



March 2015

School attainment



Top marks to our schools who have once again achieved really encouraging exam results.

A [report](#) at this week's Education, Children & Families Committee showed significant improvements since 2009 and, in many cases, our young people are now performing above the national average.

What makes these figures even more impressive is that they have been achieved against the backdrop of new exams coming on board. As a parent I know first hand what a challenge that has been and it's credit to the hard work of both staff and pupils that these results have been so good.

I'm also pleased to see that the attainment gap between schools in areas of deprivation and other parts of the city is closing. Tackling disadvantage is a key priority for us and I know that everyone is collectively committed to reducing this gap even further.

Dame Sue Bruce

Our chief executive, Dame Sue Bruce, advised me earlier this week that she is to retire from local government service on reaching her 60th birthday in October.

Sue has successfully tackled some key challenges during her time as Chief Executive and has achieved real progress for the Council. Of particular note was her leadership in resolving the tram dispute, paving the way for the completion of the project and successful launch of passenger services last May, and her decisive yet sensitive handling of the Mortonhall baby ashes investigation.

From the outset, she has worked tirelessly and well beyond the normal expectations of the role, particularly in relation to charity work and improving the job prospects of young people across Edinburgh, and I have no doubt that she will continue to play her part in public life.

Restoring stability to Lothian Buses

As majority shareholder in Lothian Buses, the Council is duty-bound to ensure that Lothian Buses can continue to build on its many successes.

Recent troubles at management level have been a concern but we are encouraged by the progress being made by Interim Chair Tony Depledge to restore stability. I am confident that the [changes](#) announced this week will help Lothian Buses make further strides towards better and more effective management.

Last week, we announced the [appointment of KPMG](#) to carry out a review into recent events at Lothian Buses, including the Council's involvement. We look forward to receiving their report in the coming weeks before it's considered by the Governance, Risk & Best Value Committee.

Towards a City Deal

Manchester was in the news recently having secured more spending powers, or 'Devo Manc', from Westminster. And closer to home Glasgow has successfully negotiated their own 'City Deal', unlocking millions of pounds of potential infrastructure investment.

So, I am pleased to report that we, in partnership with our five neighbouring local authorities, have signed up to pursue a deal for the Edinburgh City Region.

Our next step will be to seek UK and Scottish Government agreement on the development of a detailed proposition; one that we believe will ensure continued growth and reduction in inequality across one of Europe's most successful city region economies.

This is Edinburgh

I was delighted that the '[This is Edinburgh](#)' campaign won the award for Creative Marketing at the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards earlier this week.

The campaign, a joint initiative between the Council, Marketing Edinburgh and Essential Edinburgh with the creative concept having been developed by Edinburgh based The Lane Agency, has played a key role in helping to drive footfall to our city centre and the award was in recognition of the significant impact this campaign has had – and continues to have.

The latest element of the campaign, [Edinburgh Fashion Week](#), launches this weekend in the shape of the marquee on the Mound, hosted by the city's leading retailers and independent stores, followed by a full programme of events and offers running throughout the week.

Hans Rissmann

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the outgoing Chief Executive of Edinburgh International Conference Centre, Hans Rissmann, all the very best for his retirement, which officially begins this month.

Hans hosted over 3,000 events, shook hands with the Queen, and most members of the Royal Family, and had champagne with Nelson Mandela during his 22 years at the helm of the EICC.

His will be a hard act to follow but, having met his replacement, Marshall Dallas, I have every confidence in the ongoing success of this world class venue.

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