

# Trams in Edinburgh by 2014...and that's a promise?



Work is to begin again on completing Edinburgh's tram line following the signing of a settlement agreement between The City of Edinburgh Council and the consortium contracted to build the tram line from the Airport to York Place. The deal was confirmed by the council today after negotiating teams worked through the night to finalise and sign the paperwork. The project will also be overseen by Transport Scotland from this point forward.

Yet again however, there is the cloak of commercial confidentiality which will be thrown over the detail of the contract, and the council's chance to allow the public any opportunity of understanding the deal which has been done is denied. As yet it is unclear what role the current chair of tie, Vic Emery, will play in the project going forward, as tie is to be wound up as widely anticipated. Some other employees have already been made redundant or moved elsewhere.

The council say that intensive negotiations have been underway since both parties entered into a formal mediation process in March resulting from a contractual dispute. Greater certainty on the funding and the route were required to conclude those discussions and apparently this was eventually provided by the Council decision of 2 September.

Since then, the Council has been working with Bilfinger Berger, Siemens and CAF to agree the detail of the settlement which allows the dispute to be resolved by the new deadline which was set at 14 September. Remedial work on Princes Street is already scheduled to begin from this weekend, while the timetable for other works is to be announced shortly,

according to the council.

Council Leader, Councillor Jenny Dawe, said:- “This is an important milestone in restoring our vision for a clean, green and efficient transport system in Scotland’s capital. It is essential for everyone who lives or works in Edinburgh that the project gets going now as soon as possible. I am pleased with the spirit of cooperation shown by all parties and grateful for the hard work that has gone into taking us forward.”

Council Chief Executive, Sue Bruce, said:- “An incredible amount of effort has gone into addressing all the issues that have made this such a challenging project. However, the real work begins now on getting the line finished and the trams running. In doing so, I’m very pleased to welcome Transport Scotland ‘s involvement which will see our staff and theirs working closely together as we look to enter a new phase in the project’s history. As with any major construction project I’m sure we will have hurdles to overcome, but our new governance and operational arrangements are aimed at dealing with those as efficiently as possible.”

The detailed terms of the agreement are commercially confidential. The revised timescale for completing the line from Edinburgh Airport to York Place is summer 2014.

As promised in the [council decision of 2 September](#), there will be improved governance arrangements put in place, including an all-party political oversight group. Turner and Townsend are currently in the process of being appointed as the Council’s project management consultants.

Transport Initiatives Edinburgh (TIE) will cease to exist as an operating entity with its previous functions executed by the Council supported by Turner and Townsend, a company engaged by the council in a consultancy role.