

Leader's Report

City of Edinburgh Council
24 November 2011

1 Budget Consultation 2012/13 – Have Your Say

The City of Edinburgh Council and partner public sector organisations in the city are facing challenging times. To succeed in meeting these, it is vital that the best use is made of all available resources. We are therefore working closely with our partners in the city to ensure our money is spent on achieving good outcomes for our residents and our communities. To help shape the Council's future budget plans, and particularly for 2012/13, we have arranged joint meetings of Neighbourhood Partnerships to obtain views of citizens and service issues on local priorities. Information on these meetings is available at www.edinburghnp.org.uk.

The financial challenges facing public sector organisations also have implications for the city as a whole. To provide a strategic perspective on the financial challenges, the Council has arranged to bring together organisations and interest groups to:

- consider the financial challenges facing the Council and key partners;
- to discuss the budget choices facing the Council and partners; and
- set this in a strategic context, trying to make the right decisions for the city to ensure the city retains its competitive edge.

If your organisation wishes to be represented at this event on the morning of Saturday 3 December at the City Chambers please email leader@edinburgh.gov.uk

2 Edinburgh's Christmas

Recognised as one of the best cities in the UK in which to spend Christmas, Edinburgh comes to life in the winter with six weeks of festive celebration. Bursting with fireworks, markets, funfairs and Europe's largest outdoor ice rink, Edinburgh's Christmas draws thousands every year. Highlights of this year's festivities include: a spectacular pyrotechnics and fireworks display on Light Night (24 November), starring a 14m high Snow Queen; a weekend of activities to celebrate St Andrew's Day; a host of new events on Princes Street; plus the return of the much loved Edinburgh's Ice Rink and traditional markets.

Edinburgh's Christmas is open for business from 10am on Thursday 24 November. For all the latest news and information on Edinburgh's Christmas, visit www.edinburghschristmas.com.

3 Working in Partnership with Local Communities

The Scottish Older People's Assembly

The annual Scottish Older People's Assembly was held in the Edinburgh International Conference Centre last month. Organised by the Council on behalf of the Scottish Older People's Assembly Steering Group, and with over 250 delegates, topics covered active ageing, personal finance and care and support. The conference also featured live video links from the "House in the Park" in Hamburg, the Highland Senior Citizens Network and the Dumfries and Galloway Seniors Forum, as well as a discussion between the Scottish Youth Parliament and members of Edinburgh's A City for All Ages Advisory Group.

Framework for Equality and Rights

The Policy and Strategy Committee has approved for consultation a new 'Framework for Equality and Rights 2012/16'. This describes the Council's response to the Equality Act 2010 and human and children's rights legislation and will replace the Council's current 'Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Scheme 2009/12'. It also outlines a series of equality outcomes to tackle persistent inequality in the city. In addition, improved approaches to equality impact assessment and embedding equality within employment, financial management, service planning, procurement and community planning are referenced. The consultation will run until 31 January 2012, further information is available at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/equalities

Neighbourhood Partnership Student Event

More than 50 local students and residents gathered for the Students in the Community event. Hosted by Edinburgh University Students Association and supported by local Community Councils, the police, the South Central Youth Forum, voluntary sector and student societies, the participants worked together to identify initiatives to improve the local community, as well as identifying local projects to be given priority attention, including a street dance initiative, a creative writing project in Dumbiedykes and a back garden improvement scheme.

Local Community Plans published

Local Community Plans for the 12 Neighbourhood Partnership areas in the city have been produced and are now available online and in print. These plans have been developed through community engagement and consultation and outline what local people think is important. They also highlight where partnership working can deliver better services and improvement in local communities. For further information go to www.edinburghnp.org.uk

Urban Centres Programme - Upgrade in Southhouse

£85 000 has been spent on upgrading of the landscape in the vicinity of the shops at the corner of Southhouse Road and Broadway including repaving, new lighting and shop painting. This work was funded through the Urban Centres Programme.

Planning and Building Standards Portal

A major upgrade to the Planning and Building Standards Portal has ensured that it provides a modern, accessible and easy to use website. Improvements include notification and alerts and tracking of planning applications and building warrants, searching by post code or address and map based viewing.

