

Leader's Report

City of Edinburgh Council
2 February 2012

1 Severe Weather

Following the severe gales on 3 January 2012, over 100 Council buildings were damaged, roads were blocked due to fallen trees, and many privately owned properties suffered serious damage. Council teams have been working hard to assess and repair the damage.

One of the most serious incidents is Kaimes Special School where the building housing senior students suffered severe damage to the roof and its interior. Thankfully, almost all the furniture and equipment was saved from damage by moving it to parts of the building which remained dry. Pupils were moved from the Kaimes building to temporary premises at the former Fort Primary School within a week and a half. This required a considerable amount of alteration and adaptation. I would like to thank all those who worked to ensure alternative arrangements were in place so that the pupils could move into the former Fort Primary building on 16 January. Any move at short notice is difficult and for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder change can be even more challenging. My thanks to Kath Togneri and her staff at Kaimes School for managing this transition.

Council homes suffered a significant increase in roof damage, with the property conservation service attending to over 160 incidents, including falling masonry, dangerous roofs and chimneys. The Forestry Team is still clearing uprooted trees, fallen branches and wind woodland.

The speed with which staff provided help and assistance deserves to be recognised and I would like to thank everyone involved for their commitment and hard work to get the city back to normal.

2 Edinburgh Partnership Annual Report

The Edinburgh Partnership report for 2010/11 has been published. Joint working by partners has achieved positive outcomes in our five priority areas: health and wellbeing, services for children, community safety, the economy, and environmental sustainability. Successes include reduced rates of teenage pregnancy; improvements attainment levels of primary and secondary school pupils; a continuing reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions; improved access to affordable housing and increased recycling The report is available at [communityplanning](#).

3 Edinburgh's Christmas and Hogmanay

We have had another successful Edinburgh Christmas and Hogmanay, which together attracted tens of thousands of visitors into the city. The spectacular Light Night and the return of the Ice Rink, the Edinburgh Wheel, and the nativity carol concert, The Great Edinburgh Santa Run, German Market and the Highland Village Market ensured that the city sparkled.

Edinburgh's world famous Hogmanay celebrations once again showed the world how to party. A record-breaking Torchlight Procession on the 30th December was followed by the street party and Concert in the Gardens, which bade farewell to the old year and welcomed in 2012. The midnight fireworks were spectacular, heralding the start of the Olympic year.

On 1 January, residents and visitors were invited to follow the traditional Loony Dook in the Forth, in which 1,000 people participated, by taking part in Edinburgh's first ever New Year Games. This event took place in the Grassmarket, St Giles' Cathedral, Dance Base, the Hub and the National Museum of Scotland. The crowds displayed great enthusiasm for their teams, the Uppies and the Doonies. Congratulations to the Doonies on their victory!

Princes Street hosted festive events following the suspension of the tram works as part of the Open for Business initiative. Activities included a snow sports festival, live ice-sculpting, an opportunity to meet reindeer, horse and carriage rides, the Santa Fun Run, Christmas Markets and a host of choirs and entertainers. Meanwhile, iconic buildings in the city centre were illuminated with festive lighting which added to the atmosphere.

The Usher Hall's seasonal performances were well received by audiences with high ticket sales for the Children's Classic Concerts, the RSNO's Christmas Concert, the Scottish Fiddle Orchestra's Hogmanay Celebration and John Wilson & the John Wilson Orchestra.

4 Edinburgh Tram

Major works are now underway across the length of the route from Edinburgh Airport through Haymarket and to St Andrew Square. Princes Street will be completed ahead of schedule in June, while St. Andrew Square should be clear by Christmas 2012

The project has gained fresh momentum due to the close working relationship between the Council, contractors and Transport Scotland. The construction process is under constant review and if we can do something more efficiently, we will. I am now confident that the project will be completed by 2014 as planned.

5 Promoting Culture, Leisure and Sport

On 7 January Edinburgh once again hosted the Great Edinburgh Cross Country and Great Winter Run races. Holyrood Park provided a fabulous backdrop to the day's athletics, which were broadcast live on BBC 2. The Great Edinburgh Cross Country was the first athletics event in Britain's Olympic year, and is the most prestigious cross country race in the world this

year. Three current Olympic champions took part, including the legendary Kennenisa Bekele, who famously won the World Cross Country Championships in 2008 on this course despite losing one of his shoes. This time however, Bekele was not in top form and lost to Asbel Kiprop in the 3km.

