



A large number of cities throughout the world are currently reaping the benefits their tram networks bring, so too are cities in the UK, including Manchester, Nottingham and Croydon, all boasting a successful tram scheme. Edinburgh's tram network will be delivered in phases with Phase 1a running from Edinburgh Airport to Leith, Phase 1b serving the Granton area of the city connecting it through Craighleith and Roseburn to the City Centre. Phase 2 will serve key development and commuter areas to the West of the city and phase 3 will link Granton to Leith, completing the loop.

A tram network encourages investment, improves the city image and assists regeneration. It will give Edinburgh the edge when competing with other cities for jobs and investment. Trams also promote social inclusion and improve the

urban environment. The network is planned to be operational in Edinburgh by 2011.

In addition to initiatives set to improve travel within the city, tie has been tasked with the creation of a strategically important airport rail link. The largest national rail project in Scotland, the Edinburgh Airport Rail Link will connect Edinburgh Airport to the Scottish Rail network, allowing direct travel to destinations across Scotland, including Glasgow, Stirling, Perth, Fife, Inverness, Dundee and Aberdeen. Edinburgh Airport is experiencing rapid growth, an increase that is set to reach and exceed beyond 10 million passengers per year by 2015. In addition, congestion on the airport's surrounding roads is heavy at peak times and it is expected a rail link will help to alleviate traffic problems in this area.

The project creates a number of interesting challenges, including tunnelling under an operational runway, whilst maintaining uninterrupted operation of both the airport and the rail network during construction. The Bill for the project was submitted to the Scottish Parliament in March 2006 and should Royal Assent be awarded, will be operational by 2011. The Edinburgh Airport Rail Link is an ambitious national rail project, but one that has the potential to deliver benefits throughout Scotland.

Earlier this year tie successfully gained Royal Assent for a tram network in Edinburgh, which they are hoping will be operational in 2011. tie is also working through the parliamentary consideration stage for Edinburgh Airport Rail Link (EARL) which, if successful, will link 62 stations across Scotland with Edinburgh Airport.