4 Providing a Modern, Effective, Integrated Transport Network

Trams

Following the signing of a settlement agreement with the contractors in September, works on the tram project resumed across the city. While the on-street sites of Princes Street and at Haymarket are very visible, there is a lot happening at a variety of locations, including work on the Gyle, Edinburgh Park and Murrayfield tram stops; bridge construction at South Gyle, Carrick Knowe, Balgreen and Russell Road; and track laying and overhead line equipment installation at South Gyle and Balgreen.

The tram depot – which took delivery of its first tram on 17 October – is nearly complete and is fully electrified. Additional trams have also arrived and will continue to do so over the course of 2012. Test runs are scheduled to begin in the depot area from December, once the test track is complete.

Meanwhile, we continue to offer our support to city centre businesses affected by the tram works and, as part of our wider £445,000 annual business support package, we have been working with partners to organise a whole host of activities and initiatives designed to draw people into the city centre over the festive period. I am sure visitors of all ages will be captivated by these.

Increase in Sustainable Travel

Edinburgh has traditionally had high levels of bus use for travel to work. I was pleased to note that Transport Scotland's Scottish Household Survey confirmed that Edinburgh has the highest proportion of residents travelling to work by bus, bicycle, or on foot, at 55%. This compares to 37% in Glasgow, 32% in Aberdeen and 33% in Dundee. The number of cyclists entering the city centre between 8am and 9am has grown from an estimated 830 to over 1000, which is an impressive 7.3% cent of people travelling to work in the morning. Cycle improvements at the Lothian Road / West Approach Road junction will be installed in 2012/13 which will improve the experience for cyclists in this busy area.

While as a Council we aim to offer a full range of transport options to the people who live and work in our city, sustainable transport choices contribute to better air quality, among other benefits. I was therefore encouraged that Transport Scotland has recorded that Edinburgh's greenhouse gases caused by road transport has decreased from 786,000 tonnes in 2007 to 723,000 in 2009, a fall of around 8%.

High Speed Rail

Edinburgh and Glasgow Councils, and other major public and private sector organisations, are working in a partnership led by Transport Scotland to develop high speed rail options for Scotland. The partnership's work on the business case and promotion will be published shortly; in time for the Secretary of State's forthcoming announcement on whether the UK Government will proceed with High Speed Rail 2.

The House of Commons Transport Committee's report on high speed rail (to which the Council provided evidence), published on 8 November, is very helpful. It concludes that there is a good case for high speed rail between London, Birmingham and beyond. A high speed network would transform the capacity, quality, reliability and frequency of rail services between major cities, and offers greater economic and strategic benefits than a conventional line.

The Council is working with partners across Scotland to ensure that benefits are achieved for Scotland and Edinburgh. The report can be found at: [High Speed Rail](#)

Bustracker Success

Congratulations to Lothian Buses on winning the Information Management Award at the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport Awards for the Bustracker real time passenger information system. Bustracker, which was developed by the Council in partnership with Lothian Buses, provides real time passenger information on street, on the internet, on smartphones and by text message. Real time information proved especially popular and useful during last year's winter weather, where travellers needed information about possible service interruptions.

The Council will continue to develop this service, and will be promoting it to the thousands of people expected to come to the city for our winter festivals through a new advertising campaign.

5 Investing in our Children and Schools

12-18 Foster Care Campaign

This Administration has put fostering and adoption at the heart of its policies for supporting vulnerable young people. A recruitment campaign to attract potential foster carers for 12-18 years olds ran from 7-20 November. The campaign focused on targeting people who already work closely with young people and who would understand the needs of a teenager and develop their confidence, skills and potential. If you think you can help, a drop in evening has been arranged on Thursday 1 December from 5 to 7pm at Waverley Court, Market Street. You can find out more on [fostering](#) or by calling 0800 174 833.

Site for New Boroughmuir High School

I am delighted that the Council's bid to buy land for the new Boroughmuir High School at Fountainbridge has secured 'preferred bidder' status. This means that the site will be bought, subject to the conclusion of missives and the approval of Council, with the purchase confirmed before the end of the year. A consultation will be carried out on the proposal to move the school to Fountainbridge.

