM (LINE ONE) BILL COMMITTEE

Monday 14 November 2005

Session 2

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EDINBURGH TRAM (LINE ONE) BILL COMMITTEE 21st Meeting 2005, Session 2

CONVENER

*Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab)

*Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO ATTENDED:

Alison Bourne

Malcolm Thomson QC (Counsel for the Promoter)

THE FOLLOWING GAVE EVIDENCE:

Patricia Alderson (Edinburgh and Lothians Badger Group)

Rosanne Brown (Wester Coates Terrace Action Group)

Alison Hawkins (Wester Coates Nursery School)

Alan Jones

Sue Polson

Kristina Woolnough

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Jane Sutherland

LOCATION

Committee Room 1

Scottish Parliament

Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill Committee

Monday 14 November 2005

[THE CONVENER opened the meeting at 10:24]

Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill: Consideration Stage

The Convener (Jackie Baillie): Good morning everybody. Welcome to the 21st meeting this year of the Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill Committee. I apologise for the slight delay in getting started, but there were traffic problems.

Consideration stage is about the committee considering the detail of the bill. Our job is to consider the arguments of the promoter and the objectors and, ultimately, decide between any competing claims. All attending parties are aware of the procedures for taking evidence, so I do not propose to reiterate them.

As members will recall, at last week's meeting we agreed that the badger mitigation plan, which has recently been provided to the committee, will remain a private document, as it identifies the locations of badger setts. The promoter has also provided copies of the document to Scottish Natural Heritage and Edinburgh and Lothians badger group. I remind all who are present today to refrain from identifying the specific locations of setts in their questions and answers.

I ask members to note the content of paper ED1/S2/05/21/22, which provides written evidence that was sought from the promoter at our meetings on 21 and 27 June. Where possible, I intend to put all the promoter's responses before the committee at one meeting, rather than over the course of several meetings. However, on this occasion the evidence was requested in relation to witnesses who were present in June and who are also present today, so I felt it appropriate to provide the information.

Finally, at our meetings on 13 and 27 September, the committee agreed that it did not wish to take further oral evidence on planning as it already had sufficient evidence. By way of explanation, whether or not the Roseburn corridor is designated in planning as a transport corridor, an urban wildlife corridor or a linear park, that will be superseded by the bill, should it become an act. I ask questioners, witnesses and members to be mindful of our previous decision during today's meeting.

We move to consideration of evidence from objector witnesses for groups 33 to 35, 43 and 45. Today, we are considering various aspects of flora and fauna, as well as the walkway and cycleway. I remind Tina Woolnough and Patricia Alderson that they remain under oath. I invite Sue Polson to take the oath.

SUE POLSON *took the oath.*

The Convener: The first witness is Tina Woolnough, who will address the impact on wildlife and vegetation for group 33.

Alison Bourne: Good morning, Ms Woolnough. Can we start with Mr Dapr 's rebuttal, in which he refers to the current condition of the footway and cycleway? In that context, do you have any comments on vegetation and wildlife?

Kristina Woolnough: The promoter has played up the poor management of the cycleway and walkway. It has been suggested that neglect is a virtue, in terms of putting a tram on the Roseburn corridor. We feel that the vegetation along the cycleway and walkway should have been maintained better, with proper tree management and so on. However, the promoter is the City of Edinburgh Council, which has had every opportunity over the past number of years to maintain the area properly. That raises for us an issue of trust, as to whether the promoter will ever deliver the maintenance that it is supposed to. Mitigation will be included in the bill, but who will maintain the area and ensure that the corridor is kept in good condition?

We do not accept that neglect is a virtue in this case. The corridor has been successfully occupied by wildlife. It is successful as foraging ground and it offers ground cover for species such as badgers. That neglect is seen as a virtue is a symptom of the downplaying of the value of the corridor. By contrast, local people and users of the corridor value it very much the way it is, and so does the wildlife.

There are concerns about the funds that are available for the public realm and for maintenance. To say that an expensive tram scheme is the way to maintain the Roseburn corridor is, to say the least, taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut.

Alison Bourne: Mr Dapr  states that the corridor will be well lit, and that the removal of vegetation will assist in providing good visibility. Do you agree?

Kristina Woolnough: No, not at all. The removal of vegetation will have a devastating effect on the corridor's function as a secure blanket of cover for wildlife. There will be some reinstatement, but it will be only partial. There will be an almost wholesale removal of vegetation in some areas of the corridor. We are not sure for

whom there will be good visibility. Perhaps there will be good visibility for tram drivers, but wildlife does not need good visibility.

I have said before that it is not always an advantage for things to be well lit. It depends on the kind of lighting that is used. We do not agree with Mr Dapr . That is probably all that I can say on that matter.

10:30

Alison Bourne: Mr Dapr  probably also meant that the tram stops on the Roseburn corridor would be more visible as a result of the signage.

Kristina Woolnough: I have already given evidence that an on-street alignment would be much more visible than an off-street alignment. Off-street alignments are often in embankments or cuttings, shielded by vegetation and some remaining trees and they often go through residential areas. An on-street alignment would be much more visible and obviously much less detrimental to the Roseburn corridor.

Alison Bourne: I want to move on to Karen Raymond's rebuttal. What are your thoughts on her suggestion that the tram proposals offer an opportunity to deliver improved management of the Roseburn corridor?

Kristina Woolnough: That suggestion harks back to the downplaying of the state and benefits of the Roseburn corridor and its success story from a wildlife point of view. The corridor is also a success story from a human point of view. Its rural character is very much part of what we value about it and what the wildlife enjoys about it. We think that formal planting or any changes that are made will change the corridor's character for the worse. We do not accept that better management will result. There has been no guarantee at all about the management of the corridor—there is only an aspiration. We do not know where the money for managing the corridor will come from or who will manage it in the future. We do not know whose responsibility it will be. In the light of the track record that the promoter has, by its own admission, we are not hopeful that the aspiration will turn into reality.

Alison Bourne: Paragraph 2.2 of Mr Coates's rebuttal indicates that he thinks that the promoter's surveys are adequate. Do you have any comments to make on vegetation and wildlife?

Kristina Woolnough: We have been disappointed by the level of the surveys. I submitted evidence using the views of experts. I looked to a number of expert bodies for information on birds, badgers, flora and fauna and so on and they said that more rigorous surveys should have been done. Our view is that the

surveys were not rigorous enough. Obviously, Mr Coates has taken a tram point of view, if you like. The surveys may have been fit for his purposes and boxes have probably been ticked. However, the promoter is the City of Edinburgh Council, and it should have set an example of excellence rather than adequacy in looking at what is in the wildlife corridor.

Since the surveys were done, changes have been made to the amount of vegetation that will be lost. The mitigation plan is—as the promoter says—an evolving document. It may be evolving because there are no design details, but the fact that nothing is set down simply makes us less trustful and more concerned and anxious. We can assume nothing about such documents as they evolve. Until the final point at which the landscape and habitat management plan is signed off—which might be the day before construction—we do not know what input we can have into it, if any, or whether the commitment levels in the document might shrink. Obviously, we are aware that it will not be known whether extra trees will have to be removed before there are design details. Even when construction is taking place, completely unexpected things might happen as a result of the nature of the soil and the surface material on the Roseburn corridor. We feel that boxes are being ticked, but we have not been reassured and we think that losses are continually being played down because the promoter's job is to promote the tram.

The environmental statement refers to "major adverse" effects. Now that it is emerging that more vegetation will be lost than had originally been thought, we feel that the adverse effect on the Roseburn corridor is growing. The more we find out, the larger the adverse effect seems to be. It is an extreme adverse effect. Because a fuller environmental assessment was not done of other alignments, we feel very strongly that there is no measure against which to set the Roseburn corridor, and that makes us anxious.

The proposed line has impacts on the Roseburn corridor that, from our point of view, appear to be extreme. There is nothing to say, "Actually, this is the best alignment, because it has been assessed, whereas another, on-road, alignment would have had a more detrimental environmental impact on the corridor." An on-street alignment would have significantly less environmental impact—in fact, no environmental impact at all—on the Roseburn corridor.

However, we have no measure of whether that is the case or not, and we have been unable to do such a test ourselves. We are anxious about the losses and the uncertainty. There been a change in the assessment of the vegetation, and more trees will have to be removed than was originally

thought. That was because the tree surveyor did not appreciate that trees that were overhanging the Roseburn corridor would have to go. He assumed that some trees could be retained, which cannot. We do not know what else was not given in the brief to the tree surveyor. We do not know what else was not given in the brief for other surveys that have been undertaken. That is because the promoter, when it commissions surveys, has a vested interest. We feel generally discouraged and anxious about the whole surveying process.

Alison Bourne: Do you also recollect that Mr Coates said that stabilising works may add to the amount of vegetation lost? Therefore, even the figures that Ms Raymond has put forward for loss of vegetation are still conservative.

Kristina Woolnough: That is right.

Alison Bourne: It is not until stabilising works and construction actually start that we will know the full impact.

Kristina Woolnough: When I cross-examined Mr Coates last week, it was clear that there are many unknowns and that he feels that neighbouring gardens will somehow compensate for the losses in the Roseburn corridor during construction. People's gardens are not the designated urban wildlife corridor; they are people's gardens. To encompass them casually in the function and facility of the Roseburn corridor from a wildlife point of view is completely unacceptable.

Alison Bourne: Mr Coates suggested, regarding loss of trees, that they have no impact on local air quality but only on global climate change. What are your thoughts on that?

Kristina Woolnough: Mr Coates is an expert, and I respect his viewpoint. However, it is the experience of local people that trees in leaf behave quite differently from when they are not in leaf as regards sound and visual screening.

We are unaware of any evidence that has been lodged to support his point of view on air quality. We feel, from all the things that we ever learned at school, that biodiversity and air quality must have a benefit. I find it extremely hard to believe that trees are of no benefit to local air quality and that there will be no loss to it as a result of removing them. Large trees will be removed and replaced by smaller trees that will not overhang the corridor. That must surely have consequences for air quality and noise screening.

As for the suggestion that trees have a benefit only for global climate change, that is benefit enough and a benefit worth having. We find the attitude, "You lose a few trees—oh dear," rather cavalier, and we do not agree with it.

We are also very concerned that in general the ethos of environmental policy is that our green spaces should be protected. There are Scottish Executive guidelines—and funded projects—on green spaces for communities. The Roseburn corridor is the green space for several communities along it. Designated or not, it functions as a green space. Green spaces have value for communities, particularly in urban environments, yet here we are facing this huge loss.

A bit of replanting will not recover the Roseburn corridor for the communities along it. Some of those communities are in social inclusion partnership areas. It is a long corridor of green space for people. That is probably all that I have to say in answer to that question.

Alison Bourne: Would you agree that in giving the Roseburn corridor designated urban wildlife corridor status, the City of Edinburgh Council designated that space for wildlife and flora and fauna?

Kristina Woolnough: That is right. I accept that if the bill becomes an act, it will remove that status, but to people from all over Edinburgh and beyond, that status is the corridor's value and its loss cannot be mitigated. We are not getting a replacement urban wildlife corridor somewhere else. Function might be retained to a degree; we dispute that. The loss of the amenity, benefits and success of the corridor for humans and wildlife cannot be mitigated.

Alison Bourne: Referring to replacement planting, Mr Coates suggests that the tram scheme will be an opportunity to enhance the existing vegetation. He also says:

"The Promoter has consulted the local community ... and will continue to do so".

Do you have any comment on that point?

Kristina Woolnough: I have been very active in the community liaison group. I had to go to two groups because Blackhall community association spans two of the community liaison group areas so I was fortunate to be able to pick up questions where I left them at the previous meeting.

The landscape and habitat management plan was brought to us as a document in its early stages. We pointed out all the trees that were missed off and all the hedges that were not there, so the promoter went away and altered the plan. I would not say that that was a mechanism for consultation.

There is no statutory mechanism for us to be involved and, as I have said, we are not sure about what will happen as the landscape and habitat management plan approaches maturity. We are not sure what the mechanisms will be. I

cannot think of anything that we have asked for or approaches that we have asked to be taken with regard to the tram project on the Roseburn corridor that have been taken on board. We are therefore very sceptical about the word “consulted”.

Alison Bourne: Do you also feel that the promoter might be tempted to go for the cheapest option, given the probable financial constraints?

