

Leader's Report

City of Edinburgh Council
22 December 2011

1 Supporting Edinburgh's Economic Competitiveness

Edinburgh Guarantee

The economic slowdown has had a major impact on 16 – 24 year olds with reduced opportunities and increased competition for jobs. The Council has instigated a cross-partner action – the [Edinburgh Guarantee](#). Working with the public, private and voluntary sectors, the Edinburgh Guarantee initiative seeks to increase the number of jobs, education or training opportunities being made available to young people.

A breakfast debate on 8 December, sponsored by JP Morgan, brought together over 100 individuals from Edinburgh based businesses and organisations to encourage participation in the Edinburgh Guarantee and identify ways of taking the initiative forward in 2012. I was very encouraged by the ideas generated and we will be issuing updates on progress throughout the year through our Edinburgh Guarantee monthly newsletter.

If you have any ideas or want to discuss how your business can help provide support please contact edinburghguarantee@edinburgh.gov.uk.

Edinburgh Sparkles

The Edinburgh Sparkles promotional campaign features television advertising for the first time this year – as well as advertising on radio, in the press and outdoors on bus sides and large scale poster sites, a few of which have even featured actual sparkles created by the inclusion of LED lights. The campaign continues to promote the city as a destination for shopping and leisure focussing on the festive events on and around Princes Street as an additional incentive – and will also include reference to our newest residents, Tian Tian (Sweetie) and Yang Guang (Sunshine) who arrived from China on 4 December and have settled well in to their new Edinburgh home.

Edinburgh's Hogmanay

Preparations are in full swing for Edinburgh's Hogmanay. The three days of celebration are important to Edinburgh as they provide a major boost to the local economy and results in world wide coverage for the city.

Tickets for Edinburgh's world famous street party on 31 December are on sale. This year's programme is the biggest yet and the night will climax with the world's largest Auld Lang Syne and a spectacular firework display.

Revellers are also invited to come and play on 1st January at The New Year Games which take place on 1 January in the Grassmarket and around the Old

Town. Two teams – the Uppies and Doonies – will play games in venues, including Dancebase, The Hub, St Giles Cathedral and the National Museum of Scotland. Giant board games, re-imagined classics, secret missions and a huge playground in the Grassmarket are available for residents and visitors to play, participate or just spectate in a fun-filled afternoon of mental stimulation and physical challenges. Details are available at: www.edinburghshogmanay.com

2 Local Government Finances

Scottish Settlement – Implications for Edinburgh

The Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 8 December confirmed the central government funding for the Council in 2012/13 and provided indicative figures for the next two years. Edinburgh's allocation has been significantly boosted by the Scottish Government deciding that no council should receive less than 85% of the average per capita grant for Scotland. This has increased our revenue grant from 2012/13 by £22 million.

While this funding will ensure some stability in next year's revenue budget, significant budgetary challenges requiring difficult decisions nonetheless remain. In addition, services need to ensure that those savings previously approved in February 2011 are delivered. Continuing to scrutinise and challenge the way in which all its services are delivered will allow the Council to build on its strategy of redirecting resources to where they are most needed, in particular to meet additional service demand resulting from changes in the profile of the city's population. The findings of the recent public consultation events will play a crucial role in informing the way in which the Council addresses these challenges.

Lothian Pension Fund

Lothian Pension Fund and the Lothian Buses Pension Fund won Funds of the Year awards in their respective categories at the Local Government Chronicle Investment Awards. The Awards recognise best practice and innovation within the local authority pensions and investment sector. This is an excellent achievement and my congratulations go to all those involved.

3 Providing for Residents

Winter Weather Arrangements

Winter is now upon us and the Council's winter maintenance plans have already been mobilised. Following a comprehensive review of the Council's winter maintenance provision undertaken throughout 2011 revised gritting routes, additional machinery/equipment and significantly increased salt supplies are in storage. One of the improvements is the greater coverage of pavements by our fleet of 20 mini tractors. This was highlighted as a key concern by the public consultation element of the review. Information is available at [winterweather](#) where you can find an interactive gritting map and also a short video explaining some of the ways we can prepare for winter.

Drumrae Library Hub

The Drumrae Library Hub was officially handed over to the Council on 29th November 2011. The West Neighbourhood team moved into their new office

space within the new facility on 9 December. The Hub has also welcomed a number of visitors for tours of the new facility over the past few weeks, including Lothian and Borders Police Chief Constable and Chair of the Edinburgh Tenants Federation.

Morningside Library

Morningside Library reopened on 15 December after major refurbishment works. The services offered have also been extended. More than 800 local people gave their views, helping to shape the service improvements that include meeting spaces, an IT learning area and public toilets.