The Great Winter Run is the accompanying 5k road race which is open to all, and also attracted a high level of participants of all ages and abilities for the first race of 2012. There were also junior and inter-district races to complete the day's programme. Events like this present an excellent opportunity to showcase Edinburgh as a city which stages world-class sporting action in a fabulous location.

6 Supporting Edinburgh's Economic Competitiveness

Cities Outlook 2012

The Centre for Cities report, [Cities Outlook 2012](#), was published on the 23 January. The 2011 report identified Edinburgh and the other major Scottish cities as being in better shape to avoid a double-dip recession than cities elsewhere in the UK, and this broadly continues in 2012, with the report focusing on the unemployment challenge and regional economies.

Highlights for Edinburgh in the report include:

- Outwith the Southeast of England Edinburgh, along with Aberdeen, retain the highest concentration of skills in the workforce, with a higher concentration of jobs in knowledge intensive services;
- Edinburgh has the third highest percentage of residents with a high level qualification, only exceeded by Oxford and Cambridge;
- Edinburgh is noted for having an employment rate above the national average, Bristol being the only other city in a similar position;
- Housing supply as an indicator of economic health sees Edinburgh the only city in the top ten outside the Southeast of England;
- However, economic inequality remains an issue for Edinburgh given the gap between those in employment and those claiming benefit.

Enterprise Areas

On 17 January the Scottish Government announced four Enterprise Areas across 14 sites, with Edinburgh being identified as part of the 'Scotland Low Carbon / Renewables East Enterprise Area' at the Port of Leith.

This site has been identified by Scottish Government as providing uninterrupted access to the Forth estuary and North Sea. It has been identified as a National Renewables Infrastructure Plan key site offering significant opportunities to develop an offshore wind sector supply chain, especially given the 60 hectare site is the largest potential development area across all Scottish east coast ports. The Council looks forward to continuing working with Scottish Government and stakeholders to deliver this national vision of Leith as a Renewables Hub. Further details at: [Enterprise Areas](#).

Marketing Edinburgh

2011 was a very successful year for filming in the city. Over 350 individual projects including 8 feature films and 7 TV dramas plus documentaries, light

entertainment shows, stills photography and commercials gave Edinburgh and the city region a significant profile around the world. Between them these productions shot for the equivalent of 1042 days and contributed an estimated £3.8 million to the local economy.

2012 is already looking busy with early highlights including the Scottish auditions for Britain's Got Talent at the Festival Theatre on 11th February.

Edinburgh International Science Festival

I am pleased that the Edinburgh International Science Festival has been successful as principal programming partner of the first science festival in Abu Dhabi last month. Their team of 60 trained 500 local undergraduates as science communicators, staged 20 of their own events and commissioned attractions from around the world. Over 60,000 children and families enjoyed informal science learning experiences, including interactive exhibits, workshops and spectacular shows – many on the beach. Amongst the visitors were the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and members of the royal family.

7 Working with Communities

Drumrae Library Hub

I am delighted that the £5.7 million new library hub is opening to the public on Tuesday 31 January. The Hub brings together a variety of services under one roof making it easier for the public to contact us and use their local services. There is a fantastic new library for the area, access to Council services and the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, a café area, community meetings rooms and a day care centre. Staff have been working with the community to make sure the building reflects the hopes and aspirations of local people. The Drumrae Library Hub is the first of a series of facilities to be built across South East Scotland by hub South East Scotland, the public/private development company created to deliver community facilities throughout Lothians and the Borders.

Tweet on the Beat

Within neighbourhoods, there are teams and individuals out and about everyday. However, for many, the only time members of the public are aware of the work carried out is when help is needed. On 5 January, South West Environmental Wardens used social media to let residents see the challenges and successes that the team faces everyday. Using Twitter, residents got updates, asked questions and reported issues, all responded to in real time.

Best Bar None

The Licensing Enforcement team and the Police have concluded a pilot of the Best Bar None national accreditation scheme. Supported by the Scottish Business Crime Centre the scheme aims to improve standards in the licensed trade and promote positive relations with partnership agencies. This leads to better run licensed premises and fewer incidents of anti social behaviour. Leith was chosen for the pilot and 30 licensed premises completed the process. Teams of Licensing Standards Officers and Police Officers provided advice and guidance before inspecting all of those participating premises. 21 premises were successfully accredited with 2 Gold Awards, 10 Silver and 9 Bronze and were presented at the City Chambers on 20 January.

