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Edinburgh Trams: Full speed test carried out

Contractors have successfully run an Edinburgh Tram at full speed as part of a process to ensure the system is ready for service in summer 2014.

The tram runs and system tests were the final part the development of the Gogar section of the route.

The 2.8km stretch will be handed over by contractors to the council in March following testing and commissioning.

Edinburgh Council's transport convener Lesley Hinds and Transport Minister Keith Brown watched the tests.

The tests happened at the Gogar Farm Crossing at 09:00.

Mrs Hinds said: "Much progress has been made in 2012 with bridges built, tram stops completed, miles of track laid and, most importantly, the project remains on track to hit the revised budget and timeframe.

"On-street works in the city centre will continue next year of course, but we are doing everything possible to limit disruption.

"Our team will stay in close contact with residents and businesses so they have the information they need to limit the impact of the works."

She added: "We are now nearing later stages of this most challenging of projects. I want to assure people that every last element of it is being closely managed by the project team - everyone involved is ready for this next crucial year as we drive hard towards completion."

Transport Minister Keith Brown said: "The good progress made since the contractual disputes were resolved last year is now hopefully clear for all to see.

"While the project has caused disruption for some people in Edinburgh, their patience is starting to pay off.

"It will also bring major benefits for the rest of Scotland's transport network.

"The Airport tram stop, combined with the Edinburgh Gateway rail-tram interchange, refurbished Haymarket Station and existing station at Edinburgh Park, will provide better links and more options with the rail network, Edinburgh Airport and other key transport hubs."

Contractors will continue works until Friday and will resume on Monday 7 January.

The tram project remains in line with the revised budget (£776m) approved by the council in September 2011.

Passenger services are expected to run by summer 2014 and it is anticipated that full route tram testing will take place from Edinburgh Airport to York Place in late Spring 2014.