£12m Healthy Living Centre in Westerhailes

Work will start in January on the Westerhailes Healthy Living Centre, a joint development between the Council and NHS Lothian. This £12 million facility will include a medical practice, a range of community health services and staff from Health and Social Care, Children and Families and the Wester Hailes Health Agency. This project is being delivered by hub South East Scotland Ltd and is scheduled to open in September 2013.

4 Looking After Edinburgh

Key Milestones for Development Plans

The Strategic Development Planning Authority for Edinburgh and South East Scotland's (SESplan) proposed [Strategic Development Plan](#), open for representations to 19 December, presents a vision of how the Edinburgh city region will grow and how that growth will be supported by infrastructure. It sets out strategic policies covering topics including strategic housing, employment land, town centres and retailing, minerals, green belts and green networks. In early 2012 the six SESplan councils will review all the representations and consider how to respond. The Proposed Plan will be submitted to Scottish Ministers in mid 2012, with an independent public examination expected late 2012 and ministerial approval early to mid 2013.

The Council's new [Edinburgh Local Development Plan](#) has also successfully reached one of its key targets. A Main Issues Report (MIR) was published in late October and an extensive public consultation exercise is underway until the end of January. The MIR presents a series of issues and choices across a diverse range of topics to help guide Edinburgh's future. These include housing, infrastructure, shopping and climate change measures. Don't miss your chance to have your say by viewing the MIR, attending consultation events in your area and submitting your views at [MIR](#)

The Royal Mile Project

The Council is in the early stages of a project to deliver improvements in the day-to-day workings of the Royal Mile, and to make the most of this fantastic street. Discussions have commenced with stakeholders to identify the main issues that the project will tackle. A design workshop will be held in January 2012 to bring together all the stakeholders to develop solutions. I am delighted that the project has received such strong support and engagement from officers across the Council, and look forward to seeing a truly corporate project coming to fruition. Project information is available on the [Royal Mile](#)

Edinburgh Canal Strategy

Since its rebirth as part of the Millennium Link Project, the Union Canal has come a long way from a derelict backwater to one of Edinburgh's most important assets. The Canal is now enjoyed by people from across the city and beyond for boating, rowing, walking, and cycling and is also a focus for new developments including moorings, marinas, and other activities.

However, as the canal is developed, it must also be protected and its potential maximised for the benefit of the wider community and the environment. To help guide its development, the Council and British Waterways have prepared a strategy which is supported by a Delivery Plan which identifies opportunities.

The strategy and plan is a major milestone in the renaissance of the two hundred year old canal and will create a desirable and sustainable waterway.

World Heritage Cities

In October the Polish Cultural Festival Association, Edinburgh World Heritage, Krakow City Council and the City of Edinburgh Council, in partnership with the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland and the University of Edinburgh organised a series of events around a visit by Professor Andrzej Wyżykowski (Head Architect of the City of Kraków) and Stanisław Dziedzic (Director of the Department of Culture and National Heritage in the City of Kraków). These included a meeting to consider planning issues and the experience gained from Edinburgh's involvement with an EU project in Krakow in 1993. An exhibition 'The Architecture of Kraków 2012' also opened, showcasing recent architectural achievements in Kraków.

Southern Arc Area Development Framework

The [draft Southern Arc Area Development Framework](#) (ADF) has been approved by Planning Committee for consultation. The aim is to increase walkability across the area to improve health and wellbeing. The ADF includes projects ranging from a pedestrian crossing on Lothian Road to projects to improve the conditions for cycling and walking. Comments on the [draft ADF](#) can be submitted up to 26 January 2012.

Acheson House

I have previously reported that work to refurbish Acheson House, an A-listed 17th century building adjacent to the Museum of Edinburgh, will allow the museum to extend into this building and open it up to the public for the first time since 1991. I am pleased that the refurbishment is going well, and the arrival of Acheson House's first new occupants, the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, marks an important stage to bring this historic building back to life as part of a revitalised Museum of Edinburgh, which will chart the fascinating development of Scotland's capital city.

5 Providing Safe, Warm and Affordable Homes

21st Century Homes

The first phase of new council homes for rent has been advertised for letting. The homes in Gracemount, part of the £250m 21st Century Homes for Edinburgh programme, comprise flats and colony style apartments. The

homes will be handed over by the building contractor at the end of January allowing the first tenants to move in. This marks a significant milestone in the Council's house building programme, providing affordable housing in the City. The new homes are spacious, modern and will be very cheap to heat.

