



November 2017

Play your part

Please help us to improve our services by playing your part in [our budget engagement](#), which runs for six weeks until 19 December. You can watch the 2018/19 film as well as read and share your views on the impact this year's set of proposals may have on you and your community.

In 2017/18, we invested over £900m on services for residents, businesses and visitors. We focussed on the areas people told us are important, such as education, care for older people, culture and services for vulnerable children and adults.

We've saved around £240m since 2012 and continue to work more efficiently but, even at that, we estimate that we need to save at least £21m by 2019, over £100m by 2021 and £150m by 2023.

We will be running our annual 'Question Time' event on Monday 27 November in the City Chambers from 7.15pm. This is your opportunity to quiz our panel of senior councillors on the proposals.

The event will be chaired by Evening News, Scotsman and Scotland on Sunday Deputy Editor, Euan McGrory, and will also be [broadcast live](#) via the Council website. If you would like to put a question to the panel, or come along and be part of the audience, [please register online](#) by next Wednesday, 23 November.

Ready for Winter

The Christmas lights are appearing (ever earlier) and there's a chill in the air – winter is most definitely upon us, and so it's good to know we're [well prepared](#) for whatever the weather has in store.

Once again, we have stockpiled thousands of tonnes of salt, serviced our fleet of gritters and mini tractors and enlisted a team of employees from across the Council to step up should the weather close in. What's more, we'll be making use of new tracking technology on our lorries to manage resources even better.

But even though we're all set for severe weather, I would encourage you to make your own preparations for keeping safe and warm over the colder months by visiting our website for [winter weather tips](#).

Of course, not everyone looks forward to Christmas and we will be working closely with our partners to provide a range of services to support vulnerable people in the cold months that lie ahead. These include an out of hours homelessness service and care shelters operated by [Bethany Christian Trust](#), ensuring that anyone at risk of rough sleeping can access an evening meal, a bed and breakfast.

Meanwhile, we continue to work hard to ensure we are properly resourced to deal with the inevitable increase in demand for our care services. This includes an additional £475,000 to extend key services, particularly over weekends and public holidays, so that as many people as possible can be looked after in their own homes rather than in a hospital bed.

Taking homelessness to task

While our focus on prevention and early intervention has seen an overall reduction in people presenting as homeless, our services continue to face unprecedented pressures, with demand for both permanent and temporary accommodation exceeding supply.

That is why, earlier this month, we announced the creation of a cross party homelessness task force to help tackle the problem of homeless families being trapped in temporary accommodation.

Amongst other things, the group will review the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and explore alternatives that could better meet the needs of individuals and families.

Beyond that, it is clear we need a city-wide partnership approach to address these issues. This is one of the reasons I am joining the Depute Leader and Chief Executive to [Sleep in the Park](#) next month. Organisers, Social Bite, has already raised £2m and I would be very grateful if you could dig deep and help me [support this most worthwhile of causes](#).

Help us make Picardy Place work for everyone

Picardy Place is a crucial gateway at the east end of Edinburgh's city centre and, as I described in last month's report, we've got an opportunity now to make sure its layout works well for all road users – both currently and in the coming years, when the city's population is forecast to be significantly larger.

With this in mind, we're holding two [public information events](#) so that people can come along and have their say about our proposals for the area. Officers will be on hand to answer questions about the designs and explain how the plans have evolved since their inception several years ago as part of the initial tram designs.

As well as commenting on the designs, people will be able to suggest options for the space at the top of Leith Walk where the roundabout currently sits. Drop in to the City Art Centre on Tuesday 21 November (from 10am–7pm) or Broughton St Mary's Parish Church on Wednesday 22 November (from 3pm–7pm) and have your say!

Bike Life

The latest [Sustrans Bike Life report](#) was published earlier this week and, once again, the results (published every two years) demonstrated a growing appetite for cycling here in Edinburgh, where last year more than 15 million journeys were made by bike, 7.5% of people cycled to work and more than half of households own a bike.

This year, we've committed 10% of our transport budget to cycling in recognition of its many health, social and environmental benefits, and are in the process of delivering a range of exciting projects, including a major route connecting the west and east of the city.

So, it's great to read that, of the 1,100 residents that took part in Bike Life 2017, 80% of respondents backed building more protected cycle lanes, while 63% said Edinburgh would be a better place if more people cycled. This kind of support will help us to create a sustainable and inclusive transport network worthy of a major European Capital.

Six floors of art under one roof

Edinburgh boasts a nationally recognised collection of art and, this winter, you can enjoy the best of it for free. With four exhibitions spanning six floors of art across 200 years, this weekend the City Art Centre opens one of its busiest and most vibrant winter programmes yet.

Travel through time and see 'the city that never was' at an exhibition featuring some of architect [Henry William Playfair](#)'s stunning design ideas for Edinburgh, then enjoy [Hidden Gems](#) of the city's fine art collection. Follow the journey of some of Scotland's most talented artists working today, with a selection of quirky illustrations, drawings and crafts in the gallery's two new contemporary exhibitions, [Songs for Winter](#) and [A Fine Line](#). 'Tis the season to see the City Art Centre!

See the City in a brand new light this Christmas

Edinburgh is no ordinary city, and our Christmas celebrations are no ordinary affair. This Sunday, many of you will be attending [Light Night](#), the Capital's annual celebration for the switch on of our festive decorations, Christmas trees and lights.

George Street will then play host to a display of ice sculptures celebrating some of Scotland's famous characters, from Robert the Bruce to Dolly the Sheep. The exterior of General Register House will boast a giant advent calendar projection of images from the nation's archives and 'Winter Windows' designed by school pupils will peer into the future and consider what Edinburgh could look like in [2050](#).

The bright lights will continue into the month of January, when more fireworks than ever mark the midnight moment of Edinburgh's Hogmanay and the start of 2018, and when a [Message from the Skies](#) will project chapters of a short story by Val McDermid on our buildings and landmarks for Burns Night. Visit [Edinburgh's Christmas](#) and [Edinburgh's Hogmanay](#) to find out more.

Get involved

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