

Leader's Report

The City of Edinburgh Council
13 March 2008

1. Delivering Your Priorities

The Council's Budget for 2008/09 delivers on key priorities; redresses previous failings and neglect; and stabilises our finances whilst looking after the public purse effectively and efficiently. It prioritises care for elderly and vulnerable people; invests heavily in the fabric of the city; promotes inward investment and economic development; and protects front-line services whilst transforming them into what people need and want. Key elements include:

- An additional £13million for vulnerable members of society;
- £33million for five new 'wave 3' schools;
- £21million for Meadowbank and the Royal Commonwealth Pool;
- £20million a year on roads and pavements;
- £5million for pitches and pavilions; and
- committed funding for Edinburgh's festivals.

Full details can be found at :

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/council/council_tax_and_finance/CEC_council_budget_2

2. Looking after your finances

Council Tax Freeze for 3 Years

Last month I advised that this Administration was freezing Council Tax for Edinburgh residents. In our Budget, we committed to freezing Council Tax at 2007/08 levels until at least 2010/11, subject to receiving commensurate Scottish Government funding as for 2008/09. Never before has Council Tax been frozen in Edinburgh. This Administration has achieved that in our first Budget and will pursue a similar agreement to enable us to do so for at least our first three years. This reflects the tough action this Administration has taken to place Council finances on a stable footing.

Transforming our Organisational Culture

This Administration took office after highlighting that Edinburgh had been let down by a Council that was out of touch, remote, impersonal and did not listen to what people wanted. We have sought to maximise local involvement and

power and to provide people-friendly public services in the interests of local residents and communities. Inefficiencies identified, and addressed, during the Budget process reinforce the view that many practices have gone untested and unchallenged for far too long. A culture change and leaner organisational core, while building on the existing commitment and skills of our staff, is required. Our approved Budget requires activities to be reviewed to ensure that the Council acts promptly and efficiently on behalf of Edinburgh residents. Our Budget is balanced and we have already instructed that a robust budget monitoring process be put in place to ensure that maximum value is delivered for taxpayers' money. We shall rigorously and continuously scrutinise performance and use of resources to ensure that the Council delivers good quality services economically and effectively.

We must adapt and apply good practice both from within the Council and from other organisations to become the top performing Council in Scotland and a centre of excellence amongst our international peers. I am therefore delighted that our e-sourcing function has been hosting an increasing number of international deputations looking to learn from our practices.

3. Andrew Holmes - Recognising an outstanding contribution to Edinburgh

The Director of City Development, Andrew Holmes, is retiring in April after 35 years of distinguished service in Local Government in Edinburgh. Prior to his appointment as Director in 1999, Andrew held a range of senior posts across this Council and Lothian Regional Council. He has represented the Council as a board member on many of our "arms length" companies and it is an indication of Andrew's reputation that he has also served as an adviser to the UK Government's then Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions.

Andrew's personal commitment to the Council and its policies is illustrated by the fact that he was cycling to work long before green transport issues achieved such a high profile. No doubt this has contributed to his general level of fitness and the fact that he has not had a single day of sickness absence since the formation of the new Council in April 1996 – a further indication of Andrew's personal dedication. I am sure that members will wish to join with me in wishing Andrew a long and happy retirement.

4. Promoting Edinburgh's Economic Growth

Promoting Edinburgh's Development to the First Minister

I recently had a positive meeting with Alex Salmond, First Minister, about economic development opportunities in Edinburgh. The First Minister was receptive to piloting the use of innovative financing mechanisms to accelerate the development of infrastructure essential for economic growth. Together with Scottish Enterprise and Glasgow City Council, we will work alongside the Scottish Government to develop our approach and its linkage to the Scottish

Futures Trust. The Waterfront and adjacent regeneration programmes in North Edinburgh may be the most appropriate first opportunity to unlock additional investment to deliver the essential infrastructure – new homes, roads, coastal protection, flood defences, port facilities and further extension of the tram network – for economic development.