Kristina Woolnough: Because of the lack of clarity and the absence of a business case, we are not sure whether the original budget for environmental mitigation should now be increased or whether costs have increased. We cannot see the context. I cross-examined some of the promoter’s witnesses about that and it seems to me that we are feeling our way in the dark. Our aspiration is to know how the area will be managed if the tramline is built. We do not know where the money for that will come from. We do not know whether there is enough money in the pot to pay for the things that have been included in the scheme. Presumably, when the scheme was originally costed there were no details about the badgers and existing levels of vegetation, or about the human usage of the corridor. None of that information was included, so one wonders how accurate the budgeting for such projects can be; global experience is that it is not very accurate. We are concerned that those issues are not very important for the funding because the promoter has to get the tram up and running on the rails. The Roseburn corridor is not very visible; the promoter might have considered that it could be done later.

Alison Bourne: I am also unsure about where the money for mitigation measures for the flora and fauna is going to come from. Is it going to come from the construction funds or public realm improvements? Do you recall the promoter advising the committee that there is only £1 million in the bank for public realm improvements?

Kristina Woolnough: That is right. A small amount of money has been set aside, as far as we know—and it is a question of what we know rather than what is the case. There is £1 million for public realm improvements, but we want to know what the environmental mitigation budget is. If we can, we would like to see it costed out. I do not think that that is an unreasonable request. Perhaps we would gain some confidence from that.

Alison Bourne: It might also be the case that if the promoter considered alternative on-street alignments, it would not have to spend so much.

Kristina Woolnough: Exactly. Until you know what the facts and figures are, you cannot make comparisons or see whether this is an incredibly expensive place to put a tram or whether there is a

cheaper way to do it that is less environmentally damaging or even environmentally beneficial, as it will remove cars from roads, make the air cleaner on streets and reduce noise and vibration from general traffic.

Alison Bourne: And possibly even attract more patronage.

Kristina Woolnough: Possibly, but without the figures we cannot know.

The Convener: You have been sailing very close to the wind. No more alternative routes or patronage cases, thank you.

Alison Bourne: In his rebuttal, Mr Coates states that a further bat survey will be undertaken prior to construction. Do you have any comment to make with regard to that?

10:45

Kristina Woolnough: I have been in correspondence with a bat expert. We walked up the Roseburn corridor and looked at the bridges and so on. There was some anxiety about the Coltbridge viaduct, because bats like to inhabit roosts near rivers because of the feeding potential.

A survey that was conducted just before construction started would be a bit late. The issue for bats would be not whether the Roseburn corridor should be used, because that would have been decided at that point, but what mitigation measures they should have. As we do not know about the detail of the matter, we do not know whether that would have an engineering impact. Certainly, it would have an impact on the timescale and the cost. Again, however, there is uncertainty, which creates a lack of confidence about the extent of the surveys. If proper surveys had been done, we would know the answers to those questions now.

Alison Bourne: Mr Coates also mentions that further bird surveys were undertaken in May and June of this year. Has the promoter shared the findings of those surveys with you in an attempt to address that part of your objection?

Kristina Woolnough: I have seen what has been done. Again, there was a limited survey. Using experts—I spoke to RSPB Scotland and got advice on how to conduct a bird survey—I discovered that more seasonal work needed to be done. Again, however, we feel that every bird, particularly those of red-list species, is of value, especially in relation to the ecosystem of the corridor. To say simply that they will go somewhere else and find other trees to nest in and so on is to miss the point. That is not an answer to our concern. Displacement is not mitigation, it is a hope that something good will result.

Alison Bourne: In short, is it your view that the flora and fauna of the Roseburn corridor are such that the area should be considered a valuable and sensitive habitat?

Kristina Woolnough: Absolutely. To be fair to some of the promoter's witnesses, we have heard that the Roseburn corridor will never be the same again, that there will be losses that cannot be mitigated and that some of those losses might be extreme. In summary, all that I can say is that we still oppose the use of the Roseburn corridor and would support alternative alignments.

Alison Bourne: Are you aware that the Scottish transport appraisal guidance document offers the following helpful advice? It says that transport proposals should be designed to

"avoid development in, or close to, unprotected but valuable and sensitive habitats".

Kristina Woolnough: Yes. It is our view—

The Convener: For the benefit of the committee, could you tell me where that is in the rebuttal witness statement?

Alison Bourne: It is not in the rebuttal witness statement, but I think that the STAG document is crucial to any consideration of environmental impact.

The Convener: Okay, but the focus of this session is to home in on rebuttal witness statements.

Alison Bourne: That concludes my questions.

The Convener: Mr Thomson, you may question Kristina Woolnough.

Malcolm Thomson QC (Counsel for the Promoter): Ms Woolnough, would it be fair to suggest that you might find it difficult to be objective about the promoter's mitigation measures because of the vehemence of your opposition to the idea of a tram going down the Roseburn corridor?

Kristina Woolnough: The vehemence of my opposition is the result of a cumulative process based on what the promoter has said and the information that has been issued. I have become more and more convinced in my views. Initially, I did not know much about the issues. I did not know the extent of the wildlife on the corridor and I did not know much about the badgers on the corridor. Admittedly, I am a layperson, but the more research that I have done—I spoke with experts on every subject on which I submitted written evidence—the more concerned and disappointed I have become about the level of the surveys. It is perfectly legitimate for you to suggest that I am biased, but the same suggestion could be made about the promoter.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you agree that there is a difference between protected and unprotected species?

Kristina Woolnough: There is in terms of law. That is right.

Malcolm Thomson: And in respect of species such as badgers there are regulatory provisions and licences are required.

Kristina Woolnough: That is right. I understand that there is robust protection for badgers, but the issue is also whether it would be better for them if the tram did not go on the Roseburn corridor. In respect of protected species such as birds—we heard from Mr Coates last week about red species or whatever they are; I cannot remember the exact terminology—there seems to be a sliding scale of protection. I tried to get to the bottom of that last week. From a layperson's point of view, protected means protected, so it is difficult for ordinary people to understand that a "yes, but" is attached.

Malcolm Thomson: Were you at all comforted by Mr Coates's evidence last week that even where a species was not protected steps were proposed to mitigate the impact on them, such as avoiding work during the breeding season for birds?

Kristina Woolnough: I was concerned about the food-chain issue because no protection is proposed for foxes, voles, moles and other mammals. There is also no protection for a whole raft of flora and fauna that form the foraging grounds. The Roseburn corridor is currently a success story for wildlife and the difficulty for us is that elements of the wildlife that comprise the success story are not mentioned in any landscape and habitat management plan. What will happen to foxes and other mammals when construction is taking place? What will happen when the tram operates? We do not know.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you at all comforted by the ecology section in the code of construction practice?

Kristina Woolnough: Again, there are not the surveys and there is not the information about mammals and so on to match up with the ecology aspects of the code of construction practice so it is difficult to envisage how it will operate in reality. I respect the aspirations and so on of the policy documents, but until we can be helped to understand the nitty-gritty of the plan it is hard to see how it will work on the ground.

Malcolm Thomson: Have you seen a copy of the badger mitigation plan?

Kristina Woolnough: No. I was a bit disappointed about that because we asked about it last week when we did not know whether to question Mr Coates about it. We agreed that we

would reserve our concerns about the badger mitigation plan for today when we were witnesses. I have not, however, been sent a copy of the plan—I have not received one. I will rely on Patricia Alderson's evidence, as she has seen the plan.

Malcolm Thomson: Have you seen the promoter's response paper 8, which outlines its intention to amend the bill with regard to enforcement of the landscape and habitat management plan?

Kristina Woolnough: Yes, I have seen that paper. That is a welcome step and we appreciate it, but the concerns that I have described this morning are still outstanding. We are concerned that there is no independent arbiter and no independent monitoring body. We are concerned that the promoter, the City of Edinburgh Council, will not be impartial. For example, there is our experience of the changes made to the Edinburgh biodiversity action plan from the 2000-2004 plan to the 2005-2009 one. The 2005-2009 plan accepted the tram as a fait accompli despite the fact that there were robust statements in the 2000-2004 biodiversity action plan, which stated that urban wildlife corridors should be protected from development. That evidence suggests to us that we should be concerned about the impartiality of the council.

I requested evidence of consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage, but I was told that there had been none. As transport seems to have subsumed natural heritage as the lead issue, we are anxious about the independent monitoring of the scheme. We are anxious about what the landscape and habitat management plan will look like when it is finally signed off and about who will undertake and pay for the management of the Roseburn corridor after the tramline is built. Our evidence is that the corridor has not been managed according to existing management plans, so we have nothing to suggest that there will be a sea change in funding for maintenance.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you aware that Scottish Natural Heritage was involved and will continue to be involved in the preparation of the landscape and habitat management plan?

Kristina Woolnough: That is my understanding and that is of some comfort. I believe that SNH's primary concern has been about the badgers. I also understand that SNH is concerned that it does not have sufficient manpower or funding to retain a person to work on the tramline 1 project on the Roseburn corridor, during construction and beyond. We urge the promoter to consider funding someone from SNH to take on that role. If there is a manpower issue, it should be addressed.

Malcolm Thomson: Would you be comforted if the badger mitigation plan was a confidential

annex to the landscape and habitat management plan?

Kristina Woolnough: I cannot answer that, because I have not seen the badger mitigation plan. Until we hear the evidence of our expert witness on that matter, I would not wish to answer that, although such a measure would give me some comfort, as long as we were happy with the contents of the plan.

Malcolm Thomson: It would be a step in the right direction.

Kristina Woolnough: Yes, but the content of the plan may not be acceptable to us.

Malcolm Thomson: The Edinburgh and Lothians badger group has been involved in the preparation of the badger mitigation plan.

Kristina Woolnough: Yes, but I reserve any comment on that until we hear Patricia Alderson's evidence.

Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): Has the promoter communicated better in recent times? There was a lot of historical content in your comments on the wildlife corridor.

Kristina Woolnough: From our point of view, there has been no change. We did not receive the badger mitigation plan, although the private bills unit kindly forwarded to us some documents from the promoter. Patricia Alderson has issues about the speed with which documents are emerging.

Rob Gibson: Could the situation be improved in the future?

Kristina Woolnough: I sincerely hope so.

The Convener: We were clear that the promoter was to send the badger mitigation plan only to the Edinburgh and Lothians badger group and SNH, for reasons that we discussed previously, which were to do with the sensitivity of the contents, which identify the location of particular badger setts. Neither we nor the promoter ever intended to send you the badger mitigation plan. The purpose of the present discussion is to enable you to draw from your expert witness—who has seen the plan—the positives and negatives about the plan. I want to dispel any impression that you were to receive a copy of the plan and I apologise if we inadvertently gave you that impression.

Ms Bourne, do you have any follow-up questions?

Alison Bourne: I have a couple of brief ones.

Ms Woolnough, Mr Thomson referred to your vehemence against using the Roseburn corridor. I thought it might be useful to remind the committee that you are also chairperson of Blackhall community association. Is that right?

11:00

Kristina Woolnough: That is right. We distribute a newsletter to 2,500 households three times a year, so I stress that my vehemence is not personal but representative of a whole community. The friends of the Roseburn urban wildlife corridor has, I think, 227 members now. There is a network of people who are extremely concerned throughout and beyond Edinburgh.

Convener, the friends of the Roseburn urban wildlife corridor is the body that I thought that Mr Coates said would be sent the badger mitigation plan when he gave evidence two weeks ago.

The Convener: Certainly, the committee was not releasing any information on that.

Kristina Woolnough: I understand that completely. That was not what I had understood.

Alison Bourne: So your stance on the Roseburn corridor is informed—I hate that term—by the 2,500 households.

Kristina Woolnough: That is right. It is also informed by people beyond those households. The peculiar thing is that, because I as an individual have accumulated information on behalf of my community, people see me as their spokesperson and I have a burden of responsibility. That might have partly resulted in what Mr Thomson described as vehemence. I have not shied away from that burden of responsibility, and the more that I have discovered and shared with my community and other people, the more concerned I have become.

Alison Bourne: It is probably an unfair question but, as a matter of interest, can you recall anybody from the Blackhall community contacting you to say that they did not agree with what you were saying about the Roseburn corridor and the effect that the tram system would have on it?

Kristina Woolnough: In the two and a half years since the tram was suggested and the proposed alignment has been in front of us, nobody has ever contacted me to say that they wanted the trams on the Roseburn corridor and that they thought that I was doing entirely the wrong thing.