Officials have been considering options for a new site for Boroughmuir since the Scottish Government announced funding of up to two thirds of the cost of replacing the school on a like for like basis. Although the new site would be the recommended option, the legally required consultation process, starting in the New Year, will also include an option to refurbish and extend the existing high school building.

REAL Classroom Event

The REAL (Re-Imaging, Education and Learning) Centre, an Education Scotland / Research Machine initiative, opened in one of the open learning spaces in Tynecastle High School on 4th November. Running for three weeks, interested parties, including educationalists from across Scotland have been able to experience what a 21st century learning environment looks and feels like.

This has also been an opportunity for Tynecastle's students to visit the centre. Activities included Green Screen Movie-making Technology and the VER (versatile) interactive tables. These are Smart Boards which can be placed on a flat surface and become giant computer tablets with touch screen interactive technology.

PE in Schools Shows Major Improvements

Taking part in sports and physical activity is vitally important in improving health and wellbeing. Edinburgh is committed to providing at least two hours of quality PE in the curriculum to meet Government and Local Authority aspirations in this area.

I am therefore delighted that between 2010 and 2011 there have been major improvements towards realising this objective. In our primaries there has been a near trebling of schools meeting the target from 22% to 62% and in secondaries a doubling from 21.5% to 43%. In special schools there has also been an improvement from 50% to 67%.

The importance of physical activity in early years is also acknowledged and a PE pack for nurseries together with relevant training will be launched in the New Year. PE training leading to a post graduate qualification for 53 classroom teachers is being offered by Edinburgh University and this will make a significant impact on the quality of PE teaching in primary schools.

Young People in Edinburgh Secure Diana Awards

128 young people from Edinburgh have received a Diana Award, presented to inspirational young people, from all circumstances and sections of society, who are committed to taking social action and improving our communities. Currie Community High School is recognised as a 'gold school' having contributed more than 5 nominations. For more information on the Diana Award or to make a nomination visit: <http://diana-award.org.uk>.

More Pupils 'Getting in the Swim'

Learning to swim is an important life skill and I am pleased that all primary age children now get swimming lessons as part of their core PE. Our aim is for all children leaving primary school to be able to swim and achieve level 5 qualifications in the process. We are already on our way by increasing those achieving Level 5 competency from 55% to 61% in the last year.

In order to target those pupils who are least confident in the water, Edinburgh has developed a Top Up programme which provides extra support through lower teacher pupil ratios. The programme is delivered by primary swimming specialists, instructors from Edinburgh Leisure, assistants from the voluntary sector and senior pupils studying for Sports Leaders' Awards. My congratulations to all involved.

Music Making on Fridays

Beginning this month 650 primary 5, 6 and 7 children across the city will participate in music making on Friday afternoons due to investment from the Youth Music Initiative. This is approximately a 500% increase on last year.

Children across the city will benefit with voice, guitar, and recorder and a further instrument is offered to primary 7 pupils which varies across the venues. Thus, on Friday afternoons, many of the city's youngsters will be busy making music, socialising in a stimulating, up-lifting atmosphere and sharing a love of music.

Edinburgh Pupils' Mòd Success

A group of Edinburgh pupils have done exceedingly well at this year's Mod. The pupils from Tollcross Primary and James Gillespie's High School travelled to Stornoway during the half-term break to participate.

The group took first place in nine categories winning seven trophies and gold, silver and bronze badges. The choir, Còisir Bun-sgoil Crois na Cise was also victorious in two competitions. The clàrsach players performed extremely well, winning six of the 14 categories and sweeping the board in two. Gold was also won by Mara Drysdale in the Poetry Recitation category and by Sorcha MacIntyre for storytelling.

The Judges commented on the quality and clarity of the Edinburgh pupils' Gaelic - high praise indeed as Gaelic is a second language for most of these students. This success is achieved through the hard work of pupils and staff right through from pre-school to secondary level. A list of winners and categories appears in Appendix 1.

