

Five things you need to know today



Full council meeting today – Edinburgh to Doha direct – Christmas is coming! – Exploring Independence – Castleview Primary

The council meets this morning to discuss what may be a fairly short agenda. We will be reporting from the floor of the City Chamber from 10 this morning under our [TERLive!](#) section.

Qatar Airways has announced that it will commence operations between Edinburgh and Doha on 28 May 2014.

The Middle Eastern carrier will fly Scotland's first scheduled 787 Dreamliner five times per week from Scotland's capital, linking the country with over 120 destinations worldwide. Qatar Airways, Skytrax Airline of the Year in 2011 and 2012, is renowned for its five-star service and quality.

Seen as a missing piece for many years in the capital city's route network, this new route will mean that many Scots will now not need to travel across the country to access a Middle East hub airport. A direct connection to Doha will further strengthen Edinburgh's links to Asia, helping to drive vital trade routes and tourism.

Having connections to Australian hubs in Perth and Melbourne will also make it easier for Scots to travel between the two continents to go on holiday or to visit friends and relatives.

Edinburgh Airport was supported in its negotiations with Qatar

Airways by Team Scotland, the collaboration between VisitScotland, Transport Scotland and Scottish Enterprise and this is very much a victory for Scotland.

Scotland will be a huge draw to millions of visitors wishing to take part in the Year of Homecoming. The international community will be able to take full advantage of this new route and be part of a fantastic year of celebration for Scotland.

Transport Minister Keith Brown said:- “This new direct service is excellent news for Scotland’s aviation sector and provides yet more evidence of the strong bonds we are building with Qatar.

“The Scottish Government has worked hard to foster links with the Gulf States, promoting Scotland as a market leader in oil and gas and a great place to do business.

“Direct services make Scotland a more attractive destination for both tourists and businesses by removing the need for extra connecting flights. This not only helps the economy by boosting tourism, but also encourages overseas trade and investment.

“The eyes of the world will turn to Scotland in 2014 with a programme of events that includes the Commonwealth Games, the Ryder Cup and a second Year of Homecoming and we are keen to share these exciting times with our friends around the world.”

Chief Executive Gordon Dewar said: “We’ve been promising our friends and partners across the city and the country a Middle Eastern route for a number of years now. I am ecstatic to be sharing this news today and would like to thank all for their patience and support.

“Aviation is a team game and we would not have been able to secure this route without the support and hard work of Team Scotland.

“This announcement today is the result of real understanding and collaboration. I hope that it can continue as I think that it gives our country a real advantage when talking to airlines and making the case for Scotland.

“We rebranded our airport for a reason. We wanted to reflect our ambition and raise our aspirations. We can now say with growing confidence that Edinburgh is where Scotland meets the world.”

Commenting on the announcement Mr Keir, MSP for Edinburgh Western said:- ‘This is terrific news and I congratulate the management at Edinburgh Airport and Qatar Airways on this announcement, not only is it another direct flight from Edinburgh adding to recent announcements of flights to Philadelphia and Chicago, it is also the first using the new 787 Dreamliner aircraft and from Doha links onward to the Far East and Australia.’ He added, ‘it is good news for the city of Edinburgh and increases passenger choice .’



All the information you need to get ready for the official Christmas light switch on is over [here](#)...and it is looking good! Sir Chris Hoy will be doing the official part on Sunday afternoon.

We can't wait to try out the new Big Wheel!

ON 26 November 2013 the White Paper on Independence will be

published. A few days later, on Saturday 30 November 2013, The Future of the UK and Scotland – an ESRC-funded programme based at the University of Edinburgh – will hold an event to unpick and examine what the Scottish Government has proposed.

What would happen if Scotland votes Yes in September 2014? Would we be wealthier, fairer, or greener? Would we be safe in the world?

This special event will provide a unique opportunity to bring together leading academics, politicians and representatives of civic Scotland and the voting public to discuss and debate the implications of independence, and to scrutinise the vision set out in the White Paper.

Registration is free, but space is limited to 200 people. Please register your place on [Eventbrite](#)

The event will be at the University's Playfair Library, Old College, 9.30am until 3.30pm. More information [here](#).

Castleview Primary is having a visit from the Minister today, but not just any old minister, this one is the Minister for Learning, Sciences and Scotland's Languages, Dr Alasdair Allan, who is coming along to congratulate them on getting such a good report recently.

Read more here soon!