Alison Bourne: Is it your view that the tram system will result in an unacceptably severe negative impact on vegetation and wildlife on the Roseburn corridor?

Kristina Woolnough: From the evidence that I have given and the questions that I asked last week, it is clear that there are some things that simply cannot be mitigated. The promoter acknowledged that, but my concern is that the things that cannot be mitigated and the things that therefore will be lost for ever have been

downplayed and, to an extent, discredited. The importance of the Roseburn corridor as a wildlife corridor and an amenity has been downplayed. It is an amenity for people well beyond the communities that the plans affect. The corridor functions as a linear park, whether or not it is designated or formally described as one.

Alison Bourne: What would you consider to be the best and most effective mitigation measure?

Kristina Woolnough: An alternative, on-street alignment.

The Convener: There being no further questions for Ms Woolnough on the issue, I thank her for giving evidence.

The next witness will be Patricia Alderson, who will address the issue of badgers for groups 33, 34 and 45.

Malcolm Thomson: I clarify that my question was not intended to be in any way personal about Ms Woolnough. I was regarding her as entirely representative of group 33.

The Convener: Your comments are noted, but I think that they have been rebutted quite well—not that I am allowed to make such comments.

I invite Ms Bourne to ask the questions for group 33.

Alison Bourne: Ms Woolnough and I thought that it might be helpful if we tried to roll all the questions into one questioner, so I am content that Ms Woolnough question Ms Alderson on behalf of group 33, if that is all right.

The Convener: Excellent. That is helpful to the process.

I invite Ms Woolnough to ask the questions for groups 33, 34 and 45.

Kristina Woolnough: I put to you the \$1 million question: would it be better for badgers if the Roseburn corridor was not used for tramline 1?

Patricia Alderson (Edinburgh and Lothians Badger Group): Absolutely. That has been my opinion from the beginning and it has not changed.

Kristina Woolnough: I want to ask about initial construction. What impact might noise and vibration during construction have on the badgers? Are there worst-case and best-case scenarios?

Patricia Alderson: The worst-case scenario, which is probably the likely one, is that many of the badgers will simply leave the corridor as soon as possible after work begins, maybe even after a few days, and they will all depart in the course of about a month. Even if fencing is put alongside the road accesses, the badgers will simply go through gardens to escape the constant noise. It does not matter if construction does not happen at night.

Excessive amounts of noise and vibration during the day will definitely have an effect on them. I have seen in other places the effect that an amount of interference far less than is projected for the tram project can have on badgers. In that case, they moved the whole sett, but that was in the countryside, so although they moved it was not particularly disadvantageous to them, but where are the badgers from the Roseburn corridor going to move to?

Kristina Woolnough: Is it your experience that in similar, but perhaps less intensive, construction processes the badgers tend to move out?

Patricia Alderson: The case to which I referred involved only the installation of a water pump at a distance of about 100m. It was quite interesting to see that the main sett that I was looking for was no longer occupied. The badgers had moved right round the hillside so that they were away from the noise.

Kristina Woolnough: When I asked Mr Coates a similar question last week, he said that he could not predict what individual badgers would do, that there was an element of uncertainty and that it might or might not be all right. Do you think that it is possible to take a view on likely scenarios?

Patricia Alderson: Yes, certainly. A lot of work is being done on badgers in different parts of Britain, so people should be able to come up with some averages. Different badgers behave differently, and it is possible that, in the long term, badgers might survive in the Roseburn corridor after going somewhere else in the meantime, but that will not save the individual badgers that are killed on the roads when making their initial escape.

Kristina Woolnough: You will be aware that the promoter is proposing an alternative sett location. Is there any guarantee that that will work? Does your experience suggest that it can work in the specific circumstances of the Roseburn corridor, which is quite a confined space? What is your view on that temporary sett?

Patricia Alderson: The new location of the artificial sett probably means that the badgers can survive in that area. Unfortunately, as there are two communities of badgers, the second one is at much greater risk. However, the main sett, for which the artificial sett is to be provided, is probably in danger of collapse because of the works. That is one of the problems. The badgers may not have that chance to go back. The location of the artificial sett is not ideal. It is the best location available, but that is different from saying that it is ideal. If the badgers really liked that area, they would be there already; it is not really perfect, but it is the best that we can do.

Kristina Woolnough: You mentioned the construction works taking place underneath the

main, long-established sett, which is referred to in a paper from the promoter that has been shared with us. Are you reassured by the promoter saying that it will shore up the bank and that that will be fine because badgers dig away from their sett entrances? Again, that was in Mr Coates's evidence last week.

Patricia Alderson: It is quite interesting to see that that sett is on a very steep slope and that the tunnels go back underneath neighbouring gardens. However, the steepness of the slope means that it will have to be cut back quite a long way. I am not an expert on soil dynamics, but the soil is really sandy and I cannot see how it can be protected to stop it collapsing. We know that the ground will be full of badger tunnels dug back quite a long way. The stability of the soil is probably not great enough to withstand that kind of operation.

Kristina Woolnough: You think that, at best, there is a significant risk?

Patricia Alderson: There is certainly a risk.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you think there can be total or even adequate mitigation of noise and vibration during construction?

Patricia Alderson: No. I cannot think of any measures that would provide total mitigation, because the affected area is so close to the work. Even a single track would cause disturbance. The amount of excavation work that will be done means that a lot of land will be taken from the embankments.

Kristina Woolnough: It is my understanding that the promoter intends to phase construction. Would that be your preferred approach? What would be the best-case scenario for the badgers? Should all the work be done in a one or should it be done in phased stages, as is proposed?

Patricia Alderson: There has been a lot of tree felling already. That is supposed to be part of a management plan, but it is significant that it has not happened in the past. The area is now more open than it was. Some work, such as tree felling, would have to be phased. All the work should be done in sections. Once people have completed work in an area they should move along to another one. It should not be a matter of taking out the trees, then coming back a few months later to excavate the site. Work should be completed by section, but I do not know whether the promoter would find that economically viable.

Kristina Woolnough: You have seen the badger mitigation plan. Did you have a chance to express your view of it to the committee before today?

Patricia Alderson: No.

Kristina Woolnough: What do you think of the document overall?

Patricia Alderson: It looks interesting superficially, until you read it in detail, which is difficult. Aspects of badger mitigation such as tunnels, which can be lifted from other sources, have been set out in nice diagrams. That is one section of the work. The other section is fairly general, with statements such as “we can do this” and “we can do that”, but without specific commitments. The problem is in the detail. There are a lot of setts, each of which should have been addressed individually. The document should have set out what can be done at specific points.

Kristina Woolnough: It does not include an exact mapping of what would be done where?

Patricia Alderson: That is right. Given that the plan is a restricted document, I can see no reason why such mapping should not have been done.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you have concerns about the management and monitoring of badger activity after construction? Is that mentioned in the plan?

Patricia Alderson: Yes, it is. The idea is that activity will be monitored afterwards. That has not happened in most places where badger mitigation has been put in, so people do not know whether the mitigation has been successful.

Kristina Woolnough: Such monitoring would be welcome?

Patricia Alderson: It is important.

Kristina Woolnough: I presume that there is no indication of where funding for it would come from or of who might do it?

Patricia Alderson: I have no idea who is supposed to do it. I cannot see the promoter funding anyone to do it, but the principle sounds good.

Kristina Woolnough: We have heard the promoter say that the badger mitigation plan might be attached to the landscape and habitat management plan, which will be included in the bill. I presume that that would be welcome?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Kristina Woolnough: But that would depend on what was in it?

Patricia Alderson: Exactly. It is easy to attach the plan because it does not commit the promoter to as much as it should.

Kristina Woolnough: You have described what has been done elsewhere. Do you think the plan addresses adequately the particular circumstances of the Roseburn corridor?

Patricia Alderson: The main problem with the Roseburn corridor is that the promoter wants to put so much into it. It is like nowhere else I know of. For example, the Croydon system has twin-track running in places, but it does not have a cycleway. In the Roseburn corridor, only the twin-track running will occupy the base of what was the old railway line. The promoter is not highlighting that a lot more land is being taken here than is being taken in other places.

11:15

Kristina Woolnough: So, because of the particular circumstances of the Roseburn corridor, we do not have details of how—

Patricia Alderson: We do have details: they have revealed the problem. We know that the promoter will take away much of the embankments.

Kristina Woolnough: Does the badger mitigation plan contain anything about foraging?

Patricia Alderson: Yes. The promoter has decreased the amount that is supposed to be taken for foraging. That is the most striking thing about the plan.

Kristina Woolnough: At previous meetings of this committee, we have heard various calculations of the removal of vegetation, and revisions of those calculations. I presume that the more vegetation is removed, the more impact there will be on the badgers?

Patricia Alderson: Absolutely.

Kristina Woolnough: That is important even if we are talking about vegetation that the badgers will not eat. What other impacts will there be?

Patricia Alderson: A third of the vegetation—between 32 and 34 per cent—will be removed. Badgers have very clear paths along the Roseburn corridor but they do not use them all the time. I have watched them. After they leave the sett, they potter around all over the place. They are foraging. It is not necessarily obvious that they are foraging; they just pick up insects and roots and things. I have watched them foraging for half an hour in one quite small area, which clearly offers important foraging for them.

If all the undergrowth close to the line and further up the embankments is removed, three things will be removed—foraging, a source of bedding, and cover. I have watched badgers collect bedding from one side of the Roseburn corridor, then cross the corridor and go along the edge for some distance before going back to the sett. Cover is important to make badgers feel secure. They have plenty at the moment. We may not particularly like brambles and nettles but they are crucial to badgers.

Kristina Woolnough: What might look like scrub to a human does not look the same to a badger?

Patricia Alderson: Exactly, not from underneath. Badgers like it.

Kristina Woolnough: Are you aware that the promoter's figures for the removal of vegetation are averages? In some parts of the corridor, the figures will be much higher and as much as 80-odd per cent of the vegetation will be removed. Will that impact on badgers?

Patricia Alderson: The more vegetation is taken away, the worse it will be.

Kristina Woolnough: What will badgers do if there is no cover they can scurry along underneath?

Patricia Alderson: They will have to find cover. They do not like open areas very much because they have discovered that they are quite dangerous. Because of the trams and the stations, there will be a lot more activity, the lighting will be better and everywhere will be more open. The badgers will not be very happy—although, of course, there will be fewer people walking along the corridor, and fewer bikes.

Kristina Woolnough: Badger fences have been proposed, as have other kinds of fences for other purposes. Do badger fences work well? Will they further reduce the badgers' foraging grounds in certain locations? Fences are intended to be restricting, of course, but will they prevent access to things that badgers might want access to?

Patricia Alderson: The promoter has proposed two ideas. The first is to build fences to keep badgers from the track and the walkway and cycleway, which is good. The fences will have to be set back from the verges.

The second is that some of the alternative foraging should be introduced to the verges. That would be rather difficult for the badgers because they would be attracted to go on the track and the verges, which are included in the percentage of foraging to be replaced, but at the same time they would not have access to it. It appears that the fencing between the cycleway and the track is to be minimal. The badgers would then have easy access to the track—if they could get on the cycleway, they could get on the track.

Kristina Woolnough: So the proposed grass tram track would be an attraction to the badgers?

Patricia Alderson: I imagine so.

Kristina Woolnough: So you are saying that some of the replanting that is intended to replace some foraging grounds would be inaccessible to badgers?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Kristina Woolnough: You said that you have seen badgers using the Roseburn corridor and you described how they move across it. Have you made any other significant observations of badgers on the Roseburn corridor? Why do they like it?

Patricia Alderson: Badgers like it because it is secluded and provides them with the basic necessities of bedding and some of their food. When they come out of their setts initially, they spend a while foraging in the area. They first socialise and then forage close to the setts because they cannot move away from the setts until human activity has diminished considerably, not only along the corridor but in people's gardens. It is crucial that the badgers wait before they move, so foraging around the setts is important to them.

When they feel secure, they start to move away from the setts along their paths to access parks and gardens at a greater distance. However, they cannot travel a long distance because they tuck their food under their noses against their chests and move backwards. Although they can move backwards for some distance, one can imagine that it is not convenient to cross roads and so on. Bedding is important because that is how they keep warm in the winter. Without access to bedding, they have a serious problem.

