



March 2013

## Castlebrae High School



Deciding whether or not to close a school is one of the most challenging decisions that most of us will have to face in our role as Councillors.

Following an extensive consultation, officers of the Council are recommending that we close Castlebrae High School in June this year, primarily because the quality of the education. We will have to thoroughly consider the [200 page report](#) to carefully weigh up and decide what is best for the educational needs of the children as well as the longer term future of the area.

The Capital Coalition is taking time to consider the detailed contents of this lengthy report and discuss with interested parties, including those campaigning to keep the school open, before making a decision at the Council meeting on 14 March.

Whatever the outcome, we are absolutely committed to building a new school in the Craigmillar area (predicted completion in autumn 2020) - and have already allocated £618k of early funding for the start of the design stage in 2017. We realise that the successful regeneration of Craigmillar relies in part on the commitment to a new school and the creation of a safe, family-friendly environment.

Cllr Andrew Burns

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## Another step closer to Zero Waste

We have just agreed a long-term contract with Alauna Renewable Energy (ARE) to build and operate a state-of-the-art food waste recycling facility on behalf of the Council, through its successful [Zero Waste](#) partnership with Midlothian Council.

I think this is a major achievement as it enables us to provide a local, long-term solution for recycling food waste at a competitive price. It will also help us continue to increase recycling levels, reduce the amount of waste buried at landfill sites, meet greenhouse gas targets and continue to attract new investment to Edinburgh.

This is the first collaborative waste project of its kind in Scotland and will be based near Millerhill in Midlothian. Together with Midlothian Council, we are leading the way with a partnership that will see food waste collected in both areas recycled to produce renewable electricity, as well as a fertiliser for local farms.

The Zero Waste Project is also midway-through procurement for a facility to recycle all the black bag waste that can't be sorted at the kerbside.

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## Tram Update

The tram project continues to progress well, in line with the revised schedule and budget. The first completed section of the track has now been officially handed over to the Council after successful testing by the contractor, marking an important milestone for the project. The 2.8km stretch of track between the Gogar depot and Edinburgh International Airport has been subject to extensive testing and commissioning which began in November 2012 and will now be used for driver training.

The [latest picture](#) update highlighting the progress made is now available.

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## Fresh Start – Shared Repair Service

In response to public consultation, a newly designed [Shared Repair Service](#) will be phased in from 2 April to provide guidance to help home owners in shared buildings maintain their properties. This will replace the Property Conservation Service that has been the subject of significant financial and service concerns. The investigations and remedial action into historical problems will continue, but going forward, we want to offer a more customer focused service.

The new service will continue to provide an all year round, much-valued emergency response service to help owners make their properties safe if they pose a danger to public safety.

There will also be a [new advice and information service](#) providing guidance to support owners to make the right choices and take responsibility for maintaining their own properties. Information will be available on

the services provided by property factors, property management agencies and also how to organise shared repairs using the Tenement Management Scheme.

The Council's statutory powers to compel building repairs will remain but will only be used as a last resort.

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## Partnership in action

The Council recently agreed to the distribution of around £22.9m to over [220 third sector and cultural and sporting organisations](#) in the city. This is a significant amount and shows that partnership working is at the core of the Capital Coalition's contract with the capital.

This funding is a central component to meeting the operational costs of these important sectors which contribute to the city's economic and social wellbeing. I appreciate how much the Third Sector contributes to the quality of life in Edinburgh as well as their overall economic contribution of around £101m bringing in over £8.00 for every Council pound invested.

As well as that, volunteers provide over 730 thousand hours of unpaid service. Based on the average Edinburgh wage of around £13 per hour, this provides an annual economic equivalent impact of around £9.5m to the city. I can't say enough about our appreciation of the role of volunteers. The recipients of funds they raise and the people they help directly are of course the first to express their appreciation, but often the contribution from volunteers is quietly provided and therefore not visible to most of us.

It is in this spirit that we have decided to review the process for grants to third parties during 2013/14, in partnership with the third sector and other stakeholders, to ensure financial stability for organisations and value for money for the Council.

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