Edinburgh the leading city in Europe's Region of the Future

Foreign Direct Investment ranks Edinburgh as top Small European City and 6th Best Overall City in Europe. This places Edinburgh ahead of major cities, such as Frankfurt, Madrid, Brussels, Barcelona, Geneva and Dublin. Edinburgh is the economic powerhouse for Scotland, which topped the Region of the Future shortlist. This is very good news for Edinburgh and Scotland and reflects the economic potential, quality of life, infrastructure, labour supply and investment opportunities which the city has to offer.

Edinburgh makes it into the World's Top Ten Cities

Edinburgh was also placed in the top 10 cities in the world (with a satisfaction rating of 90.18%) in the annual Wanderlust Travel Awards. Over 613 cities were nominated and this is the first occasion that any UK city has featured in the history of the awards. Edinburgh sits alongside cities of the calibre of Sydney, San Francisco, Hong Kong and Venice and ahead of heavyweights such as Tokyo and Boston. Edinburgh was also the only city in the world with two events – the Edinburgh International Festival and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe – in the Best Festivals category. We cannot, however, afford to be complacent and we shall actively promote Edinburgh as a destination to live, visit, study and invest to ensure that our ranking continues to climb in future years.

Promoting Edinburgh as a Destination

With Edinburgh's continued economic growth reliant upon the ability to attract Trade, Tourism and Talent, the Council has been working closely with partners in both the private and public sectors to determine how best we can promote Edinburgh. The outcome of this work, 'Promoting Edinburgh as a Destination', is a highly ambitious report which outlines a range of options available for delivering the city's promotional agenda.

In an increasingly competitive international marketplace it is vital that Edinburgh has sufficient voice to champion the wide range of opportunities on offer. 'Promoting Edinburgh as a Destination' gives us a mandate to take the brave decisions necessary to remain competitive and ultimately achieve this city's potential. I am grateful to those who contributed their time, thoughts and energy to this excellent project.

Innovative City Region Website Launched

The Edinburgh Inspiring Capital Brand (EICB) website has been established to promote the Edinburgh city region to prospective investors, visitors, students and residents. The launch follows intensive development work, with support and contributions from more than 150 public and private sector organisations. EICB's website is an excellent shop window containing a wealth of information about living, working, visiting and studying in the city region. It reflects the Administration's priority of attracting inward investment. It facilitates a proactive and co-ordinated approach to marketing our key investment strengths and particular development opportunities. I would encourage all businesses in the Edinburgh city region to link into the EICB website (www.edinburgh-inspiringcapital.com), promote it to their employees and use it to assist recruitment, induction and provision of information.

5. Caltongate

Much has been written about the proposed development at Caltongate. Clearly, people have their own opinions and they have taken the opportunity to express them very eloquently. Whatever your view of the outcome, what has been reinforced to me is the extraordinary amount of work required of both Planning officials and Committee members in understanding and processing such major development proposals. Quite rightly, members of the Planning Committee are very protective of their independence from the party political process and, in that spirit, I should like to thank everyone involved in the complex process of taking the proposals through the Committee stage. I await with interest the final determination by Scottish Ministers.

6. Connected Capital – Keeping Edinburgh Moving Forward

Record Investment in Roads and Pavements

Record sums are being invested in our roads and pavements. Through the Budget we shall begin to address the damage caused by years of neglect. £60 million has been allocated over the next three years to repair Edinburgh's roads and pavements - contrast this with an average spend over the last three years of £13 million!

Edinburgh Park Railway Station

In November I expressed concern that the Scottish Government was backsliding on a previous Scottish Executive Ministerial agreement for mainline Edinburgh-Glasgow trains to stop at Edinburgh Park Station. West Edinburgh is the principal gateway to Scotland's capital city and Edinburgh Park is of national economic significance. It is essential that the Scottish Government does not compromise Edinburgh's competitive advantage by renegeing on this Government commitment.

The economic case for adding Edinburgh Park Railway Station onto the main line is a 'no-brainer'! Briefing for a recent Parliamentary debate (attached at Appendix A) demonstrates that annual patronage would increase by 200,000

without affecting journey times at all on eastbound services. Journey times on westbound services would increase by a mere 30 seconds! We cannot allow transport constraints to restrict Edinburgh's, and Scotland's, competitive advantage. I shall continue to press the Government to honour the Ministerial commitment for the good of the nation.

