
From: Leanne Maberley
Sent: 16 May 2008 15:40
To: Rob Munn; Gordon Munro; Marjorie Thomas; Angela Blacklock; Deidre Brock; Maggie Chapman; Louise Lang; Phil Wheeler ; Tom Buchanan; Jenny Dawe
Cc: Lynn McMath; Mike Connelly; David Haxton; Duncan Fraser; Marshall Poulton; Dave Anderson; Colin McLauchlan; Isabell Reid; John Jenkins
Subject: LEITH TRAM UPDATE
Attachments: Tram Fact Sheet - May 2008.pdf

Dear Councillor

LEITH WALK TRAMS UPDATE

- 1) Attached is the **latest tram factsheet** - 10,000 are being distributed from today
- 2) There are currently discussions ongoing **re. diverting traffic from the northbound carriageway of Leith Walk** - you may have seen an article in the Evening News recently. Plans are still not confirmed as modelling and analysis of phasing of works is still taking place to ensure that traffic flows smoothly. There is another meeting next week on this so we will hopefully be in a position to update you then.
- 3) Following issues being raised in business surgery, attended by several Leith Walk traders, and the subsequent inaugural meeting of the **Leith Walk and Constitution Street Traders' Association**, Cllr Dawe arranged an urgent meeting to see how the Council could alleviate some of the problems faced by traders. Below are the key outcomes:

Business rates support: the Director of Finance is looking at other possible rating reliefs and any other forms of assistance that may be helpful in assisting traders through this exceptionally difficult period. For most small businesses in Leith Walk (Rateable Value up to £8,000) the new Small Business Bonus Scheme (SBBS) will be able to provide 80% relief of rates in 2008/09. The Council is actively working to ensure small businesses apply for this relief. The Director of Finance will, amongst other things, consider the impact of also awarding additional rates relief on the grounds of hardship. It is important to recognise the limitations of hardship relief however. In the case of Leith Walk it is currently estimated that 81 of the 154 retail premises will qualify for 80% relief under SBBS. This leaves only 20% of the rating liability available for hardship relief. For a shop with a Rateable Value of £6,400 the maximum amount available under hardship relief is only £586.

Small business support scheme. The scheme has been extended to include businesses located on side streets up to 100 metres from the works and **tie** are currently considering how this could be applied more widely. **tie** are considering if the scheme could be applied in some form to franchise holders in addition to business owners. This could be undertaken through looking at VAT registrations etc and, of course, you will be kept advised of progress on this issue.

Communications. It has been re-iterated to tie the importance of keeping businesses and residents informed. It should be noted that the Tram Construction Advisors have had over 4000 face to face contacts with businesses and residents in Leith - these range from quick 5 minute 'hellos' to longer meetings. 35,000 information packs and letters have gone out advising people of works and diversions. Separately 15,000 factsheets have been distributed since Feb 08 and another 10,000 of the attached factsheet are being distributed from today. A rep from tie is meeting with Gordon Burgess, Chair of the new Association next week.

The new tram information boards are now up on Leith Walk and other areas. These contain a space where notices and updates can be posted.

This week, members of the new Association met with Burt Greener PR and Graham Birse of Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce to discuss potential 'open for business' marketing. In addition to the 'open for business' marketing team proposing ideas, we are encouraging 'home grown' proposals from the Association that might help promote the area. We will look favourably at funding any marketing suggestions. Currently we have scheduled a four-page Evening News supplement (which will also feature the west end) ; Radio Forth promotions and shopping feature in Edinburgh Outlook – our Council newspaper.

Tables and Chairs Permits Applications for permits around tram work sites will be treated sensitively. Affected businesses with current permits can apply for a refund. Letters will be sent to all tables and chairs permit holders in Leith Walk advising them that they may be entitled to a partial refund for the portion of last year they were unable to occupy the pavement. The permits for tables and chairs last for either six months or one year from the date of award. No fee is due until the permit is awarded. A permit for this year would not be granted, until the ongoing works adjacent to the property had been completed. If works were to progress away from a property and would not return for some time, then a temporary permit could be issued.

Parking. Where practical, provision for taxis, disabled spaces etc has been retained alongside the tram works as near to businesses as possible. General parking is however harder to provide due to limitations on available space.

The provision of additional parking facilities at Leith Garage, Old Royal High School, Leith Water World and other council owned properties in the vicinity of Leith Walk is being investigated and once we are clear on this matter we will advise you as a matter of priority. In addition It has been stressed to contractors that on-site parking is to be limited to essential vehicles only.

We have also been made aware of parking issues around Garlands Florist and Elm Row. One of our Parking Officers will visit them on site. He will talk them through the current enforcement regime and discuss with them what we can do to address their current difficulties. In the very short term, he will also instruct the parking contractor to ensure that Elm Row receives extra attention.

Given the city's limited kerb space, finding the balance between the needs of businesses and local residents can be challenging but I do believe that these meetings will help our mutual understanding of the issues in Elm Row.

Work sites The contractor, Carillion, has been instructed to remove rubbish, check fencing etc on a regular basis. As a result we believe that there has already been a considerable improvement in the condition of Leith Walk. Extended working hours are now being applied over Monday – Saturday in certain areas of the Mudfa works – though this will not be applied across the entire project.

Regards

Leanne

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The new official Edinburgh City Region website www.edinburgh-inspiringcapital.com is now live. Find out all you need to know about living, investing, visiting and studying in the area.

For information on Edinburgh's forthcoming tram network see www.tramsforedinburgh.com

For news, views and statistics about Edinburgh's economy see www.capitalreview.co.uk