

Edinburgh Trams update

The way forward for the Edinburgh Tram project is clearer today according to the Council, with one of the proposals agreed through the mediation process, being made public this afternoon.

Following the mutually agreed appointment of an independent mediator, Michael Shane, intensive meetings took place from 8 – 12 March with all relevant parties represented. In the two months since, positive dialogue has been maintained.

A key outcome of the process is said to be that the parties have set aside their differences in respect of Princes Street, and the infrastructure contractor, Bilfinger Berger and Siemens, (BBS) has agreed that it will carry out a programme of remedial works to fully repair the road surface. The works will be carried out in two stages: from 3 July – 26 November and then from January – May next year. No new public funds will be required for these works.

Other works on Princes Street will also be undertaken, including erecting street lighting, remaining overhead line equipment poles and work around the tram stop.

Over the coming period, prior to the diversions being implemented, the Council and the infrastructure contractor have said that they will carry out a detailed consultation with the city centre business community, and other key stakeholders, to plan the necessary arrangements for traffic diversions, bus services, pedestrian routes, waste collection, deliveries and signage.

Traffic diversion arrangements will be broadly similar to those in place during previous works, with buses, taxis and cycles diverted to George Street and general traffic diverted onto Queen Street as a principal route.

Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council, Councillor Jenny Dawe, said: “Last November I instructed the Chief Executive to pursue the option of mediation with **tie** and the infrastructure contractor and I am pleased that we are now seeing the benefits of this process.

“Without question there is a difficult period ahead, however I am still of the belief that a tram network which expands over time will be of enormous benefit to people living and working in this city for generations to come.

“The programme of priority works along with rectifying the road surface and other works on Princes Street is a sign that we are moving forward. We had hoped to avoid the scenario of a further traffic diversion from Princes Street but having listened to the advice from council officers and the infrastructure contractor I understand why this is necessary. We will work closely with the city’s business community to ensure any impact is managed effectively before the diversion is put in place and during the period of works.”

Vic Emery, Chair of **tie**, added: “It was vital that the momentum of the project was restored. All parties involved are in agreement that, through the mediation process, good progress has been made in identifying the key issues that lay at the heart of the dispute, and a measure of goodwill has been re-established.

“The next step is to finalise the revised plans for the delivery of phase 1a, including projected costs and programme, and this will be shared with all relevant parties including Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government before being made public in due course.”

Martin Foerder, Project Director for Bilfinger Berger Civil UK Ltd said: “There are a number of outstanding elements still to be undertaken on Princes Street and by doing these now we are also able to repair the road surface.

“Bilfinger Berger, Siemens and CAF are committed to working with partners in Edinburgh to deliver a tram system for the city and have already completed a number of significant structures as well as the building of the tram vehicles.”

“I look forward to being able to announce shortly the plans for the remaining works still to be undertaken which will see trams running from the airport to the city centre.”

A full programme of consultation with city stakeholders affected by the Princes Street programme will be undertaken, including an analysis of any opportunities which may arise to use the increased availability of pedestrian space.