

# Phew! End is in sight for City Centre Tram works



## WEST END REOPENING MARKS END OF CITY CENTRE DISRUPTION

The council said today that Shandwick Place will reopen tomorrow meaning that the end of city centre disruption due to tram works is in view.

The £776m project has involved much disruption due to the civil engineering works to reroute the underground services and then lay tram tracks on our city's streets, but in anticipation of the tram line actually running from the airport to York Place by May 2014, the city will be returning to some kind of normality with the reopening of York Place last month and now the West End thoroughfare of Shandwick Place.

A range of changes to traffic arrangements in the West End will now come into force with changes to public transport and vehicle access. These include a return to two-way vehicle traffic at Manor Place and bus, taxi and cycle access to Shandwick Place, with general vehicles permitted entry between 8pm – 7am. Full details of traffic arrangements can be accessed on the Council's [website](#).

Following the return of traffic, further work to reinstate the road network back to pre-tram arrangements will be carried out by the Council and in addition preparations for live tram operation will also take place. These planned works will be localised but may occasionally impact on traffic flows until

the end of the tram's testing and commissioning phase.

Councillor Lesley Hinds, the city's Transport Convener, said:-  
"With the tram project now nearing completion, the city centre is beginning to take shape and we can look forward to next year when passenger services will begin.

"We know it's been very difficult for people living and working in areas affected by the tram works and it will be a big relief that the majority of disruptive works in the city centre are now over. Now is the time to look forward to the opportunities ahead and to embrace the benefits that a modern, integrated transport system, incorporating all transport options, can bring to our city."

"Our target for service launch is now May 2014 but, of course, we'll bring this forward if we can. However, it's important to remember that a thorough testing, commissioning and driver training programme is absolutely essential. There is much work still to be done and it's vital that all the appropriate tests and checks are made before we go into service."

Transport Minister Keith Brown said:- "Alongside the redevelopment of Haymarket and Waverley Stations, Edinburgh will very soon have a modern transport system it can be proud of. The investment at Haymarket, Waverley, the Gateway and in electrification takes us one step closer to revolutionising the rail network in central Scotland."

"We cannot forget the disruption that those living and working

in the West End have had to endure for too many years, but we can welcome this step forward in a tram project which is gathering pace. Transport Scotland has played a key role in supporting City of Edinburgh Council and contractors to get the tram project back on track and we will continue to work with them to bring the May 2014 delivery date forward at every available opportunity.”

The tram service is forecast to be up and running for passengers in May 2014, two months ahead of the revised target of July 2014. Route testing has begun between Gogar depot and Edinburgh Park Station with full route testing scheduled to begin in December.

The Council has set out plans to create a new organisation, Transport for Edinburgh, to integrate transport services in the Capital. Transport for Edinburgh will be set up initially to integrate the tram and bus services, with Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams confirmed as the operators. A report on the latest position on the appointment of the Transport for Edinburgh board will be considered by Councillors on 24 October 2013 when four of the directors of Lothian Buses will be confirmed as part of that board along with Transport Convenor Lesley Hinds and other councillors from other political groups.

The council maintains that the project remains in line with the revised budget (£776m) approved by the Council in September 2011, with work either ahead of schedule or in line with the revised timescale reported in December 2011.