Kristina Woolnough: Has the promoter put enough importance on foraging? We heard from the promoter that you have been involved in some of the survey work and at various stages of what has been proposed so far.

Patricia Alderson: Consultation in this context just means that the promoter asked me what I thought and then told me that it was not going to do a lot of other surveys because they are not necessary. Consultation just means that I disagree with what the promoter said. Nowhere near enough work has been done.

Kristina Woolnough: On foraging?

Patricia Alderson: On foraging and on where the badgers go. The promoter does not know where they go; it thinks they forage in gardens.

Kristina Woolnough: Will badgers displace to gardens? The promoter talked about gardens as if they were part of the wildlife corridor. As I described earlier, they might be part of the function, but they are not part of the designation of the corridor. Might badgers go into people's gardens more?

Patricia Alderson: Yes, they clearly will. I know that I have covered this point, but it is important to repeat it. When people ring me up and say, "Holes are suddenly appearing in my lawn," the holes are

sometimes quite significant because badgers have been digging. People do not like that. If badgers did not have the alternative of the Roseburn corridor, they would have to depend more heavily on foraging in people's gardens. They would lose so much if they lost the corridor that they would be forced further afield into nearby gardens.

Kristina Woolnough: We have heard a lot about the Roseburn corridor and its function as a wildlife link. The badgers are unusual in that they also live in the corridor. It is all very well if the function of the corridor is retained, but because the badgers' home is combined with the function of the corridor, losing it would have a much greater impact on them.

Patricia Alderson: Yes. We travel along corridors in buildings, but a wildlife corridor is not quite the same. It simply means that animals live in it.

A series of voles and moles live in that area as a continuous group. If part of that group is destroyed, the whole function of the corridor is disturbed. Birds, of course, can fly over the corridor.

The small animals form an important part of the food of larger animals. Whether the animals eat one another or just dig, they fertilise the soil to produce more suitable berries and roots. It is a very complex and integral system. If we disrupt it, we change the whole system.

Kristina Woolnough: Have you had a chance to see the landscape and habitat management plan?

Patricia Alderson: I have, yes.

Kristina Woolnough: Can the Roseburn corridor be planted and replanted to reinstate it as it is now?

Patricia Alderson: No, because by changing the amount of light one changes everything below it. Some parts might be improved for wildlife, but simply increasing the amount of light changes what is below it.

Kristina Woolnough: Do we know whether that will or will not be a more suitable habitat for badgers?

Patricia Alderson: Badgers like cover.

Kristina Woolnough: They like cover.

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Kristina Woolnough: Can I ask you about the new information from the promoter and the risks attached to the setts? Is it your opinion that the construction works near setts may pose a risk to the stability of the setts and the bank?

Patricia Alderson: Yes, particularly where the sett is high up on the banking.

Kristina Woolnough: We will talk about another sett now. You said in your evidence that single-track running would make a difference, although that was rebutted by the promoter who said that double tracks would be fine. Why do you feel so strongly that single-track running would make a difference?

Patricia Alderson: Because it would reduce the land take; it would mean that the banks could be left more or less as they are. There would be very little extra work. The badgers would probably still have to be protected, but much less tree and foraging removal would be required.

Kristina Woolnough: We have heard a great deal about mitigation and so on, and that is a solution in many cases—in part, at any rate. It seems to be the fashion to take a pragmatic view. Can the impact of tramline 1 be successfully mitigated for badgers?

Patricia Alderson: I do not think that the badgers will have an easier life. Perhaps they will survive; I do not know. I cannot say; I do not think anybody can say. Having so much work done to their habitat would certainly be very disadvantageous to them and, afterwards, there would be severe restrictions on their foraging.

Kristina Woolnough: Presumably badgers are so successful because their habitat is as it is.

Patricia Alderson: Exactly. They have good places for their setts and sufficient foraging. I do not know what is sufficient, but they must have sufficient there. The promoter has not found that out either. I would have thought that it was really important for them to find out what is sufficient.

Kristina Woolnough: Is there anything else that you wish to add? I have not read the badger mitigation plan, so I cannot anticipate anything that you might wish to raise.

Patricia Alderson: It is important to realise that in this location there is a sett that is very conspicuous and quite low down. At that point, the solum is to be raised by 2m. That would put the sett entrances very close—I do not know how close, as it is difficult to measure, but I think very close—to the running surface.

It would be difficult to fit a fence between the running surface of the tram and the sett. As well as that, all the trees will be removed and the area will be tarmacked. That really should be addressed; it is not acceptable at all.

11:30

Kristina Woolnough: That is the area in which there will be a large access ramp.

Patricia Alderson: Yes. There will be a pedestrian access ramp there and that is where a

massive amount of construction work will take place—the whole of the embankment will be removed opposite the badger sett and no artificial sett will be provided. I understand from the promoter that that spoil will be used to raise a solum. That is absolutely unacceptable.

The Convener: Thank you very much, Ms Woolnough. Mr Thomson.

Malcolm Thomson: I have a few preliminary points, the first of which is that I fully understand that you think that the best solution would be to put the tram somewhere else so that the badgers would not be disturbed. However, for the purposes of the questions that I will ask, I would like you to assume that the tram has to go along the Roseburn corridor. My other preliminary point is that I do not want you to feel that you have to say anything that you regard as confidential in answer to any of my questions. If you feel that I am straying into a no-go area, please warn me, because it is not my intention to ask you to disclose anything that is confidential.

Let us start with the badger mitigation plan. Am I right in thinking that last week a meeting took place that involved Environmental Resources Management (Scotland) Ltd—the promoter's consultant—SNH and the Edinburgh and Lothians badger group, and that you were present at that meeting?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Was the badger mitigation plan discussed at that meeting?

Patricia Alderson: Yes—briefly.

Malcolm Thomson: Was the topic of possible enforcement measures for the mitigation plan discussed at that meeting?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: In other words, you discussed the proposal to make the mitigation plan a confidential annex to the landscape and habitat management plan?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: If that were done, would you regard that as a step in the right direction?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: I see from your statement that you have worked, and still work regularly, with both the council's planning department and SNH.

Patricia Alderson: That is right.

Malcolm Thomson: Have you any reason to doubt the integrity or the competence of either of those bodies in dealing with badger issues?

Patricia Alderson: No. I am sure that they will do their best to ensure the safety of the badgers.

Malcolm Thomson: Am I right in understanding that one of the current problems with the badger mitigation plan is that the detailed design work for the tramline has not yet been done, which means that, to some extent, the detailed mitigation measures have to be somewhat generic and tentative?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you accept that, because of the sequence of events, that is an inevitable problem at the moment?

Patricia Alderson: I think that more could have been done by this point.

Malcolm Thomson: As a result of reading the mitigation plan and listening to the discussion at last week's meeting, has it become apparent to you that engineers have been involved in considering the generic means of providing badger mitigation?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Does it give you some comfort that there has been engineering involvement in putting together the proposed solutions?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you satisfied that the drainage issue has been dealt with satisfactorily?

Patricia Alderson: We did not discuss drainage—or rather, we barely discussed it.

Malcolm Thomson: But as far as you are concerned, drainage is not a burning issue at the moment.

Patricia Alderson: I think that there are probably ways around the problem.

Malcolm Thomson: Did I understand from your evidence in chief that you regard the proposals on maintenance and monitoring as another step in the right direction?

Patricia Alderson: The proposal that maintenance and monitoring should be done is definitely a step in the right direction.

Malcolm Thomson: We find that in both the badger mitigation plan and the code of construction practice.

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Am I right in understanding that the badger mitigation plan will evolve over time, with input from both SNH and the Edinburgh and Lothians badger group, and that the carrying out of detailed design work will allow it to crystallise?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: And you are happy to be involved in that process on behalf of the group.

Patricia Alderson: It is something that I have to do. It is like medicine—one has to take it.

Malcolm Thomson: Again, perhaps that is because of your initial opposition to the use of the corridor.

Patricia Alderson: Yes, because the Roseburn corridor is not the best option for the badgers. The tram should not be on that route, therefore anything that I do is second best.

Malcolm Thomson: Am I right in thinking that two main setts are affected by the Roseburn corridor?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Two family groups of badgers are affected. Can you give the committee some idea of the general area of land over which a family group forages?

Patricia Alderson: It depends on the foraging that is available, such as the type of landscape that they are in. In an urban area, it is even more difficult. The promoter has been able to take only averages.

Malcolm Thomson: Would 50 hectares sound reasonable to you as the probable foraging area for one family group from one main sett?

Patricia Alderson: It is possible, probably in a rural area.

Malcolm Thomson: Do badgers use the Roseburn corridor much as humans would use a tram, in other words as a way of accessing further afield areas?

Patricia Alderson: Not exclusively.

Malcolm Thomson: But they use it for that purpose.

Patricia Alderson: They use it for that purpose among others.

Malcolm Thomson: Am I right in understanding that badgers use used and disused railway lines and roadways as a means of accessing foraging areas?

Patricia Alderson: I do not know of any sett that is located where there is no shelter and foraging, which are the most important things to a badger. Badgers move their main sett if foraging accessibility is changed. In many places, I have found that it is important to badgers that they can come out of their sett and forage immediately. That is why it is normal in a rural area for badgers to locate their sett at the junction of pasture and the edge of a wood, because both kinds of foraging are available to them there.

Malcolm Thomson: I do not mean this in a critical way—I am merely curious—but do you have direct personal experience of setts like the two in question, which are in the immediate vicinity of a foraging access corridor? In other words, they are a way of accessing foraging areas that are further afield.

Patricia Alderson: No one place is a corridor for badgers. They just see it as a junction between different kinds of foraging. In the Roseburn corridor, their foraging is between the corridor, with a certain kind of foraging, and gardens. They also go along the corridor, undercover, to reach other places, gardens and open spaces.

Malcolm Thomson: That is what I wondered about. We have read evidence that some residents are fond of the badgers—they deliberately feed them and encourage neighbours and children to come and see them—whereas other people, as you say, do not like holes in their lawn and plainly do not encourage the badgers to come into their gardens. Presumably, the badgers learn which gardens are which and know which ones to go to and which ones not to go to.

Patricia Alderson: I know a lot about badgers, but I could not speak for them to that extent.

Malcolm Thomson: If people put food out in their gardens, are the badgers more likely to come back there?

Patricia Alderson: Yes, once a badger has found the food.

Malcolm Thomson: In your previous evidence to the committee, you stated:

“When a badger is born, it starts learning about where it is and where it can feed. Its mother takes it round and afterwards it continues to feed in that area. It cannot just move, because it has an intimate relationship with its territory.”—[*Official Report, Edinburgh Tram (Line One) Bill Committee, 27 June 2005; c 440.*]

Do you remember that evidence?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: For the badger, is not part of that process learning where it will find food?

Patricia Alderson: Absolutely, but human beings are more fickle. We sell our houses and move elsewhere, and a new person moves in. It is very much a matter of what humans provide that makes the badgers decide which garden to go to. If a person who has been feeding the badgers moves to a different area and the new person does not like badgers and has a large dog, the badgers must quickly learn that the garden is no longer accessible to them.

Malcolm Thomson: But they will learn.

Patricia Alderson: Yes. Badgers have to learn in that way.

Malcolm Thomson: I am thinking of gardens in particular. Badgers use the Roseburn corridor to gain access to the gardens that they have chosen to go to.

Patricia Alderson: Yes. They also go through gardens to access other gardens.

Malcolm Thomson: And other foraging areas.

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: How many badgers are there in each of the two setts?

Patricia Alderson: I do not know. You should ask the promoter; it should have done the work on that.

Malcolm Thomson: I am asking you to see whether you know.

Patricia Alderson: I do not know. The badgers have undergone a lot of disturbance, so I do not want to go and spend a lot of time looking at them. Cameras should have been put up over the setts and the badgers should have been assessed.

Malcolm Thomson: Looking at the overall foraging areas of both setts, do you accept the promoter's evidence that the amount of foraging that will be lost as a result of the tram is in the order of 1 to 2 per cent?

Patricia Alderson: Is that foraging or land?

Malcolm Thomson: Foraging.

Patricia Alderson: How did the promoter assess foraging when it did not do any analysis?

Malcolm Thomson: Do you accept that figure?

Patricia Alderson: No, I do not. It is based on a lack of knowledge.

Malcolm Thomson: You have not done any work that would contradict that figure.

Patricia Alderson: No. The information is not available.

