

Five things you need to know today



This week is going to be busy at the City Chambers, so we bring you council news today. The council have two meetings on the agenda – the first on Tuesday is the Culture and Leisure Committee and the second on Thursday is the meeting of the full council, where they may well discuss and agree a strategy for the privatisation of services.

The Culture and Leisure Committee are going to discuss (among other things) Edinburgh's libraries.

Edinburgh Libraries' mantra is 'Better Libraries, Better Lives' and this message is central to a new draft strategy for the service due to go out for public consultation if approved by councillors.

The Library and Information Service plays a vital role providing free access to a range of reading, media, IT and information services to all citizens from babies to the oldest in our communities.

Services are delivered in a variety of ways to meet customers' needs. These include 27 Community Libraries, Central Library, the Virtual Library, Prison Library, Mobile Library and Services to Hospitals and Care Homes.

[The Next Generation Library and Information Service Strategy](#) presents a model to take the service forward into the 21st century. It presents a vision of "Better Libraries, Better Lives", a Library and Information Service built on excellence in customer services, inspiring customers and reinforcing strong community connections.

Councillor Deidre Brock, Culture and Leisure Convener, said:-
“Obviously all local authorities are having to make big savings just now, and we are no exception. But unlike some areas, we have not closed, and WILL NOT close any of our libraries – on the contrary, we’re opening more, integrating library services within community facilities to give greater flexibility and make best use of resources. The first of these innovative ‘hubs’, the Drumbrae Library Hub [pictured], is due to open early in 2012, while the beautifully refurbished and modernised Morningside Library is preparing to welcome the community back in just a few weeks’ time.

“In Edinburgh we are shaping our library service based on customer feedback, usage patterns and discussions with Libraries staff. As we move forward, we’re looking to gauge the public’s views on our draft strategy for libraries. We invite everyone to tell us what they think – your feedback is invaluable in helping us continue to improve this vital service for the City.”

It’s never been easier to access library services in Scotland’s Capital. The award-winning [virtual library](#) is thriving and has just been tipped for yet another [top accolade](#).

[A report on the Next Generation Library Strategy](#) will be considered by the Culture and Leisure Committee on Tuesday 22 November 2011.

One unhappy property owner served with a statutory notice has complained about the way this was handled by the council. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman has [decided that they have a point](#), and has required the council to apologise to the individual concerned.

In the meantime the Council Leader, Jenny Dawe, has issued her Leader’s Report [which you can read here](#).

The Leader’s Report mentions the tram works specifically as

follows:-

“Following the signing of a settlement agreement with the contractors in September, works on the tram project resumed across the city. While the on-street sites of Princes Street and at Haymarket are very visible, there is a lot happening at a variety of locations, including work on the Gyle, Edinburgh Park and Murrayfield tram stops; bridge construction at South Gyle, Carrick Knowe, Balgreen and Russell Road; and track laying and overhead line equipment installation at South Gyle and Balgreen. The tram depot – which took delivery of its first tram on 17 October – is nearly complete and is fully electrified. Additional trams have also arrived and will continue to do so over the course of 2012. Test runs are scheduled to begin in the depot area from December, once the test track is complete. Meanwhile, we continue to offer our support to city centre businesses affected by the tram works and, as part of our wider £445,000 annual business support package, we have been working with partners to organise a whole host of activities and initiatives designed to draw people into the city centre over the festive period. I am sure visitors of all ages will be captivated by these.”

The tram works between Water of Leith Bridge and Balgreen Road are ongoing and Edinburgh Trams have taken time to explain that some of these works have to take place overnight. If this is your neighbourhood then [you will see what is scheduled here.](#)

Leith Central Community Council are holding their monthly meeting tonight with a curtailed agenda, to allow those attending to reflect and share their memories of the chair, Stewart Blaik who died suddenly this month. The meeting starts at 7.30p.m. in McDonald Road Library.