

# Five things you need to know today Edinburgh



**Scottish Government's draft budget**

**Mountain biking in the city**

**Edinburgh chef teaching the school cooks**

**20 MPH Consultation**

**Rail contracts**

Finance Secretary John Swinney will today set out the Draft Scottish Budget 2015/16.

Mr Swinney is expected to focus on policies which will help to make Scotland a more prosperous country, tackle inequality and protect public services.

Scotland's economy has returned to pre-recession levels. However, the budget will be set against the context of cuts by Westminster by around 10 per cent in real terms over five years and capital spending cuts of over 25 per cent.

The budget will also include proposed tax rates and publish tax receipts forecasts for the first time, ahead of the Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT) and Scottish Landfill Tax (SLfT) coming into force on April 1, 2015.

Ahead of his statement in which Mr Swinney will indicate that Scotland is in a new phase of economic and political debate he said:

"We have seen a strengthening of Scotland's economic performance over the last two years and currently have record levels of employment.

“However, major challenges in the economy still remain, compounded by the fact the public finances are under such pressure by the UK austerity programme.

“This budget follows unprecedented levels of political engagement not only on Scotland’s constitutional future but the wider priorities of the people of Scotland.

“What will lie at the heart of the budget will be a determination to make Scotland a prosperous and fairer country where the benefits of economic growth are not only maintained but are shared by everyone.

“Many of these aspirations will be taken forward within the budget and also within the setting of tax rates. The Land and Buildings Transaction Tax is the first tax created by the Scottish Parliament since before the 1707 union.

“The budget is a major landmark in taking forward the Government’s programme and is also a historic opportunity to set new tax rates for Scotland.”

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Later this morning Cabinet Secretary for Commonwealth Games and Sport Shona Robison will see plans for a new urban mountain bike and BMX trail in Edinburgh.

The project on the outskirts of Holyrood Park is one of 47 across Scotland which will receive funding from the Scottish Government’s £10 million Legacy 2014 Active Places Fund to get more people involved in sport and physical activity.

Ms Robison will visit the prospective site along with Angus Calder of the Braidwood Bikepark Group, Simon Turner of the Craggs Community Sport Centre, Stewart Harris, Chief Executive of **sport**scotland and local cyclists.

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Renowned Edinburgh chef and restaurateur, Mark Greenaway, took time away from cooking award-winning food to encourage the city's school cooks to use and experiment more with fresh, seasonal and Scottish produce.

He was speaking at a [Food for Life](#) seminar last week in the City Chambers, organised by the City of Edinburgh Council and Food for Life Scotland, to launch the latest school menu – developed to meet the [Soil Association's](#) Bronze Food for Life Catering Mark standards.

With the help of Food for Life Scotland, all Edinburgh schools are working towards the bronze standard, ensuring that more meals are freshly prepared using seasonal produce.

Achieving the prestigious award will make Edinburgh the first Scottish Local Authority to serve Catering Mark awarded meals in all school levels.

Mark was joined by Environment Convener Councillor Lesley Hinds to commend all those involved in the Council's bid, and to celebrate the important work that school cooks do in helping to nurture and nourish the capital's school pupils.

Cllr Lesley Hinds said: "I'm sure Mark's input, together with implementation of the Food for Life Catering Mark will help our school caterers build on the great work they already do in our schools using fresh, seasonal and Scottish produce. As a Council we have a strong commitment to sustainability and to providing fresh nourishing and locally sourced food across our facilities.

"Currie Community High School and Buckstone Primary School already have the bronze award and we need to keep up the momentum to achieve our goal of Edinburgh being the first local authority in Scotland to achieve this across the whole school sector."

Mark said: "It was fantastic to see so many of the city's

school cooks in one place, sharing their experience of cooking and hearing about the changes being made to the menus which will allow them to serve more fresh and seasonal produce in Edinburgh's schools. I think Food for Life Scotland has the potential to make a significant difference to food culture in schools and beyond, which will benefit all of us over time"

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Councillors Lesley Hinds and Adam McVey who both have responsibility for transport and environment in the city joined pupils and parents from Sciennes Primary School to remind residents about plans to roll out 20mph limits across the city.

Pedestrian charity Living Streets joined the photo call and all of them would like you to visit the consultation documents and have your say. You have until 17 October 2014 to offer your views on the scheme that is being hailed as a trailblazer for cities across Europe.

Alison Noble, Head Teacher of Sciennes Primary School, said: "As a school community we were really supportive of the pilot programme idea for South Edinburgh and I'm pleased to report that there has been an increase in the number of parents walking with their children or allowing them to cycle to school."

To complete the 20mph consultation, please go to [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/20mph](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/20mph).

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**Reacting to the news that The Scottish Government awarded the Scotrail contract to Dutch company Abellio yesterday, Edinburgh East MP Sheila Gilmore said:**

'For the last five years trains between Edinburgh and London

on the East Coast Main Line have been publicly run, with more services and profits retained for public benefit. I've been campaigning against David Cameron's plans to re-privatise the line in February next year.'

'It's therefore hugely disappointing that the SNP have followed the Tories' lead by insisting that the Scotrail franchise should remain in the private sector.'

'With the ability to delay the contract award already devolved to the Scottish Parliament and the ability to introduce a public sector operator set to follow, Keith Brown had a real opportunity to use this combination of powers for the benefit of passengers. Today's award shows that he's only interested in powers for powers' sake.'