Malcolm Thomson: Can we agree that the removal of a sett and the creation of an artificial one can be done only under licence from SNH?

Patricia Alderson: That is right. The artificial sett is not a permanent alternative to the existing main sett, and it certainly has to be licensed.

Malcolm Thomson: The hope is that the badgers would return later to their own sett.

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: You talked about the difficulties of sandy soil. I take it that badgers are able to build their own tunnels satisfactorily in such soil.

Patricia Alderson: Yes. It is their preferred environment.

Malcolm Thomson: Am I right in thinking that the promoter changed the proposed location of the artificial sett after consultation with your group?

Patricia Alderson: Yes. What happened was—

Malcolm Thomson: You do not want to mention where it is.

Patricia Alderson: No. The badger consultant did not notice the precise location of a stop and pedestrian access, so they recommended that the artificial sett be located very close to it. I realised that that was not the best place and recommended a different location.

Malcolm Thomson: Was that recommendation accepted?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: I am thinking about the access that badgers will enjoy to foraging in the immediate vicinity of the tram track after construction. I understand that it is proposed that there should be badger fencing on one side of the proposed tram track and on the outside of the new cycleway and walkway. Is that your understanding?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Was the difficulty to which you alluded in your evidence in chief that the further away the fence is from the tram track and the cycleway and walkway, the more the badgers are liable to be separated from their natural foraging on either side of the present cycle track?

Patricia Alderson: The problem is that if the badger fencing goes along both sides of the tram track, badgers could get on to the track at pedestrian crossing points, so that is not possible. On the other hand, if the fencing was put a little way up the banking so that the tram track and the cycleway were seen as one corridor and badgers were confined to the banks, that would exclude badgers from the verges, where there is short-grass foraging, which is particularly desirable for badgers.

11:45

Malcolm Thomson: What would be wrong with putting the badger fencing closer to the edge of the cycle track on the one side and the tram track on the other side?

Patricia Alderson: That would be better, but that is not the intention.

Malcolm Thomson: Would it be an improvement?

Patricia Alderson: Yes, although it would not be possible to keep the verges cut short, as there would be problems with access for a cutting machine. Therefore, it is not a viable option.

Malcolm Thomson: We have talked about badger fencing that has the intention of keeping badgers away from the cycle track and the tram track. As you said, there is the risk of a badger getting on to the tram track at one of the places where pedestrians can cross. If the fencing between the cycle track and the tram track were to be permeable to badgers, so that they could step off the tram track and on to the cycle track when a tram came, would that be a satisfactory protective measure?

Patricia Alderson: Yes, if somebody mentioned to them that they should not be on the tram track when a tram comes. It is a little difficult to train them before they die—there is a short but rather final learning process.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you accept that badgers use ordinary roads at night?

Patricia Alderson: Yes, and they get killed there—that is their main cause of death.

Malcolm Thomson: But some survive.

Patricia Alderson: Yes, but in some places whole setts have been eliminated when a new road has been routed through badger territory.

Malcolm Thomson: That may be because they have moved.

Patricia Alderson: Yes. I could not find them—whole setts disappeared completely.

Malcolm Thomson: But you did not find enough bodies to account for the total demise of the setts.

Patricia Alderson: I did not know how many badgers there were to start with but, over the years, the bodies could well account for the vast majority of the setts.

Malcolm Thomson: At what time of day do badgers forage?

Patricia Alderson: In the evening, night and early morning.

Malcolm Thomson: So for at least half of that time, the trams will not be running.

Patricia Alderson: That depends on the season. In winter, the trams will be running for a large amount of the time.

Malcolm Thomson: How much of the badgers' foraging time is after midnight?

Patricia Alderson: Quite a lot, especially in the summer, although they probably will not be on the Roseburn corridor at that point, as they will have moved away.

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): I am slightly concerned about sett 2. You described the access and egress as being close to the cycleway and walkway, which may make that site

impractical. Why is there no plan to provide an artificial sett for that family?

Patricia Alderson: Because there are other setts along the corridor, which the promoter thinks would be suitable for the badgers. However, the badgers will still be subject to a lot of disturbance from construction traffic and work.

Phil Gallie: So there is an alternative for the badgers.

Patricia Alderson: On the corridor, yes.

Phil Gallie: You said that Mr Thomson's proposition with regard to the narrowing in of the fencing was impractical from the point of view of maintenance. You said that it was "not a viable option". If the promoter were to make such a proposition, surely it would be the promoter's responsibility to determine whether it was viable. Surely the promoter would not make a suggestion that was not viable.

Patricia Alderson: The promoter has not made that proposition to me. In the badger mitigation plan, I have read that the fencing is to be on the other side of the verge.

Phil Gallie: If the situation were changed to reflect Mr Thomson's proposition, would you welcome that, even though it would not meet all your needs?

Patricia Alderson: The proposition would have to be considered carefully and I have not done so. Other problems might arise from increasing the access that badgers would have to the line, which is what we want to avoid. The point is to keep badgers off the line.

Phil Gallie: Would you like such a proposition to be put to you so that you could consider it?

Patricia Alderson: Yes, that might be helpful. However, there might be a problem with the practicalities that would be involved in cutting the grass, which is extremely important. Such details are usually what sink mitigation plans. Further, we want to ensure that badgers are kept off the line in areas where there is pedestrian access across the line. It would be possible to do that if the fencing held them on the banks. Where there is pedestrian access down the banks, there would have to be a badger fence on either side and a badger tunnel going underneath the pedestrian access.

I think that it will be difficult to keep badgers off the line. Even though it would be possible to stop badgers getting on to the line as they come along the Roseburn corridor, they could come in from the road, if they have been in gardens. That is my concern. Even with all the fencing that can be provided, it will be difficult to stop badgers accessing the tramline.

The Convener: Is it not the case that the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 applies in this

circumstance and that the promoter has no choice but to conform to the regulations that it contains?

Patricia Alderson: Under the act, the badger is protected, its setts are protected and access to its setts is protected. However, foraging is not protected. That does not stop our concerns being important.

The Convener: Do you think that, in that context, the badger mitigation plan conforms to the act in intent and spirit and addresses your concerns about foraging?

Patricia Alderson: The plan does not address my concerns about foraging, but it protects badgers in other ways, although I still think that there will be engineering problems relating to removing the banking from below the sett.

The Convener: However, as it stands, the badger mitigation plan conforms to the act.

Patricia Alderson: Probably. However, I do not know. If the sett collapses, no; if it does not collapse, yes.

The Convener: Ms Woolnough, do you have any follow-up questions for Ms Alderson?

Kristina Woolnough: Mr Thomson asked about the foraging times of badgers and the running times of the tram. Is it correct that dusk is an important time for foraging and that that might be at half past three—peak time for the tram—on a winter afternoon?

Patricia Alderson: Yes. Badgers are less active in the winter, but when it is mild—and there can be mild weather in winter—they come out and forage around the sett.

Kristina Woolnough: So the suggestion that badgers are most active in the middle of the night, between midnight and 4 in the morning, when trams will not be running—that is the expectation, although that is not guaranteed—is not correct.

Patricia Alderson: I would not say that badgers are more active at that time. It depends on a hundred other conditions, particularly the time of year. They certainly forage in the early morning, when there are few people around. That is quite an important time for them.

Kristina Woolnough: Mr Gallie tried to find a helpful solution to the suggestion that the fence could be moved up or down the bank. Is it your understanding that Mr Thomson made that suggestion and that it had not been made previously?

Patricia Alderson: I am not aware that it is in the badger mitigation plan.

Kristina Woolnough: The matter has not been raised in discussions with ERM or anyone else?

Patricia Alderson: We have not discussed it.

Kristina Woolnough: So your understanding—

Patricia Alderson: Let me correct myself. We raised the matter and we were told that the fence would be put up the bank.

Kristina Woolnough: So your understanding is that the proposals in the badger mitigation plan that is before us represent the promoter's best efforts at addressing the issue.

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Kristina Woolnough: I wanted to verify with you that foraging is not protected by legislation, and your view that the promoter has not investigated foraging. Do you think that the promoter has taken a rather cavalier attitude to foraging or that the proposals are, at best, wishful thinking?

Patricia Alderson: The promoter has stayed within the letter of the law. However, because other protections apply to the corridor, the matter should have been investigated more thoroughly.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you feel that because the promoter is the City of Edinburgh Council it had an additional responsibility to be seen to be setting more of a precedent for other developers?

Patricia Alderson: Indeed. After all, the council has introduced its biodiversity action plan and signed up to green spaces. It insists that other developers go to some lengths to accommodate badgers.

Kristina Woolnough: When Mr Thomson asked you about your relationship with the City of Edinburgh Council, you said that anything you did was second best. By that, did you not mean that you have to engage with developers no matter whether you would rather that they went away?

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Kristina Woolnough: And that, as a result, you have a good relationship with the council, in that you will do the best that you can in the circumstances. As a result, were you surprised to find that the council, as the bill's promoter, proposed to use the Roseburn corridor even though it knew that there were badgers there?

Patricia Alderson: I was horrified. I often look around the setts in Edinburgh and I thought that the badgers in the Roseburn corridor were happy and safe. Now I discover that they are some of the most endangered badgers in the city. I find that very sad.

Kristina Woolnough: I just wanted to clarify that when you say that anything you do is second best, you mean that you take a pragmatic view of the situation, engage with developers and do your best for badgers.

Patricia Alderson: Yes.

Kristina Woolnough: And this is just such a case.

The Convener: I think that we have got the point, Ms Woolnough.

Kristina Woolnough: Thank you.

Do you think that, as far as foraging grounds are concerned, people's gardens are being considered as part of the mitigation proposals for badgers? After all, the promoter repeatedly refers to badgers being displaced into people's gardens, going elsewhere to forage and so on. Is such a suggestion valid?

Patricia Alderson: It is considered to be bad policy. In fact, Scottish Natural Heritage's policy is not to encourage badgers to go into people's gardens.

Kristina Woolnough: Thank you very much.

The Convener: Thank you, Ms Woolnough. As there are no further questions, I thank Ms Alderson for giving evidence.

Ms Woolnough, would you like a comfort break before you take your seat on the other side of the table?

Kristina Woolnough: Yes, please.

The Convener: I can give you only a minute, because I intend to press ahead with the meeting.

11:58

Meeting suspended.

12:01

On resuming—

The Convener: Okay. Before I bring in Ms Woolnough, I point out that we have heard a lot of detail from the expert witness about the impact of trams on badgers. She was speaking as a witness for groups 33, 34 and 45, so I expect that the statements that follow will be brief and will not repeat what we have heard. I welcome back Kristina Woolnough, who will address badgers for group 34. In the absence of a questioner, she will make an opening statement and will then have the opportunity to make a closing statement.

Kristina Woolnough: I rest on what our expert witness said. However, I share an anxiety concerning Mr Thomson's remarks about my "vehemence" earlier. I am bit anxious that my personality is getting in the way of my evidence, and I wish to apologise if that is the case.

The Convener: I think that it was clear from Mr Thomson's earlier comments that no such inference was intended. That is now a matter of record, Ms Woolnough.

Kristina Woolnough: Thank you.

The Convener: Is there anything else?

Kristina Woolnough: No, that is it.

Malcolm Thomson: Ms Woolnough, just to make it absolutely clear, when I referred to "vehemence" earlier I had no intention of suggesting that you were allowing your personal feelings on the matter—which I know are very strong—to colour the evidence that you were giving. It was my intention to ask you, as a representative of group 33, whether other members of the group felt as you did.

Kristina Woolnough: Okay. Thank you for that clarification.

Malcolm Thomson: I have no further questions.

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Thomson. Do committee members have any questions?

Members: No.

The Convener: Do you wish to make a closing statement, Ms Woolnough?

Kristina Woolnough: No, I rest on the evidence that our expert witness gave.

The Convener: Excellent. Thank you. There being no further questions, I thank you for giving evidence. I will allow you a brief opportunity to return to the other side of the table. The next witness will be Sue Polson, who will address badgers for group 34. Ms Woolnough will begin the questioning.

Kristina Woolnough: Ms Polson, how long have you been aware of badgers visiting your garden in Blinkbonny Road?

Sue Polson: We moved to Blinkbonny Road 17 years ago. A year later, we suddenly became aware of visitors.

Kristina Woolnough: Is it appropriate that people's gardens should be seen as part of the solution to the loss of some of the Roseburn corridor?