The Planning Service has also been involved in a number of the sites at Pennywell/Muirhouse, North Sighthill and Gracemount including:

- Pennywell and Muirhouse Central Area Masterplan: a mixed use proposal for new Council, affordable and market housing, a partnership centre for the NHS and Council, the redevelopment of the shopping centre and integration of uses such as the North Edinburgh Arts Centre and Muirhouse Library. Community engagement is being carried out with a planning application expected early 2012;
- Pennywell and North Sighthill Design Guides: design guides are being prepared for these areas to ensure future developments are of a high quality design for both buildings and public realm; and
- West Pilton Crescent: further work is being undertaken to design around 33 new dwellings with a planning application expected in January 2012.

Winter Night Shelters

Bethany Christian Trust and Streetwork have put in place winter contingency arrangements for people who are sleeping rough in extreme weather but under Government rules would not normally have access to services. The arrangements apply when the temperature is below zero and means there is accommodation for this group when the Bethany night shelters are full. So far this year the night shelters have been able to provide an extra safety net for everyone that has needed it. The costs of the contingency are met by the homelessness and commissioning budgets of SfC.

Strategic Housing Investment Plan

The Council is currently consulting on its Strategic Housing Investment Plan after approving record levels of investment in new affordable homes this year. The consultation seeks views on how to maintain the construction of 1,500 affordable homes to buy and rent every year over the next five years.

The Council has strong partnerships with housing associations and house builders in the city. This year we approved more than 1,500 affordable homes. This will generate more than £200m of direct and indirect investment and support around 2,000 jobs. The Council has approved £76m of low cost finance to support housing associations and house builders to build affordable homes and we are committed to building more Council homes.

6 Working with Communities

Liberton & Gilmerton Neighbourhood Partnerships

Liberton & Gilmerton and South Central Neighbourhood Partnership, in conjunction with the local community, are identifying the key priority actions in the Local Community Plans 2011-14.

South Central Neighbourhood Partnership led the way with a community conference on 6 November with more than 80 delegates, including pupils from Boroughmuir High School, discussing the problems caused by the misuse of alcohol. The Partnership is trying to reach out to a wider audience and encourage more people to make their voices heard. A number of actions were agreed which will be included in the Partnership Action Plans.

On 25 November, Liberton/ Gilmerton Neighbourhood Partnership hosted a Youth Engagement Event at Valley Park Community Centre involving 120 people, of which 48 were local young people. Young people used drama, film and presentations to present their views and provoke discussion. In the workshops that followed participants worked alongside the teenagers and identified solutions including improved access to local facilities and activities, engaging young people in decision making, improving green space and parks and increased access to sports/fitness activity. Feedback from the event was very positive. Proposals developed will form an action plan to take forward the priority of positively engaging with young people.

7 Providing a Safer City

Campaign Against Domestic Abuse

The Police have launched a festive operation to target domestic abuse and violence against woman. Operation Auction is a two-month initiative, led by police and supported by the Council and the health and voluntary sectors.

The operation incorporates the International 16 Day of Activism against Gender Violence Campaign and the Scottish Government backed National Antiviolence Campaign (Safer Scotland). As part of Operation Auction, officers will engage with communities to raise awareness of domestic abuse and violence against women and provide advice and guidance. Police will continue to take the necessary action on anyone responsible for domestic abuse or violence against women.

Underage Tobacco Sales

The Council's Trading Standards service has been driving a successful test purchase campaign aimed at reducing sales of tobacco to underage children. Two shops have recently been fined after trained volunteers, aged 16 years old, attempted to purchase cigarettes at various premises across the city. The businesses now face a £200 fixed penalty and if caught again they will face an increased fine of £400 and could be prevented from selling cigarettes.

UKAS Accreditation

The annual audit of Edinburgh Scientific Services carried out in October was completed successfully. All laboratory functions were assessed against international quality standards of performance. The findings of the audit were very positive; the laboratory was commended for the high calibre of staff, excellent performance in independent assessment programmes and for exhibiting best practice in its organisation and procedures. The service can now continue to undertake statutory duties including public analyst and food examiner for public protection; and animal feed stuffs, water supply and asbestos testing. Well done to everyone involved.

Dalmeny Incident

On 14 November a leak of liquid from a pipeline serving the BP oil transfer facility at Dalmeny occurred. The liquid produced a strong odour resulting in a major incident being declared which required responses from a number of agencies. A team of Council staff were on site within the hour and worked alongside police and fire service colleagues manage the situation. The multi agency team approach minimised the impact of the incident thus removing the need for evacuations and other disruptive actions. Thanks to those involved.