Ryanair expands Edinburgh's international links

Transport connections are vital for Edinburgh's continued economic success and our quality of life. Air links are essential in the increasingly competitive global market place. Edinburgh is Scotland's busiest airport and Ryanair has just announced a huge increase in its operations from Edinburgh. Last year, Ryanair operated flights to just two destinations from Edinburgh. By the end of this year that number will rise to 19 (detailed at Appendix B). Ryanair's expansion demonstrates the national, and international, confidence in Edinburgh as a place to live, invest, visit, study and to do business.

Forth Road Bridge

With tolls having been removed from the Bridge, we are working closely with the Forth Estuary Transport Authority and other partners to ensure that bridge traffic is managed as effectively as possible with minimum congestion. People will be aware that the Bridge is currently the subject of ongoing maintenance work and this is causing some delays and frustration. Fortunately, the (Council supervised) construction of the M9 spur was completed on time and this has considerably reduced congestion on this side of the Bridge.

Trams

The work to divert utilities from the tram route is well underway. It was always acknowledged that these works would result in a level of inconvenience and I should like to thank motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and especially all those whose homes and business are directly affected for their patience at this time.

I am encouraged that the Open for Business compensation scheme run by **tie** is being taken up. This unique scheme recognises that local businesses will suffer a degree of hardship, especially when the roadworks take place outside their front doors. I am confident that this is the most generous compensation package ever implemented to address the effects of a major transport infrastructure scheme. We shall, of course, continue our dialogue with the business community as the tram construction work gathers pace. Work has moved into Shandwick Place with utilities being diverted to enable tram tracks to later be placed on the road surface. Further details can be found at http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Transport/Public_transport/Trams/CEC_latest_news.

7. Caring for Edinburgh's Disabled Children

There are currently around 50 disabled children needing care in Edinburgh. The Council is appealing for more carers to come forward. The two types of care most urgently needed are:

Specialist Disability Foster Care: Caring full or part-time for disabled children with complex needs; and

Share the Care: Caring for disabled children with less complex needs for short, regular periods.

For more info, click on the links above and, if you are interested in taking the next step, please get in touch by calling 0800 174 833. If you would be willing to promote this campaign within your organisation, please get in touch with Joanne MacDougall on [REDACTED] or e-mail joanne.macdougall@edinburgh.gov.uk.

8. Tackling Climate Change

Climate change is one of the greatest threats today. Care for the environment and becoming a truly environmentally sustainable city is at the core of this Administration's vision for Edinburgh. I am delighted that the Council has been selected as one of four local authorities to pilot the Local Climate Impact Profiles Project (Scotland). The project will run from March to September 2008 and aims to profile the type, location, severity and previous responses to weather related impacts which have affected Edinburgh. This will enable the city to plan better for the future. The profile will illustrate the real effects of climate change in the city in a way which is both accessible and easy to share and results will be integrated into the Council's existing work on climate change and carbon management. The project will be led and supported by the Scottish Climate Change Impacts Partnership.

9. Promoting Fair Trade to Make Poverty History

I was delighted to participate in a Fairtrade Breakfast event in Waverley Court to promote Fairtrade Fortnight (25 February to 9 March). Organised by the Edinburgh Fairtrade Steering Group and hosted by the Council, the event marked four years of Edinburgh's status as a Fairtrade City. We were privileged to hear Julius Ethang'atha from Kenya speak about the difference that fair trade has made to the lives of tea producers in his home country. Hearing directly from a producer highlights that making small but important changes to our shopping patterns really do change lives.

I am aware that the reason Edinburgh secured Fairtrade City status in the first instance is due in no small part to the organisations, communities and individuals across the City who work tirelessly to raise the profile of fair trade. This was reflected in the number of events being held across the City to celebrate this year's Fairtrade Fortnight. It is also reflected in the fact that Scotland has now established a Fair Trade Forum whose primary goal is to help Scotland achieve fair trade nation status. Edinburgh will play its role in

working towards this national status and, as Leader, I will be working with the Council and its partners to promote fair trade across the City.