Sue Polson: In no way are people's gardens part of the solution in relation to badgers. As our expert said, many people dislike having badgers in their gardens, digging them up. I do not particularly like them digging our garden up, but we try to avoid that. We are talking about the corridor; we are not talking about the gardens. The worry is the badgers' life, and their life is in the corridor. Occasionally, badgers wander into gardens at different places, but those are not part of the corridor.

Kristina Woolnough: A number of the other questions that I was going to put to you relate to mitigation for the badgers. However, we have not seen the plan, have we?

Sue Polson: No.

Kristina Woolnough: Are you happy to rest on the evidence that Tricia Alderson has already given?

Sue Polson: Yes, very much so. It was very interesting.

Kristina Woolnough: Will you describe your concerns about construction?

Sue Polson: I am quite concerned about the situation. We all know that construction sites and animals cannot possibly mix. I am concerned that, even if badgers weather the first onslaught, they will not have a chance. I have only recently understood the fact that the construction workers will be revisiting each section of the corridor constantly. Will that be over a year or two years? I do not know. As soon as the badgers revert to some sort of normal pattern, the workers will come back again. Although I am sure that they will be terribly wildlife friendly, I do not think that the badgers are going to appreciate that. The length of time that the whole thing will take, with the various sections being revisited, will be the end of the badgers. They will just go.

Kristina Woolnough: Can we conclude that your preference is for the Roseburn corridor not to be used, because of the badgers and the wildlife?

Sue Polson: Absolutely. It has no place for a tram.

Malcolm Thomson: In the light of your evidence this morning, I want to ask you whether the following, given in your written witness statement, is still your evidence. You state that badgers

“can be seen most evenings in quiet gardens bordering the Corridor, either foraging or eating food left for them by residents. They bring their cubs with them which enables the house owner to watch the badgers at play. Visitors to these houses who had never seen a live badger are greatly intrigued by their presence which gives rise to discussions and a raising of awareness of those who would not normally be interested in animal life.”

Is that still your evidence?

Sue Polson: It is my evidence, yes.

Phil Gallie: I acknowledge your concern about the extended length of time that the construction of any one section will demand. However, my recollection is that the promoter gave an undertaking to the committee to concentrate on the construction section by section and to minimise the construction time for any one section. We heard a suggestion last week that the promoter will try to fit the work in with badgers' breeding habits and other aspects of wildlife in the area. I questioned the commitment on that at the time. Would it be some consolation to you to know that the promoter has committed to working

section by section, in relatively small blocks, from start to completion?

Sue Polson: That is an improvement. I would like not to see construction at all, but if I have to see it, I would not want the work to go on for ever, ruining what is a wonderful thing.

Kristina Woolnough: To pick up on Mr Thomson's point, I presume that you offer a garden that is friendly to badgers, as it were. That might not be the case elsewhere. Is that true?

Sue Polson: Yes, that is very true.

Kristina Woolnough: Is it also the case that, even if badgers are already using people's gardens, their further displacement into people's gardens might not necessarily be possible? Gardens are already foraging grounds, but would you say that the promoter's idea that everything will be fine because the badgers will move even further into gardens might not be true, given that the slack might already have been taken up?

Sue Polson: I think so. It could be a disaster area if badgers start moving into the gardens that are not friendly. There are people who really do not like badgers, who do not want them and who really do not care what happens to them. That would be a disaster.

Kristina Woolnough: Is successful interface between humans and badgers the most desirable outcome for all parties?

Sue Polson: Of course.

The Convener: Thank you very much, Ms Woolnough, and thank you, Ms Polson. I am afraid that you do not escape quite that easily; we are going to keep you here just a wee bit longer. We turn to the issue of bird survey evidence for group 34.

Kristina Woolnough: Ms Polson, could you illuminate for us how long you have been monitoring birds in your garden?

Sue Polson: I began monitoring the birds when I suffered a massive multiple sclerosis attack and lost the use of my legs for some time. I had to relearn how to walk. One of the good things that I could do was to sit and watch the birds in the garden. They have always been plentiful in our garden.

I began to understand how wonderful they are, and so I decided to register the garden with the British Trust for Ornithology. Since 2000, I have done a daily bird watch for the trust that is now computerised.

Kristina Woolnough: We were all fortunate that you lodged your bird survey as part of your evidence to the committee a considerable time ago. Is it true to say that your evidence was confirmed by the promoter's bird survey?

Sue Polson: Yes. I was happy about that.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you take a different attitude to red-list species from that of the promoter? I do not know whether you heard Mr Coates's evidence last week when he said that they are still quite common, so they are not really an issue.

Sue Polson: Yes. I got that feeling from his rebuttal statement. Every species is important. The species that come into my garden are some very shy birds. I do not really care whether they are red-list species or not; they are valuable to us all.

Kristina Woolnough: Did Mr Coates's rebuttal statement reassure you on the methods that will be used to mitigate the impact on birds in the corridor?

Sue Polson: I am not reassured about the birds. I am sad about Mr Coates's fairly flippant comment in paragraph 2.1 of his rebuttal statement, in the chapter on "Issue 12 - Impacts on Birds", where he says:

"Any impacts during construction will be temporary and will be no more significant than perhaps birds using other stretches of the corridor, gardens and other nearby habitat a bit more during construction works."

That does not fill me full of encouragement. I am concerned that the planting will be very different from what we are used to. We have a huge canopy of trees, which is wonderful in the summer. I can see only my deregistering the garden with the trust, because we will not be attracting anything like the quantity of birds or the variety of species.

Kristina Woolnough: The promoter has also suggested that birds can nest elsewhere temporarily and that that will be fine. Is it true that there is a general concern that people's gardens are increasingly becoming hard surface—people put down pebbles—so that feeding and nesting opportunities in gardens are reducing?

Sue Polson: One can tell that from the number of people who are incredibly surprised at how much bird activity there is in our area. The noise alone is incredible, and many people never see that quantity of birds, because gardens are diminishing and tubs are taking their place. We have a wonderful canopy of trees and good undergrowth edging the garden, which encourages the birds to come into the garden. However, that is disappearing fast.

Kristina Woolnough: Do you want to add anything else in response to the rebuttal statements?

Sue Polson: I would just like to feel that the promoter takes the bird situation a little bit more seriously. I do not feel that the survey was very

brilliant. There is a great deal more to learn about the birds in the corridor.

Kristina Woolnough: Thank you.

The Convener: Thank you, Ms Woolnough. Mr Thomson, do you have any questions?

Malcolm Thomson: I have no questions, madam.

The Convener: Do members have any questions?

Rob Gibson: Ms Polson, will you just remind me how many red-list species are represented in the Roseburn corridor?

Sue Polson: There are very few; probably only two or three.

Rob Gibson: Which are they?

Sue Polson: I would love to have a thrush. I am waiting. Occasionally, I get a thrush—perhaps once a year. Of the more common species of birds, that is the main red-list one that I seldom see. I have ones that are fairly rare, such as bullfinches, which are seen by only a tiny percentage of people in the country. It is a bit sad when we cannot even depend on the old thrush.

12:15

The Convener: If there are no more questions from committee members, Ms Woolnough, do you have any follow-up questions for Ms Polson?

Kristina Woolnough: No, unless she has anything to add—

The Convener: You cannot go on fishing expeditions. I let you do so once; I will not let you do so twice.

Thank you for giving evidence this morning, Ms Polson.

With people's agreement, I will press on for a wee bit, because I want to make progress. Ms Woolnough, I ask you to change places again and to address birds, bats and insects for group 34. While Ms Woolnough is getting ready, I point out that she does not have a questioner and so will be entitled to make an opening statement. At the conclusion of questions from the promoter and committee members, she will be entitled to make a closing statement.

Kristina Woolnough: I will comment on the same key issues of dispute, such as inadequate surveys; the resulting unknown impacts, and whether they are permanent or short term; and the laissez-faire attitude of the promoter that wildlife can find somewhere else to go temporarily and hopefully come back. I am disappointed, as are the groups that I represent, with the ticking of boxes to meet the legalities. That is not enough

when the promoter is a local authority. The loss of the wildlife's amenity value to humans and of the interface between wildlife and humans cannot be mitigated.

On the landscape and habitat management plan amendment, I have already raised the issue of when the plan will be finished, and when and how local people and experts will be involved in completing it. We are not happy that there is no independent watchdog because, as I have said, we contend that the council has already demonstrated bias. We are concerned that the local transport strategy was post-dated to include the tram, which has led to our loss of trust and confidence. That is all I have to say.

The Convener: That was fairly comprehensive. Mr Thomson?

Malcolm Thomson: I have no questions.

The Convener: Do committee members have questions? If not, would you care to make a closing statement, Ms Woolnough?

Kristina Woolnough: No, I have nothing to add.

The Convener: That is excellent. I will keep you where you are and move you on to address vegetation, human amenity and linear park for group 34. Again, you are entitled to make opening and closing statements.

Kristina Woolnough: Once again, I will summarise the key points. The loss of vegetation is extreme in places, and goes on for some distance, in terms of the linearity of the corridor. There is uncertainty about what will and will not be lost. The promoter has agreed that there will be a permanent change in the character of the Roseburn corridor, and we do not accept and find upsetting the suggestion that the tram will lead to an improvement in the amenity that we currently enjoy. We find the concept that neglect is a virtue and that poor management hitherto can be used to justify the tram alignment completely unacceptable. As I have said, to local people and people from all over Edinburgh, the corridor is a linear park, whether or not it is designated as such. That point is disputed—we argue that it is, and the promoter argues that it is not. However, the promoter has conceded that for a large number of user groups the amenity and the current use of the corridor will be lost forever.

We are concerned that the promoter has not taken the human amenity value seriously enough. Only once we had done our comprehensive surveys was the promoter prompted to do a rather cursory two-hour survey on an August morning during the school holidays. We feel that our surveys are substantial and well evidenced. We think that because the scale of usage by humans of the Roseburn corridor was not known at the

environmental statement stage of the bill, the usage was grossly underestimated and should have been factored in. To say that the corridor's function as a cycle walkway will be retained, so that box is ticked is not good enough.

The promoter has conceded that there will be an impact on the scale and type of usage, which cannot be mitigated. Again, we revert to the suggestion that the tramline should use an on-street alignment and should not go in the Roseburn corridor.

The Convener: Thank you very much, Ms Woolnough. Mr Thomson has questions.

Malcolm Thomson: Ms Woolnough, is there any signage on the Roseburn corridor suggesting that it is a park? Do we see Roseburn park signs anywhere?

Kristina Woolnough: Until fairly recently there was no signage at all on the corridor, which is what we liked about it. It was completely free of urban street clutter. There is no sign that says "park", but the corridor functions as a linear park. Whether the promoter and the City of Edinburgh Council describe it as a park is a technical matter. As we have heard, the function is an important aspect of usage and the corridor functions as a park. People walk and talk along it and meet people from other communities. They gather in a way that occurs in a park. We have no other local park. The corridor is our nearest park, which links all our communities together. That is why we enjoy it—as a park.

Malcolm Thomson: Am I right in thinking that, in fact, the signage says, "Roseburn Path"?

Kristina Woolnough: Yes. We are not sure where the signage came from. We believe that it was a cycling initiative that began about five years ago. Signs were unilaterally put in the corridor. I do not know whether it was called "Roseburn Path" by the street-naming department. As I said, I believe that the signage was funded by a cycling initiative, but we are not sure. It came without consultation. The signs were installed in the wrong places in some circumstances and are still sitting there as urban street clutter, which we do not like.

Malcolm Thomson: Have you seen Roseburn corridor park or Roseburn park referred to anywhere in writing or in signs?

Kristina Woolnough: There is a Roseburn park, which is next to Murrayfield.

Malcolm Thomson: But the Roseburn corridor is not it.

Kristina Woolnough: It is not it, but we are talking semantics here. I am talking usage and you are talking designation. I have already agreed that we do not agree about whether the corridor is

designated as a park. It is certainly an open space and a recreational space. Our view is that, in the central Edinburgh local plan, it is designated alongside parks. We dispute your view of the designation, but we are not allowed to go into that. You are trying to get me to agree with your point of view, but we dispute that point of view.

Malcolm Thomson: Do people commonly picnic in the Roseburn corridor?

Kristina Woolnough: Amazingly, it has been known. It has also been known for people to pick blackberries and to eat them as they go along.

