

## Cracks in concrete 'will not delay tram opening'



The Edinburgh tram "network" was meant to open in July 2011 David Cheskin/FA

City officials have insisted that testing of Edinburgh's £776 million tram system will not be further delayed by the appearance of cracks in concrete supporting a section of the line.

The apparent defects were discovered in an elevated section of the track near the Edinburgh Park tram stop, soon after the first testing of the line had taken place.

Professor Lewis Lesley, technical director of Trampower, a light rail company, suggested that expansion joints had not been added to the concrete.

"What will happen is the reinforcement wires will rust and then the concrete will break apart," said Professor Lesley. "It's clearly going to be a maintenance problem.

"They would need to check for any further cracks and fill them with an epoxy cement grout, but it indicates that this is a bit of a rushed job and they didn't quite get it right."

The Edinburgh tram "network" was meant to open in July 2011, at a cost of £550 million, and run from Newhaven to Edinburgh Airport. However, it actually runs two thirds of the original route and is 50 per cent over budget.

Full tram testing is due to take place in December before the opening of the line in May next year. A council official said that the cracking would not delay either event.

A City of Edinburgh Councils spokesman said: "Cracking within concrete is common and the majority of cracks, such as this one, have no structural influence on performance.

"The contractor and CEC have a monitoring process in place for such items and, of course, all aspects of the tram system will be thoroughly tested and checked before we go into operation."

Roadworks associated with the trams will be cleared from the city centre by the end of this week, the official said.

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