

Five things you need to know today



Flood Prevention works – Portobello High School – Edinburgh Bus Geeks – Fettes College and the Great War – EdinburghReportage

The council is starting to look at the next phase of flood prevention works to be carried out on the Water of Leith. Ahead of the Transport and Environment Committee meeting next Tuesday they have issued a report which outlines new measures to ensure that the next phase of the project does not run into problems. There were insufficient funds to carry out all of the works needed in one go, so in 2009 the council decided to divide the £106m scheme into three phases. Phase 1 included defences at Stockbridge and Warriston, St Mark's Park and Bonnington, and was completed last year, although it ran considerably over budget.

The council is now adamant that they want to learn from mistakes made in carrying out works on the first phase to ensure that none of these errors are repeated.

One of the ways in which the council will keep a tighter grip on the project is that they have appointed a project manager who is employed by the council to oversee it. Rob Leech is a Chartered Engineer and senior Programme Director who has over 20 years experience in construction. He also has over 10 years experience of high value capital projects. Mr Leech worked on the multi billion euro Metro North project in Dublin. He is now the project manager for the Flood Prevention Works.



Flood prevention works at Stockbridge

By May 2014 an independent consultant will have been appointed to review the design which will check all aspects of the works to limit any risk in the contract.

One of the main problems encountered on the Braid Burn scheme complete in 2010 at a cost of £28.7m, was the discovery of munitions which then had to be cleared. During some ground investigation work at Murrayfield an unexploded WWII bomb was revealed, and some further investigation will be required to reduce any extra expense from this kind of problem.

Phase 2 is estimated to cost around £25.5m although there is only £19.9m left in the council coffers after completion of the works downstream. The Transport Convener is certain the additional funds can be found from within the council's budget, and the committee voted last June to go ahead with the next part of what are deemed essential works.

The Transport and Environment Committee meets for its first 2014 meeting next Tuesday at 10am.

Paul Wheelhouse Minister for Environment and Climate Change made a statement about recent flooding yesterday in Holyrood. Although most of the flooding in December and January was confined to the west coast of the country, historically there have been huge problems within Edinburgh itself with areas of flooding from Murrayfield to Balcarres Street in Morningside. The minister said during his speech:-“We have continuously maintained and protected our support for SEPA and, in conjunction with our partners in the [Convention of Scottish Local Authorities](#), we have maintained the element of the local authority settlement that is identified for flood protection. The Scottish Government has continued to invest in supporting actions to reduce flood risk, including protecting SEPA's budget at £37.5 million and increasing it, in challenging financial circumstances, to £39.5 million in 2015-16. Local

authorities can also apply for funding for large new flood protection schemes using capital funding worth £42 million a year. That investment is making a difference and will stand us in good stead.”

Sarah Boyack Lothians MSP asked the minister whether phase 2 of Edinburgh’s vital flood scheme will be eligible for funding from the £42 million to which the minister had referred. She also pointed out that the much-delayed £25 million scheme is currently £6 million short. In his response the minister did not rule out the possibility of some Government funding being made available.

The minister replied:-“In the case of the [Water of Leith](#), we have a historic scheme that has been funded to date, so we have already committed funding. I appreciate the difficulties that the [City of Edinburgh Council](#) faced in procurement. It has ended up with more expensive contracts than it anticipated and faces exceptional costs.

“We have to try to fund a number of other schemes. We have legacy schemes from previous legislation. There is the Brechin scheme, and the Ettrick scheme and other schemes, which will apply by the 21 January deadline, have come forward.

“All that I can say is that I will happily meet [Sarah Boyack](#)—I met Mr Biagi to discuss a similar issue—to explore the detail in that case and explain the circumstances in relation to the current funding package.”

A new Portobello High School is becoming more of a reality now that the Scottish Parliament considered the bill in a session yesterday afternoon and MSPs then voted on the bill giving it universal approval.



Convener of

Education – Paul
Godzik

Councillor Paul Godzik, Convener of the Education, Children and Families Committee, welcomed the decision.

He said: “This marks another major milestone in our bid to build a new Portobello High School on Portobello Park. We are pleased that the Scottish Parliament has unanimously agreed the general principles of the City of Edinburgh Council (Portobello Park) Bill and that the Private Bill can proceed to the consideration stage. This means we are getting closer to delivering a fantastic new school that the people of Portobello rightly demand and pupils of Portobello deserve.”

Green MSPs at Holyrood include Lothian MSP and former Edinburgh councillor, Alison Johnstone, who spoke in the debate. She said that the issue had been handled badly by the council and admitted that it was deeply divisive for the community, but that, many years after the council first took its decision, it was right to support the legal mechanism to get the school built. She called for a strengthening of assurances and protections for compensatory green space and the common good status of the land being built on.

The Lothians MSP blogged about the bill [here](#).

Two guys Chris and Neil known to many as [@LothianBusGeek](#) set out yesterday morning to try and ride on all Lothian Buses from number 113 back to number 1 while at the same time running 20 miles between stops. They had to ride the buses for at least five stops. The aim of this was to raise money and after some Twitter exchanges, they decided to raise the money for local charity It's Good 2 Give.

As at 11.00pm last night they had raised around £1800 for the charity. Hooray for them! You can donate to It's Good 2 Give

[here](#).

Here they are waiting for their last bus...

Here we are! <http://t.co/vnEUHTXZNK> [#edinbusgeek](#)

– Chris and Neil (@LothianBusGeek) [January 9, 2014](#)

Fettes College prepared for the Great War by drilling many of their pupils in the school's cadet corps. Find out more about all of this 100 years on from the start of the war in 1914. Edinburgh Reads are running a talk by David McDowell who teaches at the school and you can book your tickets [here](#).



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Show us – join in the fun over [here](#).