8 Writers' Museum

Staff at the Writers' Museum in Lady Stair's Close were delighted to discover the 8th instalment in the book sculpture mystery which has puzzled Edinburgh for months. The first sculpture was discovered in the Scottish Poetry Library in March, and since then, others have been found in the Filmhouse, the National Library, the Scottish Storytelling Centre, the National Museum of Scotland and Central Library. Two pieces were found at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, one of them on the Unesco Edinburgh City of Literature stand. The sculptures have attracted considerable media attention and the online community has commented on these mysterious donations too. One blogger tells the full story of how each piece was found, illustrated with photographs of each sculpture. Well worth a look, the blog can be found at [blog](#)

Several of the sculptures can be viewed by members of the public, including those in the Scottish Poetry Library, the Scottish Storytelling Centre, Central Library and the Writers' Museum. Admission to all these venues is free.

9 Investing in our Children and Schools

Mini - Trials celebrate 10 years

It is a decade since the idea of mini-trials was first mooted. Mini-trials are simulated court cases designed to teach young people about the Scottish legal and courts system. Students take part in a reconstruction of a criminal jury trial convening the court, hearing the evidence and returning their own verdict. From the very beginning the interest from our schools and from all areas of the legal profession has been superb. In the 9 years since the first Edinburgh Mini-Trial Day most Edinburgh City secondary schools have participated. The link between the Council, Lord Kinclaven who created the idea and the legal profession in the city has developed and strengthened.

Children & Families Achievement Awards

The Children and Families Department hosted this annual awards ceremony in the Hub at the end of November. There were a record number of entries this year and the standard was excellent. The winners can be seen at [achievementawards](#)

I would highlight two special award winners – the Convener's Award which went to the Edinburgh Junior Award Scheme. The scheme involves young people setting their own personal targets in any one of four areas: My Interests; Me and My World; Get Active, Stay Active; and Adventure.

The Director's Award went to the Edinburgh Youth Issues Forum which brings together young people to discuss and influence council decisions.

Career Academies

The Career Academies scheme, launched earlier this month, involves three city secondary schools, Forrester High, Liberton High and Tynecastle High working with businesses to give young people an opportunity to their develop employability skills and their confidence in the working environment. This model of 1:1 working and providing work place visits has worked well in England. This pilot will be evaluated to see if it will be worthwhile to roll out across all secondary schools in the City. My thanks to all involved.

Seaview Respite Care Centre

Planning permission has been given for the replacement of the Seaview respite care centre. The replacement of Seaview has been on the capital programme for a number of years but a suitable site has been difficult to find. The new site, which became available as a result of the closure of Lismore Primary School, will see Seaview becoming the anchor for a wider ranging re-energisation of the Bingham area.

John Byrne Award

In this second year of the John Byrne award, 7 city secondary schools gave presentations on values in society through a variety of media. The focus was the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible and pupils were asked to consider the Sermon on the Plain as the stimulus. All entries were exceptional and pupils presented their work through music, art and multimedia. The winning entry was from St Thomas of Aquinas High School where pupils presented a triptych of portraits to represent values across different age ranges. Prize money of £7,000 was awarded to the school to take forward values work within their school community.

The judging panel included John Byrne, Joyce McMillan and Richard Holloway and pupils enjoyed the opportunity to meet the judges and discuss their values through their individual presentations.

FanFare Concert

The annual Fanfare Concert on November 18th 2011 was a huge success and feedback has suggested this year's concert was among the best ever. Around 150 pupils performed at St Paul's and St. Georges Church to an audience of nearly 500. The varied programme featured the Edinburgh Schools Jazz Orchestra, Clarsach Ensemble, Wind Ensemble, Rock Ensemble, Classical Guitar Ensemble, the Edinburgh Secondary Schools Orchestra and a new ensemble from The City of Edinburgh Music School. The success of the concert is due to the talent, dedication and commitment of pupils from across Edinburgh, ably taught by skilled and experienced Instrumental Teachers.

10 Religious Leaders' Conference

On the 28 November I co-chaired the Annual Edinburgh Religious Leaders' Conference with Rabbi David Rose. Over 50 people attended, representing the main faith and belief communities in Edinburgh. As in previous years, it was a unique opportunity to engage with this important sector on a range of topics, including a debate led by the Council's Chief Executive on child poverty, homelessness and vulnerable older people and a presentation by the Lord Advocate on tackling hate crime. Other topics included improvements in

spiritual care within health services and the development of wellbeing indicators in the city. My thanks to the Edinburgh Inter Faith Association for organising this event and for their continued partnership working with the Council on these important matters.

11 Fairtrade

Nominations are being invited for the Lord Provost's Fair Trade Awards 2012 to recognise our citizens and businesses who promote fair trade in Edinburgh. The city's Fairtrade City status has recently been renewed and it is encouraging to note the increasing number of residents of all ages that are engaging with fair trade products and business.

Nomination forms, which should be returned by Friday 20 January, are available from [fairtrade](http://fairtrade.org.uk).

Finally, I wish you all a peaceful and happy Christmas and New Year.

Councillor Jenny Dawe
Leader City of Edinburgh Council