Malcolm Thomson: The word I used was "commonly".

Kristina Woolnough: I have no evidence that it is common or uncommon. I have not assessed or surveyed that. People frequently walk along the corridor from Sainsbury's eating their sandwiches, but I do not know whether you would describe that as picnicking.

Malcolm Thomson: Is it common for people to sunbathe in the Roseburn corridor?

Kristina Woolnough: I am not sure how common that is in Edinburgh parks or, indeed, in Scottish parks.

Malcolm Thomson: Is it common for children to kick a ball about in the Roseburn corridor?

Kristina Woolnough: Yes, it is.

Malcolm Thomson: Despite the cycle traffic.

Kristina Woolnough: Yes.

The Convener: I am unclear where we are going with this, given that I cautioned at the beginning that I did not want to stray too far into planning matters or descriptions of what things are.

Malcolm Thomson: That was my last question.

The Convener: Ah!

Malcolm Thomson: The point of it was that because Ms Woolnough demurred at the suggestion that the title "park" was in any way relevant and preferred to consider usage, I was asking her questions about usage.

The Convener: Indeed. I confess to having eaten blackberries as I walked along. How did you know?

Kristina Woolnough: And you are still alive, convener.

The Convener: Indeed. Committee members have no questions, so do you want to make a closing statement, Ms Woolnough?

Kristina Woolnough: No, I do not think I do. Thank you.

The Convener: Okay, on that basis, I thank you very much for giving evidence.

We were to have heard next from Dr Mark Bastin, who would have addressed the issue of local parkland for group 34. Unfortunately, he is unable to attend, so he will be resting on his written evidence. Can I confirm, Mr Thomson, that you are content for the objector to rest on his written evidence?

Malcolm Thomson: I am content. The only things that I might have asked him about, I have dealt with through other witnesses.

The Convener: Excellent. The cycle path issue will be coming up later on, which includes the issue of bridges. Can I confirm that you are similarly content with that?

Malcolm Thomson: Indeed.

The Convener: Thank you very much. Okay, this seems like a natural point at which to take a break. I suggest that the committee reconvenes at 1.30, at which point we will hear evidence from Alan Jones, Rosanne Brown and Ms Woolnough.

12:26

Meeting suspended.

13:39

On resuming—

The Convener: I welcome everybody back to the meeting. Before we go any further, I welcome Alan Jones and Rosanne Brown to the witness table.

ALAN JONES and ROSANNE BROWN *took the oath.*

The Convener: Ms Woolnough will now address three issues for group 45: the linear park, flora and human amenity. I notice that the witness statements that Ms Woolnough provided for group 34 on those issues have been adopted by group 45, so I assume that the oral evidence that Ms Woolnough provided for group 34 earlier today can be adopted without being reiterated again. Is that fair?

Kristina Woolnough: Totally fair.

The Convener: Excellent. I take it that there is no opening statement.

Kristina Woolnough: There is none.

The Convener: Mr Thomson.

Malcolm Thomson: On that basis, I have no questions.

The Convener: I like this committee meeting. Do members have any questions?

Members: No.

Rob Gibson: We are very happy.

The Convener: Mr Gibson is very happy. That is great. We will capture that for the *Official Report* and I will use it again in future.

Do you have a closing statement, Ms Woolnough?

Kristina Woolnough: No, I do not.

The Convener: Thank you very much.

On that basis, we will move straight on to Mr Jones, who will address the issue of wildlife for group 35. I understand that you do not have a questioner, so you are entitled to make an opening statement and—once questions have been asked—a closing statement.

Alan Jones: For my opening statement, I must confess that I was one of the ball kickers who have been mentioned and that my wife makes frequent sandwich parties, although not for humans. The rest of my statement consists of what is in my rebuttal.

The Convener: Excellent. Thank you very much. Mr Thomson.

Malcolm Thomson: Have you had a chance to look at Mr Andrew Coates's rebuttal of your statement?

Alan Jones: Yes.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you in any way satisfied with the explanation of the increase in badger activity at Ravelston bridge that he provides in paragraph 2.1 of his rebuttal?

Alan Jones: I know for certain that there has been a tremendous increase in badger activity this year. I put that down to the fact that the badgers have been driven out of the main sett by the refurbishment of a house at Craighleith, which has meant that they have come along to Ravelston to start work on a sett there.

Malcolm Thomson: May there be some force in Mr Coates's explanation, too?

Alan Jones: Do you mean the suggestion that the increase in activity was related to the birth of cubs?

Malcolm Thomson: Yes.

Alan Jones: Yes, there may be some force in that explanation.

Malcolm Thomson: Again on Mr Coates's rebuttal, do you accept that one of the proposed tram stops is being relocated to accommodate badger issues—if I can put it in that general way?

Alan Jones: I think that that relocation will be detrimental to the badgers. In the first map that we got, the ramp and associated fittings were on the

south side of Ravelston Dykes—in other words, they would have been on the other side of the road bridge, away from the badger sett. On the new map, the ramp is directly opposite the badger sett. When I did my training in copper-pipe bending, we filled the pipe with sand, vibrated it to make it solid and bent it. If there is vibration opposite a sandy embankment, the only thing that will happen is that the embankment will fall down.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you accept that the Edinburgh and Lothians badger group had some say in the proposed relocation of the tram stop?

Alan Jones: That is what it says in Mr Coates's rebuttal.

Malcolm Thomson: So the badger group seems to have a different view of the matter from you?

Alan Jones: Precisely.

Malcolm Thomson: On the basis that I have raised the badger issues that I wish to raise with previous witnesses, I do not propose to pursue any of those matters further with this witness, unless the convener would particularly like me to.

The Convener: No, I would not. We obtained comprehensive detail this morning and I suspect that we would just be covering old ground rather than introducing anything new.

Malcolm Thomson: That was my view. In that case, I thank Mr Jones.

13:45

The Convener: Thank you, Mr Thomson. Do committee members have any questions for Mr Jones?

Members: No.

The Convener: You are escaping lightly, Mr Jones. Would you care to say anything by way of a closing statement?

Alan Jones: On the main thing, which is wildlife, I am a bit perplexed. At the Coltbridge end, the promoter proposes to lower the solum by about the height of a human being. That means that they will reinforce the banking. What steps will be taken to give small animals a chance to escape from predators?

Another point is that, in my view, the badger fencing should be right next to the track so that animals can escape from the tram track straight away but still have the freedom to roam on the cycle path.

That is all I have to say.

The Convener: Thank you for giving evidence this afternoon, Mr Jones.

The next witness is Rosanne Brown, who will address the issue of wildlife and enforceability for group 43. The questioner is Alison Hawkins.

Alison Hawkins (Wester Coates Nursery School): Mrs Brown, is your evidence contained in your statement and in group 43's rebuttal of the promoter's witness statements?

Rosanne Brown (Wester Coates Terrace Action Group): It is.

Alison Hawkins: Do you wish to emphasise or clarify any particular points?

Rosanne Brown: I am due to speak about wildlife and the enforceability of the landscape and habitat management plan. I do not propose to add anything on the subject of wildlife, which has been adequately covered. I adopt what the other objectors said on that subject.

However, I will make a few points on the enforceability of the landscape and habitat management plan because there has been a recent development on that. The committee has a copy of the promoter's proposed amendment to the bill. At one time, it was suggested that the plan might be incorporated in the bill, but the current proposal is that there should be a planning application procedure to deal with the plan. The promoter suggests that, before any work is carried out, the plan should be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The amendment envisages "an iterative process" whereby the plan would be discussed and developed with the local planning authority.

Ms Woolnough has already touched on this point. There is no provision, as there would be in the case of a normal planning application, for affected residents to be notified and there is no provision for them to have any input to the content of the plan. That is our main objection to the proposal.

The plan is to be considered solely between the council as promoter and the council as the planning authority. The amendment states:

"Any breach of the LHMP, once approved by the local planning authority, will be enforceable by the local planning authority".

Not enforced, but enforceable. My understanding of planning law is that the planning authority's power to enforce is discretionary—it is not a power that the authority has to exercise. The proposal in the amendment is obviously along the same lines.

Assuming the planning authority wanted to enforce the plan, how would that work? The council as the planning authority would enforce a plan that it had approved, but it would enforce the breach against the council as promoter. From a layperson's point of view, that procedure does not inspire confidence.

I am also concerned about what the enforcement action could achieve and what incentive there is for the promoter not to be guilty of a breach in the first place. The amendment refers to

"financial implications for the authorised undertaking and the construction contractor".

I do not understand how the construction contractor could incur financial implications for failing to implement a contract for reasons that were outwith its control. Also, I am not entirely clear about the links between the council as promoter, Transport Initiatives Edinburgh as the project delivery body and the authorised undertaker.

My point is that there is not sufficient involvement for the affected residents. The enforcement procedure does not involve the residents and it does not inspire confidence because it involves the council enforcing against the council. I am not sure what the enforcement action would achieve.

Alison Hawkins: I have no more questions.

The Convener: Mr Thomson?

Malcolm Thomson: Mrs Brown, are you aware that Scottish Natural Heritage has been and, it is proposed, will be involved in the iterative process of the landscape and habitat management plan?

Rosanne Brown: I am aware that it has been involved to date, yes. I was not aware that it is proposed that it should have any further involvement.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you aware that it has withdrawn its objection to the bill?

Rosanne Brown: Yes. It withdrew its objection on the basis that it was going to rely on undertakings from the promoter. Is that correct?

Malcolm Thomson: Unfortunately, I get to ask the questions.

In your evidence, you refer to both Wester Coates Terrace and the Roseburn corridor as "semi-rural". Thinking about Wester Coates Terrace, are you referring to the houses on one side of the terrace that back on to the Roseburn corridor or are you suggesting that Wester Coates Terrace is semi-rural?

Rosanne Brown: I am referring to the houses that are affected by the tram proposal.

Malcolm Thomson: On the other side of the road there are flats and I believe that there is so much on-street parking that the controlled parking zone is about to be extended to Wester Coates Terrace. Is that correct?

Rosanne Brown: Yes it is.

Malcolm Thomson: Thank you. I have no further questions.

The Convener: Do members of the committee have questions?

Phil Gallie: It seems to me that your only concern—leaving aside the fact that you would prefer the tramline not to be proposed—relates to the enforcement of the habitat plan. Is that correct?

Rosanne Brown: My principal point is that if there is to be no alternative route, the implementation of the plan will be essential.

Phil Gallie: If you were to receive assurances from the promoter on enforcement, would that be sufficient for you to withdraw your objection?

Rosanne Brown: No. As residents, we do not have the resources to police that or to take enforcement action. We need an independent body to act on our behalf.

The Convener: As there are no further questions from committee members, Mrs Hawkins may question Mrs Brown further.

Alison Hawkins: Do you wish to add anything, Mrs Brown?

Rosanne Brown: No.

The Convener: Technically, you should not have asked a fishing question, but it was asked and answered before I could object, so that is fine.

There being no further questions for you, Mrs Brown, I thank you for giving evidence.

13:53

Meeting suspended.

13:54

On resuming—

The Convener: Mrs Hawkins must take the oath or make a solemn affirmation.

ALISON HAWKINS *took the oath.*

The Convener: Ms Woolnough will now address the impact on the walkway and cycleway for group 33. Ms Bourne will ask questions.

Alison Bourne: In his rebuttal statement, Mr Dapr  suggests that the tram system

“will enable and encourage people to continue to use the footway/cycleway”

in the Roseburn corridor. Do you agree with him?

Kristina Woolnough: Absolutely not. Our surveys, which were conducted in December last year and in May, show that current users of the cycleway say that the trams will affect their usage

of the corridor. A commonsense approach would probably help. The introduction of high-speed, noisy trams and high noise barriers in particular, and the removal of vegetation and so on in the area for which group 33 is acting, will surely not encourage anybody to use the cycleway—indeed, it is extremely likely that they will have the opposite effect. Trams travelling at speeds of up to 50mph in a constrained space cannot mean that it will be an attractive place in which to walk or cycle.

Alison Bourne: Are you convinced by Mr Dapr ’s statement that

“Operation of a tramway alongside the footway/cycleway is not equivalent to operation alongside a carriageway”

and that therefore the same speed limit need not apply?