6 Providing Safe, Warm and Affordable Homes

Keeping Your Stair Safe

Last year at this time there was an increase in fires in stairwells in the Southside/Newington area. To prevent a repeat this year, the Community Safety team in the South Neighbourhood, in partnership with the Police and Fire, launched "Operation Stair Safe". During three days in October, 136 stairs in the Southside/Newington area were checked for hazards and over 1200 advice leaflets were distributed. The security of main doors was also checked and a number of insecure stairs were identified, with advice being offered to the residents. Referrals were also made to the Fire and Rescue Service where hazardous material was found to be stored in common stairs. This initiative is an excellent example of how we can work together to help improve the safety of residents in Edinburgh.

Homelessness Prevention Service

A recent report by the Cyrenians into Edinburgh's Homelessness Prevention Service reported that 99% of those supported by the service had not become homeless again. This is an excellent outcome. The Council, Edinburgh Housing Advice Partnership and the Cyrenians will continue to work together to develop the service and expand an early intervention service that has already helped many.

National Housing Trust Contract

In August 2010, the Council agreed to join the National Housing Trust Initiative to encourage developers to build homes for mid market rent and has, since then, worked with the Scottish Futures Trust to invite bids and evaluate tender submissions from private developers. The outcome is that three developers have signed contracts with the Council to build 422 homes for mid rent at the Waterfront, Lochend, Telford North and Salamander Place. This will increase the number of affordable homes under construction in the city to 1,578. This investment has also had a positive impact on the construction industry and the local economy, supporting 2,000 jobs.

Additional £1.5million for Housing Development in Craigmillar

£1.5 million has been secured from the Scottish Government to support the next phases of Council-led housing development. Approximately £420,000 will be used to provide Council homes for rent and the remainder will be used to develop mid market rent homes. The Council will work with PARC which will assist in the regeneration of Craigmillar. Development of the site is anticipated to start summer 2012.

Postgraduate Student Accommodation

The Council recently approved the development of 248 bed-space student accommodation on Holyrood Road, as part of a wider postgraduate campus being developed by the University of Edinburgh. The accommodation built around a

courtyard space will make a valuable contribution to the stock of student accommodation within the city. The new building will improve the appearance of the area, respecting its special character and complementing the area.

Ex Service Personnel

To recognise their contribution to society, people leaving the armed forces will now have the length of time they have served taken into account when they apply for housing. Their registration date on Edinburgh's Common Housing Register will be backdated to the date they first entered into the armed forces. In order to qualify, they must register within three years of leaving the armed forces.

Telecare Service

The Community Alarm and Telecare Service annual report has been issued. The service is available to any Edinburgh resident who is at risk due to age, disability or social circumstances and supports individuals to maintain their independent lifestyle in the community by providing a response service in emergencies.

Over the period April 2009 to March 2010 the service:

- handled 192,717 calls, with 97% answered within one minute;
- attended 4,068 emergency visits (87% within 45 minutes);
- installed 863 complex Telecare packages; and
- installed 1,275 standard alarms.

Service improvements planned for the next 12 months include:

- Domestic abuse initiative – using technology linked to the police;
- Bogus callers project – using technology to create a response where concerns are raised; and a
- Safe walking pilot – using global positioning technology to support people to remain independent in the community if they get lost when out.

Further information can be found at [alarmtelecareservice](#)

7 A Clean, Green, Safe, Attractive and Environmentally Sustainable City

Flood Prevention – Braid Burn Commendation

The Braid Burn flood prevention scheme received a Commendation for Environmentally Sustainable Construction at the 30th Anniversary Civil Engineering Awards 2011. The scheme will protect 900 properties, including factories and residential homes, which were badly affected by major floods in 2000. It has involved input from a range of Council services, including the Flood team, schools, roads, planning, archaeology and parks.

By maximising the use of natural flood plains and creating two storage reservoirs, the Council has worked with nature in this project. We have also enhanced the environment along the burn's banks. The natural meander of the waterway has been restored and a natural river bank has been recreated.

Parks and Greenspaces

In October, Edinburgh's Countryside Ranger Service received the Investors in Volunteering Award, the standard for good practice in volunteering management. This is the first time it has gone to a Countryside Ranger Service in Scotland.