10. World Cross-Country Championships

Some of the world's top athletes are on their way to Edinburgh to compete in the 2008 IAAF World Cross Country Championships on 29/30 March. Spectators will be able to watch the action for free as it takes place in the magnificent setting of Holyrood Park.

11. Working with you to improve our quality of life

Promoting Community Safety

The introduction of Neighbourhood Action Units is an innovative example of partnership working and joint funding, following a review and refocusing of the successful, community based work of the Police Safer Community Units and Youth Action Teams. Their work will be intelligence-led and will include high visibility, targeted patrols and initiatives with partner agencies such as Environmental Wardens. Officers from the Neighbourhood Action Units will be on duty 7 days a week. More integrated working, including joint patrols with Council Community Safety staff, will contribute even more to ensuring safe communities.

Working with you

A priority for this Administration is to create a fair and transparent Council and to empower and strengthen our local communities. Twelve Neighbourhood Partnerships, comprising representatives of the local community, Councillors, Police, NHS and the voluntary sector, have been established across Edinburgh to work together with residents to plan and improve local services. Appendix C provides dates for the next meetings of the Partnerships. Prior to each Partnership meeting, drop-in sessions take place where councillors, experienced Council officers and partners are available to respond to any concerns which local residents may have about services such as roads and pavements, housing, street cleanliness, graffiti removal, recycling and libraries.

Improving our Parks and Greenspaces

The most recent household survey shows that 71% of residents are satisfied or very satisfied with our parks, gardens and open spaces – reaching and exceeding our target (65%) three years early. Access to green spaces, parks, play areas and allotments is seen by many as one of the best things about their neighbourhood. Edinburgh's outdoor environment is one of its most attractive features and we aim to maximise the enjoyment and opportunity that this presents. Additional funds for parks, pitches and pavilions has been provided in our Budget. We welcome ideas and thoughts on how to improve your parks or greenspaces. Please send these to parcs@edinburgh.gov.uk

Edinburgh Building Services – Charter Mark Re-accreditation

In January 2008, Edinburgh Building Services retained its Charter Mark status. The Charter Mark Assessor not only confirmed re-accreditation but also identified two more areas of best practice - the EBS complaints and good practice guide and the use of project management to identify and deliver efficiencies and financial savings. I should like to congratulate all staff involved in securing this accreditation which reflects outstanding quality in customer service and continuous consultation and improvement.

Edinburgh Park Railway Station Briefing

NEW EDINBURGH LIMITED



On Thursday 7th February 2008, motion S3M-1118 will be discussed at a Private Members Debate:

S3M-1118: Edinburgh Park Railway Station—

That the Parliament commends the continuing economic contribution made by Edinburgh Park not only to Edinburgh's economy but to Scotland as whole; congratulates the park on its numerous green initiatives encouraging employees to choose public transport and ease the heavily congested road system surrounding the park; understands that a comprehensive public transport infrastructure is integral to the further growth of this area; considers that there should be clarification as to exactly why Edinburgh Park may not be included on the main Edinburgh to Glasgow line until 2016, forcing employees travelling from the west to travel on to Haymarket Station before doubling back on themselves; acknowledges that, in order to increase connectivity across Scotland, improve business links with Glasgow and aid environmental initiatives, Edinburgh Park must be included on this line as a matter of urgency, and believes that Edinburgh Park must be included as a stop on the Glasgow to Edinburgh mainline without further delay.

About Edinburgh Park Railway Station

New Edinburgh Limited (NEL) - a joint venture between The Miller Group and CEC Holdings Ltd - and the City of Edinburgh Council constructed a £4.5million railway station at Edinburgh Park in 2003 on the understanding that Edinburgh to Glasgow mainline trains would stop at the park. Despite assurances from various parties involved in the rail network, this commitment has never been met.

Edinburgh Park, the South Gyle area and Gogarburn is the fourth largest economic

- Despite commitments that Edinburgh Park Railway Station would be included as a stop on the Edinburgh to Glasgow mainline, this has never occurred.
- Inclusion on the Edinburgh-Glasgow line would only increase journey times on westbound services by 30 seconds. Journey times on eastbound services would remain unaltered.
- Annual patronage would increase by 200, 000 in the first year (900 extra passengers a day.)
- The proposed stop would likely have a positive economic present value of benefit.

area in Scotland, with some 30 000 people commuting to the area every day. Capable of accommodating international business headquarters, the area boasts world-renowned occupiers such as the Royal Bank of Scotland, Aegon and BT.

