

Five things you need to know today



The City of Edinburgh Council has announced that it will investigate individual cases of complaints about statutory repairs. They have issued a [report on the statutory notice repairs process](#) which will be considered by councillors next week and which recommends creating a dedicated team of surveyors and a review panel to resolve outstanding complaints.

Serious allegations made against staff and contractors led to the Council stopping all non-emergency work pending a detailed investigation. Where appropriate, disciplinary hearings will be held, but both the separate Council and Police investigations are continuing.

The report also advises on interim arrangements for the service, which aims to maintain good quality housing, protect the public and protect the built environment, allowing time for further improvements to be devised and introduced.

Councillor Phil Wheeler, Convenor of the Finance and Resources committee, said: “Carrying out further investigations is a welcome proposal and I hope it underlines to the public how seriously the Council is taking this issue. However, we also need to look again at introducing arrangements to ensure essential work is carried out appropriately. The city needs housing of an excellent standard, and we also need to see that the public and our built heritage are safeguarded.”

Mark Turley, Director of Services for Communities, added: “This is a thorough and painstaking investigation. We will

review the specific circumstances of all complaints and try to remedy these. The approach we are taking aims to be open and inclusive, which is essential for both resolving the issues raised and moving the service forward in a way that regains the public's confidence."

Councillor Ewan Aitken said:-"The interim report on Statutory Notices released today will help those who need a Statutory Notice to make sure that repairs which are affecting their quality of life are completed. However, there remain many serious questions about the alleged systemic and potentially corrupt practices within the statutory notice system, to which the citizens of Edinburgh have a right to have answers. My colleagues and I will continue to demand those answers."

Elsewhere [Reuters](#) have announced that the council is looking at a British firm, Enterprise, as the preferred provider of environmental services. This will be discussed at the council meeting next Thursday. The company would look after park maintenance, street cleaning and bin collections.

[STV Local](#) tell us that Edinburgh World Heritage now have an iPhone App. But earlier in the week the council announced a new management plan for the city in its role as a World Heritage site. The plan has been launched following a full consultation process and attempts to unite all interested parties in a common set of actions and priorities.

There is to be a demonstration in Edinburgh tomorrow against benefit cuts for disabled people. [The Herald](#) explain that the Hardest Hit day of action aims to highlight the plight of disabled people who feel that they are unfairly dealt with in the new benefits available to them. It is reported that there will be a collective loss of income of £1 billion over the next four years.

Finally the Edinburgh based oil company, Cairn Energy, has

spent half a billion pounds on drilling in Greenland, according to the [BBC](#). The exploration so far has been unsuccessful.