

Five things you need to know today



Hearts – Forth Road Bridge – Networking Event – Penguin Cam is back – Edinburgh MSP calls for action on BBC redundancies

The open top bus tour was cancelled. Hearts lost the League Cup to St Mirren. Scotland failed to win against France at rugby. The results of Scottish sport over the weekend were almost as dull as the weather, but not without some moments of drama and excitement. John Hislop has all of the excitement for you in [The Edinburgh Reporter Weekly Sports Round-up.](#)

The future arrangements for the management and maintenance of the Forth Road Bridge have been endorsed in a report published today by the Scottish Parliament's Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee.

The Committee's Stage 1 report on the Forth Road Bridge Bill has recommended to the Parliament that the general principles of the bill are agreed to. If the Parliament agrees with the Committee when it debates the Bill later in March, the Bill will progress to its next stage of scrutiny.

The primary objective of the Bill is to make provision for the future management and maintenance of the Forth Road Bridge as part of the Scottish Government's wider strategy to upgrade the Forth crossing transport network. It seeks to dissolve the Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA) which currently manages the Forth Road Bridge, with all its responsibilities transferring to a bridge operator to be appointed by Scottish Ministers. This new operator will manage and maintain both the existing Forth Road Bridge and the new Forth Crossing.

Committee Convener Maureen Watt MSP said:

“Our Committee recognises the importance of this Bill as a key component in progress towards meeting the Scottish Government’s objective of delivering a co-ordinated, managed Forth crossing strategy.

“Following the evidence we heard, we are satisfied that a single bridge operating company is the most appropriate and cost effective approach to the management and maintenance of both the existing and new crossings. We were reassured to hear that FETA staff will be able to transfer to the new operator and that their valuable expertise and experience will be retained, ensuring a strong element of continuity.”

Within the report, the Committee also notes and accepts the very clear statement made by the Minister for Transport which confirms that the Scottish Government will take responsibility for meeting FETA’s obligations, including any arising from the building of the M9 spur approach to the Forth Road Bridge. The City of Edinburgh Council had raised concerns that it might be liable for outstanding compensation claims related this work following the dissolution of FETA. The Committee is of the view that it would be helpful if the Scottish Government formally advised the Council of the position before the Bill completes its parliamentary passage.

The Committee also agreed with the proposal in the Bill that the road over the Forth Road Bridge should become a trunk road. It also asks the Scottish Government to provide more information on how its plans for the new management and maintenance contract to last for five year periods will fit with FETA’s current maintenance programmes which can cover up to 15 years.



A networking event is taking place at Cargo this Friday. Contact tjoyce@cargoedinburgh.co.uk to confirm your place.



Penguin cam is back! Read all about the new [penguin enclosure at the Zoo here in yesterday's article.](#)

An Edinburgh MSP has called on the Scottish Parliament to debate the compulsory redundancies announced by the BBC to take effect on 31 March 2013. Raising concerns over the effect these redundancies would have on the quality of news output and analyse, Mr Eadie called for the BBC to rethink their strategy or risk seriously undermining the BBC's ability to adhere to the terms of its own Royal Charter.

Mr Eadie – SNP MSP for Edinburgh Southern – has lodged a motion in the Scottish Parliament seeking support for a Members' Debate

Mr Eadie who recently raised the issue during First Minister's Questions, said:-

“With the referendum taking place next year and the Glasgow

Commonwealth Games just around the corner, the need for quality reporting and news output has never been greater in Scotland. Scottish license fee payers have a right to expect the kind of high quality news and analysis that befits a world class public service broadcaster. If we do not oppose these cuts we risk diminishing standards of broadcasting to an unacceptable level.

“This debate affords an important opportunity to voice the concerns of staff and the National Union of Journalists who feel compelled to strike in order to halt these redundancies and maintain the standard of broadcasting we expect from the BBC.”