Previous Commitments

Prior to the 2007 Scottish Parliamentary elections, then Transport Minister Tavish Scott MSP indicated that Edinburgh Park would be included in the December 2007 timetable change. Following the election, Mr Scott has reiterated that First ScotRail and Transport Scotland were instructed to ensure Edinburgh Park was included on the Edinburgh to Glasgow route.

Current Position

The Scottish Government has indicated that there are no imminent plans to include Edinburgh Park on the mainline, citing negative economic impact and lengthened journey times as reasons for further delaying the stop's inclusion on the Edinburgh-Glasgow mainline.

Study Results

NEL commissioned Faber Maunsell to carry out an independent study investigating timetable changes, patronage and the financial implications of including Edinburgh Park on the main Edinburgh- Glasgow line. Emerging findings highlight the benefits of Edinburgh Park's inclusion:

- Inclusion of Edinburgh Park on the exiting eastbound Glasgow to Edinburgh service – stopping at Croy, Falkirk High and Haymarket – could be accommodated without increasing overall journey time.
- Edinburgh Park's inclusion on the existing westbound Edinburgh to Glasgow service would only increase overall journey time by 30 seconds.
- Inclusion of the stop would likely have a positive economic present value of benefit
- Annual patronage would increase by 200, 000 in the first year (900 extra passengers a day.)

Solutions

NEL urge you to support Edinburgh Park's early inclusion on the mainline which would:

- Provide a positive economic impact
- Deliver comprehensive public transport links to Edinburgh Park from across the Central Belt for the 30 000 people commuting to the area every day
- Ease congestion in the surrounding area
- Improve business links with Glasgow
- Increase connectivity across the Central Belt

Appendix B

Ryanair Routes from Edinburgh

Existing Routes

Dublin (Ireland)
Shannon (Ireland)

Routes to start in the next month or so

Alicante (Spain)
Bremen (Germany)
Pisa (Italy)
Marseille (France)
Frankfurt Hahn (Germany)

Routes just announced and to begin by end of year

Berlin (Germany)
Billund (Denmark)
Bournemouth (UK)
Bratislava (Slovakia)
Dusseldorf (Germany)
Krakow (Poland)
Lodz (Poland)
Malaga (Spain)
Palma (Spain)
Poznan (Poland)
Stockholm Skavsta (Sweden)
Wroclaw (Poland)

Working With You to Deliver the Localisation Agenda

Neighbourhood Partnerships [Meetings below need updated]

All Neighbourhood Partnership meetings convene at 7pm with a surgery held from 6:30pm where local Councillors and Council officers will be present to address any concerns or issues that people wish to raise. Forthcoming meetings are:-

South Central Neighbourhood Partnership

Next meeting – 10 March 2008 in St Peters Church Hall, Lutton Place. Thereafter on Monday 12 May.

Liberton Gilmerton Neighbourhood Partnership

Future meeting dates – Wednesday 12 March, Wednesday 28 May – both in the Faith Centre.

Craightinny & Duddingston Neighbourhood Partnership

Next meeting - Tuesday 18 March 2008 in Northfield Community Centre.

City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership

Next meeting Thursday, 20 March 2008, Assembly Rooms, 54 George Street.

South West Neighbourhood Partnership

Next meeting – Thursday 20 March 2008 in Craiglockhart Primary School.

Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership

Next meeting– 15 April 2008 in Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre.

Almond Neighbourhood Partnership

Next meeting – Tuesday 22 April, venue tbc.

Portobello and Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnership

Next meeting – Wednesday 23 April 2008 in the Hays Community Business Centre.

Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership

Next meeting - Monday, 12 May 2008, venue tbc.

Forth Neighbourhood Partnership

Next meeting – Tuesday 3 June, venue tbc.

Leith Neighbourhood Partnership

Next meeting – Tuesday 10 June, venue tbc.

Western Edinburgh Neighbourhood Partnership

Next meeting – Friday 11 June, venue tbc.