East Neighbourhood Office and Library

Anyone who has passed through Craigmillar recently will have seen real progress in the construction of the new East Neighbourhood Office and Library. This building is contributing greatly to the regeneration of the area and the library will act as a community hub providing a range of activities and facilities. The building is on track, on budget and will open at the end of the 2012. This will deliver services in new ways to meet local needs.

Royston / Wardieburn Community Centre

On 16 January 2012 the new Royston / Wardieburn Community Centre was officially opened. The original building was state of the art in 1965. Now, the new building boasts state of the art facilities with an ICT suite, meeting rooms, a kitchen / cafeteria and large games hall. The local community have produced a film of the history of the centre and this was shown at the opening. The Royal Scottish National Orchestra welcomed guests and the community was well represented amongst those who attended.

8 A Clean, Green, Safe and Environmentally Sustainable City

Recycling Games

Waste Staff have developed three [games](#) to keep you up to date about what can be recycled in the garden waste recycling, red and blue box collections and in the paper and packaging banks. The games are designed to be fun and informative and suit all ages.

Food Waste Success

On Monday 2 January 8.62 tonnes of food waste was collected from 45,000 households who receive a kerbside collection. A typical Monday food waste collection is normally in the region of 6 tonnes. Food waste collections will be rolled out across the city this year.

9 Developing the City

SOCO - Cowgate

At the end of last year the Council approved proposals for a new hotel with bar, restaurant, cafe, retail, commercial and nightclub uses for the Cowgate fire-site (SOCO). I look forward to this complex site being redeveloped to provide a mix of uses which will complement existing activities in the area and will improve the appearance of this part of the Old Town.

Primark

The opening of the new Primark store on Princes Street before Christmas has been a boost to the retail offer in the city centre and is undoubtedly attracting shoppers to the city centre. The striking new building makes a positive contribution to the mix of architectural styles on Princes Street and creates an important link between Princes Street and Rose Street.

The Royal Mile Project

As part of the Royal Mile Project, the Council held a design workshop in mid-January to look at the many issues facing this world-renowned street. The event featured presentations from Diarmaid Lawlor (Head of Urbanism,

Architecture + Design Scotland) and James Rebanks (Cultural and Heritage analyst). The event was attended by a wide variety of people with an interest in the Royal Mile including traders, businesses, residents, Councillors and relevant Council representatives.

The event attracted substantial interest and the actions that emerged from the event will now be taken forward to enhance the street. The Council is committed to working with others to make the Royal Mile an even better place than it is at present for all those who live in, work in and visit the street. More details on the project can be found at [Royal Mile Project](#).

There have been a number of press articles recently regarding the shops owned by the Council on the Royal Mile. The Council owns 46 shops on the Royal Mile, stretching from Lawnmarket to the bottom of Canongate. Of these, 43 are currently let to a wide variety of businesses offering a range of goods from general groceries to specialist whiskies.

The latest shop to be marketed for lease by the Council received fourteen offers demonstrating that traders are still keen to have a presence on this fabulous street, even in today's difficult retail circumstances. In addition, the work to improve the overall environment of the Royal Mile can only serve to further enhance retailer interest in the future.

Building Improvements in Leith

The Heritage Lottery Fund has approved a final tranche of grant money for the Leith Townscape Heritage Initiative. The project is now in its fifth and final year. An additional £100,000 is being made available for each of the shopfront grant schemes and the building restoration grant scheme. The eligible area is bounded by Great Junction Street, Duke Street, Constitution Street, Bernard Street and the Shore. Grants cover up to 75% of eligible works for external improvements and the maximum sum offered for each property is £15,000. Shop owners are able to apply for grants to re-instate traditional shopfronts and residents can apply to reinstate traditional features such as timber sash & case windows. Details are available at [Townscape Heritage Initiative](#).

10 Providing Safe, Warm and Affordable Homes

Houses in Multiple Occupation

The Council's role in maintaining a high level of safety and security for tenants in the private rented sector is extremely important. The licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) is a key element to ensure the quality of accommodation. An Edinburgh landlord has recently been fined £1,000 for not having the correct licence in place and failing to meet the "fit and proper person" criteria. Council teams working in this sector will continue to be vigilant and pro-active to ensure action is taken when necessary

First Tenants in New Council Homes

The first tenants in a generation to move into the new Council homes will do so at Gracemount in February. The homes part of the £250m, 21st Century Homes for Edinburgh programme, comprise flats and colony style apartments and are spacious, modern and heat efficient. This is a significant milestone in the Council's affordable house building programme.

