

Five things you need to know today



Special meeting of Edinburgh Council today

Edinburgh MP Mike Crockart still on the case for better Dalmeny trains

More trees felled on Water of Leith

Edinburgh Youth Issues Forum

Edinburgh Zoo shows off two new babies

The Council meets today to discuss the possibility of its Alternative Business Model, actually being used in one of the three proposed initial areas of the council's work. During 2011 the council voted not to outsource waste collection under this model, but the recommendation from the administration today is to adopt the outsourcing model for what is known as Integrated Facilities, short for school meals and other services.

The proposal is recommended on the basis that it will provide savings of over £50m over the next seven years. The agenda is a short one but the matter is nonetheless a contentious one. The Reporter will be at the City Chambers this morning and will bring you an account of the proceedings under our Liveblog section. The hashtag will be #edincouncil

Local MP, Mike Crockart, has contacted Scotrail again this week over the chaos commuters at Dalmeny station are facing.

Last week, the Edinburgh West MP was told by Scotrail management that the Edinburgh bound commuter train at 7.58am would be restored to a six carriage service. However, it appears that further storm damage to the rolling stock has delayed the additional carriages being added to the peak-time train.

Commenting Mr Crockart said:

“The situation for commuters at Dalmeny is simply unacceptable. Not only is there reduced capacity on the peak-time train but passengers are now facing delays on the line and overcrowding at the platform.

“I know that the Perth-Edinburgh service is now stopping at Dalmeny at 8:03 but this, as I have pointed out to Scotrail, is of little help to those wishing to travel to the Gyle. I was told by Scotrail that my comments would be passed on to their train planners.

“I have however been advised this afternoon that ‘the additional call was introduced in an endeavour to assist in what is accepted is a difficult situation... There is no scope for this service to call at South Gyle.’ I was also told that the 7:58 service is now scheduled to run with six carriages from Monday.

“During my call to Scotrail today I have to say that I was shocked and disappointed by their attitude to the escalating problem. When I asked whether disruption would continue for

four to six weeks as commuters have been advised via PA announcements at the station, I was simply told that updates would be available via their website. It was in a subsequent email that I was informed of the plan to run a six carriage service from Monday 23rd.

“Needless to say, I will be writing to the Managing Director again.”

It seems that some tidying up on the Water of Leith has led to more of our precious Edinburgh trees being felled. And the reason this time seems to be the Royal visit at the end of last week according [to the report by STV](#).

Young people from across Edinburgh got together yesterday to have their say on the future priorities for the city.

Edinburgh residents, aged 11 -21, have been invited to the City Chambers, to give their views at the Budget Youth Summit, which is organised by the awarding winning Edinburgh Youth Issues Forum. It will be an interactive session that promises to inspire lively debate.

The Edinburgh Youth Issues Forum is a partnership of young people, the City of Edinburgh Council and its partners, to discuss and influence city-wide youth issues and services. The Forum is open to all those in the city aged 11-21.

The Forum meets every six weeks and alternates between committee meetings and city-wide youth events, giving young people the opportunity to be consulted alongside key partners such as Councillors, police and fire service, youth workers, NHS and Edinburgh Leisure.

City education leader, Councillor Marilyn MacLaren said: "Young people are an integral part to our society and our city's future. Therefore it is only right that they have the chance to have their voices heard and the Edinburgh Youth Issues Forum is a fantastic way to do this.

"This unique forum offers us the chance to engage in some of our most challenging issues of the day with future voices of tomorrow. And I am sure that the event will provide us with valuable contributions to help us set priorities in the coming years."

The Forum received the City of Edinburgh Council's Children and Families Director's Award for Outstanding Achievement, in recognition of the value of engaging young people.

For the first time Edinburgh Zoo's new pair of Ground Cuscus will go on view to the public. 6 year old Bruce the male and 3 year old Aru the female have been part of the Zoo's animal collection for a few months, but have just gone on public display.

Ground Cuscus are marsupials, meaning the females have a pouch for carrying their young in once they are born. Most recognisable for their large eyes and ears which are perfect for night-time tree foraging, Ground cuscus also enjoy a bit of sunlight and can often be seen catching a warming ray or two.

Donald Gow, Primate and Hoofstock keeper at Edinburgh Zoo said "We're excited to be showing the Ground Cuscus to Zoo visitors for the first time since they arrived in our collection. Bruce and Aru seem to be getting on really well together

thankfully, because if they weren't we would know all about it! Ground Cuscus are known to hiss and even bark at other members of their species if they don't quite see eye to eye. Things are going really smoothly with the pair so far, so we're extremely hopeful they will breed together – it's just a case of fingers crossed!"