Community Clean-Up

A two part 'Community Clean-Up' organised by the North Bughtlin Tenants

Association took place on 20th October and 8th November. Local residents, volunteers from British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and West Neighbourhood combined to tackle the rubbish dumped in the burn, cut-back and remove the undergrowth and plant bulbs along the tree line at the Burn.

Firework Safety

TOAST, a play tackling anti-social behaviour involving fireworks, was performed in 15 schools in Edinburgh between 25 October and 4 November. Funded by the Council and working with the Fire and Rescue Service, TOAST is just a small part of our endeavours to reduce the incidence of injury and disruption over the bon fire night and weekend. I am delighted to report that there were no major injuries or call outs during this period.

8 Promoting Culture, Sport and Leisure

Collective Gallery

Good progress is being made in relocating the Collective Gallery from Cockburn Street to the Old City Observatory and City Dome on Calton Hill. Opened in 1984, the Collective is internationally recognised for the production, research, presentation and distribution of contemporary art and culture with a focus on new visual art.

Arts and Crafts in the City

Between 19 November and 12 February 2012, the City Art Centre is showing *Reflection*, celebrating 10 years of the city's contemporary art and craft sector. *Reflection* highlights the work of 22 artists and makers who have been supported by the Visual Arts Awards and Craft Maker Awards grant schemes run by the Council in partnership with Creative Scotland. Selected through an open submission process, the artists work in disciplines including ceramics, printmaking, jewellery, painting, glass and photography. The exhibition provides an excellent opportunity to experience some of the best of Edinburgh's thriving visual art and craft scene.

Scottish Tapestry Artists Regrouped (STAR*) Exhibition

On 12 November the City Art Centre unveiled the country's largest exhibition of Scottish tapestry for many years. This retrospective exhibition by Scottish Tapestry Artists Regrouped (STAR*) includes work from the 1960s up to the present day, showing the diversity of Scottish tapestry with work that embraces strong colour and a multiplicity of themes. STAR* members exhibit regularly all over the world and their work is to be found in public buildings and collections both here and abroad. The exhibition, which also features works from the City Art Centre tapestry collection, runs until 8 January 2012 and admission is free.

9 Success for Edinburgh Castle

I was delighted that Edinburgh Castle was named the best UK heritage attraction at the 2011 British Travel Awards ceremony. The Castle welcomed one million visitors this year. It is home to the Scottish crown jewels and the Stone of Destiny, but it is also a venue for events ranging from rock concerts to firework displays. Edinburgh Castle plays a major role in attracting tourists to the city and is the most visited tourist venue in the city.

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

Appendix 1

Edinburgh Pupils' Mòd Success

Choral Unison Singing Under 13 years

1st Coisir Bun-sgoil Crois na Cìse – The Aberfoyle and District Branch Trophy.

Choral Singing Two Part Harmony Under 13 years

1st Coisir Bun-sgoil Crois na Cìse – Mrs Ann Grant Memorial Trophy

Poetry Recitation Age 11-12 years Fluent

1st Mara Drysdale – Gold badge

Clàrsach Self Accompanied Songs

1st Tuesday Rose McDonough - The Glendale Quaich and Gold Badge

Clàrsach Beginners' Introductory Class

1st Abigail Campbell - The Helmsdale Trophy and Gold Badge

Clàrsach Elementary Juniors

1st Ceitidh McLuskey -The Florence Wilson Trophy and Gold Badge

Clàrsach Intermediate 1 Juniors

1st Cara McLuskey - The K Barry Milner Trophy and Gold Badge

Clàrsach Intermediate 2 Open

1st Sean MacPherson - Gold Badge

Open Ensembles

1st Àrd-sgoil Sheumais Ghilleasbaig (James Gillespie's High School) - Pilgrims Harp Trophy

Narration in traditional style of an ancient folk tale, Age 13-15 years

1st Sorcha Nic an t-Saoir - Gold badge and Alasdair McInnes Cup
(who previously attended the Gaelic unit at Tollcross Primary).

Fiddle Under 13 years, Slow Air and March, Strathspey and Reel

1st Magnus Westwell

Leith Walk Primary

Piano Open 13-18, Play a slow Gaelic Air and March

1st Jack Westwell - The Margaret Hill-Boyle Memorial Trophy and Gold Badge

Broughton High School