Kristina Woolnough: As we argued earlier, a more restricted speed limit would be needed to retain any of the attractiveness of the walkway and cycleway. There should be the lowest speed limit that can be controlled and monitored. It seems to our group that there should be a maximum speed limit of 20mph because of the line’s proximity to the walkway and cycleway. The tram will go through areas that are safer routes for a number of schools. I do not know whether a number of activities such as nature walks and school fundraising runs that currently take place on the cycle path could still take place, but a more restricted speed limit would certainly lead people to think that the corridor was more attractive to use.

Alison Bourne: Am I right in thinking that the Roseburn corridor is currently designated as a public road?

Kristina Woolnough: There is a dispute about that, but I believe that that is its status. Obviously, no vehicles are allowed to go at 50mph on roadways in the vicinity of the cycle path at the moment and it seems to me that a sensible urban speed limit—preferably a maximum of 20mph near schools—would be much more applicable than a speed limit of 50mph. We are talking about a route that goes through a quiet residential area and not a motorway or a dual carriageway on which one might expect to see vehicles going at 50mph.

Alison Bourne: I want to move on to Mr Dapr ’s comments on the friends of the Roseburn urban wildlife corridor association—FRUWCA—survey. Mr Dapr  suggests that we should not draw any conclusions from the finding that the tram would affect people’s usage of the corridor. What do you think about that?

Kristina Woolnough: When I cross-examined Mr Dapr  on that matter, he was unable to present any evidence to support his view. Our May survey was a refinement of the December survey and the

comments were made by users. I think that there were 600 responses. Perhaps I do not need to go over the figures, as we have supplied them to the Parliament, but I will give them to you anyway. Some 74 per cent of those who were questioned did not want the tram to go through the area; 70 per cent said that the introduction of trams on the cycleway would affect their use of it; and 4 per cent were unsure whether the tram would affect them. Our evidence, which is based on the views of real people, is all that we have to go on, as the promoter has done no similar assessment to find out whether there would not be the impact that it claims that there will not be.

Alison Bourne: Am I right to say that FRUWCA membership rocketed when those surveys were done?

Kristina Woolnough: Yes. I think that that was partly because the surveys raised awareness. A large number of people did not know about the trams at all when we carried out our December survey. By May, most people knew about them and wanted to be kept informed about what was going on.

Alison Bourne: My next question, on the point that Mr Dapr  makes in paragraph 3.10 of his rebuttal statement, is slightly similar to what I have already asked. Do you agree with his contention that people will continue to use the corridor?

14:00

Kristina Woolnough: We have heard the promoter concede that a number of user groups will not get the benefits from the corridor that they currently get—peace and tranquillity are obvious ones—and that vulnerable groups of people, such as young children learning to cycle, will not continue to be able to move freely in their communities without fear of traffic. Our concern is that that represents a rather large number of current walkway and cycleway users, so we do not think that people will continue to use the corridor. Perhaps they will continue to use it as a commuter cycleway, but it will not be used as an amenity because, with trams going past every three and three quarter minutes at 50mph, it will not be an attractive amenity.

Alison Bourne: What are your comments on Mr Dapr 's assertion that segregation of the tramway has been discussed with Her Majesty's railway inspectorate?

Kristina Woolnough: From cross-examining Mr Dapr  last week and from information that I got as a result of a freedom of information request, my understanding is that the mechanism is that the promoter goes to HMRI with a proposal to which HMRI says yea or nay. My understanding is that no proposal on segregation has been taken to

HMRI for a final yea or nay. Therefore, the situation is unclear and we might end up with much higher and more substantial barriers than we expected or were led to believe we might have. There is also the issue of whether it will be legal to go on the tramway—will it be like a railway, or not? All those matters are unresolved until the promoter takes a design to HMRI and asks whether it is on. We will not know until that point, which will probably post date the committee procedure.

Alison Bourne: In his rebuttal statement, Mr Turner states that tram stops on the Roseburn corridor will comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which will give improved access to a much wider group of people. Do you have any comment on that?

Kristina Woolnough: Our experience is that there are a number of access points on the corridor that are wheelchair accessible. They are accessible to people with mobility difficulties and young children, for example. My understanding is that the tram stops, but not all the access points, will be DDA compliant. Access to the corridor will be made DDA compliant at certain points, but new access points will be installed that will not be DDA compliant. I am not entirely sure why that is and I am not sure that it is a gain.

Alison Bourne: My next question deals with visibility, which we covered this morning, so we will move on.

Do you agree with Mr Turner that 1,000 people movements over 10 hours in the Roseburn corridor is not much?

Kristina Woolnough: I raised that point in cross-examination last week. I do not agree at all. A cycleway and walkway that has that number of movements is deemed to be busy by anybody's standards. Elsewhere in the city, there are cycle paths that are much wider and carry fewer people than that. The survey that we carried out over 10 hours did not reflect the people who use the cycleway and walkway outwith those 10 hours. Pedestrians and cyclists, whose mode of travel is prioritised in Scottish planning policy 17, should be kept as a priority and it is unacceptable that public transport could displace them.

Alison Bourne: What are your thoughts on Mr Turner's suggestion that 1,000 movements is not much compared with the thousands that the tram will carry?

Kristina Woolnough: As I pointed out last week, our people movements are tested and proven, but the tram is untested. We are not comparing like with like. As I said, SPP17 prioritises walking and cycling over public transport, so we think that that should be the priority in the Roseburn corridor.

Alison Bourne: I have a question—[*Laughter.*]

The Convener: I can tell from your laughter that I am about to rule it out of order.

Alison Bourne: I suspect that you will, but it is worth a try. The question arises from the oral evidence that was given by several of the promoter's witnesses and it covers a major area of dispute between the objectors and the promoter, but it is not referred to in the statements or the rebuttals.

The Convener: I will allow your question if it has arisen from the oral evidence so far, on the basis that you will get to the point rather than ask a series of questions.

Alison Bourne: The promoter's witnesses have repeatedly stated that the reason for using the Roseburn corridor is that the line would be cheaper to construct there, that it would give faster journey times and that the environmental impact would therefore be justified. What are your comments on that?

Kristina Woolnough: That is simply not proven. Without an alternative alignment being assessed, we cannot say that that is the case. When Karen Raymond gave evidence about the use of the Roseburn corridor, we pressed her about whether an on-street option would be more environmentally desirable than using the Roseburn corridor. Her answer was that it was, but that other factors had to be taken into account.

Our priority has been to argue that environmental factors should be given due weighting and that engineering factors—and indeed other team members for the promoter—should not be given disproportionate weighting. We need to consider each case in isolation. As you will have heard many times, we have contended that the environmental impact is not justified and that there are viable alternative routes, which might be quicker and cheaper, that should be examined.

Malcolm Thomson: Do you accept that, at the moment, without there being a tram, if there is intensification of cycle and pedestrian use, that could be at the expense of more passive recreational uses of the Roseburn corridor?

Kristina Woolnough: I do not know, but what I do know is that if the council trimmed back its verges a bit more frequently and managed the corridor a bit more successfully, the walkway would be kept at a width that would accommodate everybody and all varieties of users. I do not know that Mr Thomson's contention would be the case. The corridor's success as a commuter cycle route is without dispute. Recreational users tend not to use it during the morning and evening rush-hour peak times.

Malcolm Thomson: Are you denying that, under the tram proposal, there would be more DDA-compliant access routes to the Roseburn corridor than there are at the moment?

Kristina Woolnough: When we examined that point last week, I could not assess whether that was the case because I do not know what DDA compliance is, I do not know the guidelines for that and I am not an engineer. To me, as a common and ordinary person, it looked as though the ramped-up section coming off Craighleith View, with its four tiers of ramping, was not very disability accessible.

I do not think that compliance is as good as it could be. The proposals might be good enough for the purposes of ticking all the boxes, but I think that more access improvements could be made. I cannot dispute or accept that the plans are DDA compliant, because I have not studied them from that point of view.

Malcolm Thomson: But you cannot deny that there would be more DDA-compliant access routes if other people have given evidence to that effect.

Kristina Woolnough: No, I cannot deny that—that is correct.

The Convener: I now ask Ms Woolnough to address the issue of access to the walkway for group 34. In the absence of a questioner, you have the opportunity to make both an opening statement and a closing statement.

Kristina Woolnough: My opening statement is simply to highlight the confusion felt by many residents about informal and formal accesses, and about what will happen to any informal access that people may have. My concern, as I have just been articulating to Mr Thomson, is that although accesses will be improved to a degree, it does not appear that they will be particularly wheelchair friendly or wheelchair accessible.

Some of the features in the design manual make use of the phrase,

"Good enough is not enough".

I completely support the application of that phrase to the scheme. The design manual describes things that should be done

"to encourage and facilitate walking, cycling".

Accessibility—the ability to get on to the cycle path—is of great importance to facilitate that.

Actually, it seems to me that we do not need a tram scheme to improve DDA compliance; we could improve compliance and accessibility now.

The Convener: Thank you, Ms Woolnough. Does Mr Thomson have questions?

Malcolm Thomson: I have no questions.

The Convener: Members have no questions. Do you wish to make a closing statement, Ms Woolnough?

Kristina Woolnough: No, thank you.

The Convener: Excellent. In that case, there being no further questions for you at all today, I thank you for a marathon session of giving evidence to us.

The final witness today is Alison Hawkins, who will address the issue of loss of walkway and footway and safety issues for group 43. Mrs Brown is questioning.

Rosanne Brown: Mrs Hawkins, is your evidence contained in your witness statement and group 43's rebuttal of the promoter's witness statements?

Alison Hawkins: Yes.

Rosanne Brown: Do you wish to emphasise or clarify any particular points?

Alison Hawkins: Yes, please. I would like to emphasise the point that the parkland of Roseburn corridor offers a unique resource. Mr Dapr  states at paragraph 3.1 of his rebuttal:

"Clearly, there will be some impacts, but the Promoter is of the view that these will be limited".

I maintain that it does not really matter what safety issues are proposed—whether the line of sight of tram drivers or speed factors—there is no risk assessment or set of circumstances that would allow groups of schoolchildren or groups from youth organisations to utilise a pathway that runs adjacent to a tramline. This is true not only for the school that I represent, but for many family groups, including those with young children, those with elderly friends and relatives and those with a disability.

I speak with the backing of more than 200 signatures of people along our community who are just appalled at the thought of a tram being in the corridor. We could have had very many more signatures if we, as laymen, had understood the severity of the tram suggestion at a much earlier stage.

In short, I would like this part of the tram route to be rejected, if possible, and an alternative route used. I adopt the witness statements for all the other objectors with regard to an alternative route.

The Convener: Is that the questioning concluded, Mrs Brown?

Rosanne Brown: Yes, I have no further questions.

The Convener: Thank you both very much. Do you have questions, Mr Thomson?

Malcolm Thomson: I have no questions, thank you.

The Convener: Committee members have no questions, but I have one. I understand absolutely the force of your argument, but do you think that any mitigation can be put in place to make the proposed route safer?

Alison Hawkins: I cannot think of anything. What sort of investigation has been made, for instance, of getting a group of schoolchildren, a group of children in wheelchairs or adults in wheelchairs—there is an adult centre near us—on to the tramline to get to the proposed cycleway and walkway on the other side? The trams are meant to pass by every three minutes, so how would one get a group across? We can enter the corridor just now with the greatest of ease and we can run and do all sorts of things there. The area is very well used by educational institutions in our community.

Putting a fence between the trams and the walking land and parkland would still mean that we would have the noise and the whizzing by, which is the frightening bit for young children or vulnerable people. In short, I cannot see that there can be any mitigation. If they put the tramway in the corridor, I think a lot of people will cease to use it. There is no ready alternative in our community for us to use.

The Convener: Thank you, Mrs Hawkins. There are no further questions from committee members. Mrs Brown, do you have any follow-up questions for Mrs Hawkins?

Rosanne Brown: No.

The Convener: Thank you for giving evidence this afternoon, Mrs Hawkins. That concludes this item on our agenda.

We now move to item 2, which is our discussion in private of the oral evidence that we have heard today. As members will recall, we agreed to meet in private at the end of each oral evidence-taking meeting to enable the committee to consider the evidence it has heard. That, of course, will greatly assist us in drafting our report at the end of phase one of the consideration stage. I thank you all for attending. This is a record closure time. I look forward to seeing you next week—I assume. [*Interruption.*] I am informed that we will not see you until 29 November. We shall miss you.

14:15

Meeting continue in private until 14:32.

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