11 Investing in our Children and Schools

Leith Academy 'Fit for Girls'

Sportscotland's 'Fit for Girls' initiative, which has been piloted in Leith Academy, has attracted substantial media interest. This project, aimed at encouraging teenage girls into physical activity, has been a venture between Sportscotland, Leith Academy and Active Schools staff. The initiative has seen the introduction of a dance studio to provide a wider range of activities including boxercise, dance and zumba.

The extra-curricular programme, Just for Girls, has also been successful by providing swimming, fitness and dance. The choices were decided by the girls giving them ownership of the programme. Senior female pupils assist in After School Clubs and are good role models for younger pupils.

Positive Destinations for School Leavers

Positive destination figures for leavers from Edinburgh schools are the best they have been in a decade. The % unemployed seeking work has fallen to its lowest level reported and four of our schools have improved their outcomes by more than 10%. Last year 3029 leavers (87.4%) moved into education, employment or training. That means this Council is doing better in the current difficult climate than Aberdeen and Glasgow and has moved from 32 to 25 in comparison with other local authorities.

Across all of our schools there is a strong focus on improving positive destinations. For each school, Depute Head Teachers lead 16+ Learning Choices groups bringing together Skills Development Scotland, Community Learning and Development and voluntary sector partners to put in place additional support and provision for those young people most at risk.

Increasingly, schools are developing their partnerships with businesses to provide employability skills and post school employment opportunities. Recent partnerships include: The Lloyds Banking Group who have teamed up with James Gillespie's and Tynecastle High Schools to deliver five workshops giving insight into the financial sector and key employability skills; Edinburgh's Chamber of Commerce working with Leith Academy and Gracemount High School preparing 4th year pupils for work; and The Career Academies providing twenty S4 and S5 pupils from Gracemount, Tynecastle and Liberton High Schools with mentoring and paid placements in the financial sector.

Our vision for Edinburgh is that all young people move into a positive destination on leaving school. Despite our improving figures, 394 young people did not secure a positive destination this year. The Edinburgh Guarantee, led by the Council, brings together public and private sector partners to generate employment, learning and training opportunities. Under the Guarantee training and employment opportunities have already been secured including 12 paid placements at Standard Life, 50 new modern apprenticeships and 80 training places in the Council. The Edinburgh Guarantee is producing real opportunities for young people which will build on current momentum and deliver positive destinations for young people. For more information contact edinburghguarantee@edinburgh.gov.uk.

Heritage Skills Training

Nine young people, currently on the Getting Ready for Work course run by Capital Skills, have secured places on a training course in Heritage Skills at Telford College commencing at the end of January. They will learn a variety of skills including the use of mortars, traditional repairs, pointing, harling, limewashing and traditional window repairs. The 16 day course is funded by Heritage Lottery Fund through the Leith Townscape Heritage Initiative.

Young Consumer of the Year

The Edinburgh Final of the Young Consumer of the Year competition took place on 14th December. Boroughmuir High School took first place and will now represent Edinburgh at the Scottish final in March. The competition tests knowledge on consumer, finance and health and safety issues.

Young People Debate Edinburgh's Priorities

Thirty young people aged 11 – 21 from across Edinburgh came together on 18 January to have their say on future priorities for the city. Over 70 ideas were generated and prioritised. The key themes that emerged were encouraging more volunteering, developing relationships between old and young, more leisure opportunities for young people, and pay freezes. The suggestions will be fed into the budget planning process.

12 Visit to Leith Gurdwara

On the 16 January 2012 the Council's Chief Executive and I visited the Edinburgh Sikh Gurdwara in Leith. It was of great interest to hear about the development of the Gurdwara and discuss matters affecting the Sikh community in Edinburgh. Following our visit, an action plan has been developed to address Gurdwara development, access to community halls, engagement with the local neighbourhood partnership and support for festivals and civic events. Over the forthcoming months we plan to strengthen our links to communities of faith and belief through visits to Edinburgh Churches Together and Blackhall Mosque.

13 Max Thomson

It was with great sadness that I learned of the untimely death of Max Thomson, Public Transport and Accessibility Manager. I extend sincere condolences to Max's family, colleagues and friends in their devastation at Max's death.

**Councillor Jenny Dawe
Leader City of Edinburgh Council**