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## **Transport for Edinburgh: New body to oversee trams and buses**

**A new organisation called Transport for Edinburgh is to oversee the capital's tram and bus services.**

Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams will be brought together under the new integrated transport operator.

Its predecessor, Transport Initiatives Edinburgh, faced widespread criticism over its handling of the tram project and the size of salaries paid to staff.

The council also said that next month it would reveal the operating start date for the controversial tram line.

The new body will also have responsibility for other forms of travel, including cycling and walking.

Lesley Hinds, Edinburgh Council's transport convener, said Transport for Edinburgh would not be an expensive, new quango.

### **Staff expertise**

Mrs Hinds said it would instead draw on the expertise of staff already working for the bus and tram companies, as well as the council itself.

She told BBC Scotland News: "Our first priority will be integration between bus and tram services and we will have the executive directors of Lothian Buses on the board of the new organisation.

"We must make sure that people can move easily between bus and tram, and tram and bus."

Mrs Hinds has also repeated her assurance the launch date for the new tram service would be revealed next month.

The project is years behind schedule and millions of pounds over its original budget.

Edinburgh City Council said it was confident it could meet the revised budget of £776m and the latest target of having the tram line operating before summer 2014.