



October 2015

Have your say on budget proposals



Following the success of last year's budget consultation, in which 2,000 of you took part, we are once again asking for residents' views on how we spend and save money.

This year you will also get the chance to contribute your own ideas on how city services are provided, using the online '[Your City, Your Say](#)' dialogue page. It forms part of our ten-week engagement, allowing you to feed back on proposals for the [Council's 2016-20 budget](#), which aim to address an overall shortfall of £126m.

You can submit suggestions and views on issues, creating solutions to challenges and ideas for better serving the public and saving money. You can also rate and comment on others' posts.

By doing things differently and introducing our new online engagement tools, we're making it easier for you to contribute your views and ideas, and to understand the different challenges there are in setting the budget. Please take the time to have your say between now and 10th December.

Save time, do it online

You may have seen our new advertising campaign, '[Save time. Do it online](#)', aimed at encouraging residents to use our website to report issues such as problems with street lighting, pot holes and litter.

The campaign involves a series of posters and bus shelter ads being displayed at sites across the city, refuse lorries, as well as targeted online and radio adverts highlighting the service. It forms part of our 'channel shift strategy' which aims to make savings of £5.9 million by 2017/18 and transform the way residents interact with the Council.

There are currently 35 services available, ranging from requesting a new recycling bin to reporting a problem with a streetlight. From April 2016, the number of different issues residents can report online will double to include new areas such as benefit claims, parking and new licensing transactions.

Challenge Poverty Week

Tomorrow, 17th October, marks the start of the national [Challenge Poverty Week](#). A number of events and activities are being held locally to coincide with it.

In September, the Council agreed to adopt a set of pledges to challenge the stigma that can so often be associated with living in poverty. Part of the '[Stick Your Labels](#)' campaign, these pledges reinforce that poverty is not inevitable and commit organisations to setting out what they will do to help.

My personal challenge is for organisations and citizens to engage with Challenge Poverty Week and use it as a platform for discussion and action. I would be happy to hear your ideas on tackling poverty in the city; my commitment in return is to consider these views and to use them to help Edinburgh move forward on this crucial agenda.

Smarter Cities

The [Scottish Cities Alliance](#) recently launched its 'Smart Cities Scotland' brand with the significant boost that £10m in European funding has been approved for the programme.

As Chair, I am delighted that we have secured the funding, which will not only allow Scotland's cities to become Smart Cities but also give them the edge to attract more investment.

The Alliance, which is the collaboration of Scotland's seven cities and the Scottish Government, aims to use Smart City technology to transform cities into world-leading digital hubs to enable them to become more internationally competitive and boost economic growth.

Countdown to Christmas

There's a chill in the air, winter is fast approaching and plans are already well under way for our world-famous Christmas and Hogmanay celebrations. No other city compares to Edinburgh during this time of year and the festivals remain a huge draw for visitors from all over the world.

[Edinburgh's Christmas](#) will kick off on 20 November with the new 'Virgin Money Street of Light' featuring a string of more than 60,000 lights along 26 arches running the length of the City Chambers to the Tron Kirk.

The Royal Mile will also then play host to an 'Old Town Ceilidh' as part of [Edinburgh's Hogmanay](#). This expansion of the Street Party will see revellers attempt to perform the world's longest ever Strip the Willow.

The Concert in the Gardens, set in the Ross Bandstand against the backdrop of Edinburgh Castle, is already a sell-out but there are plenty of other ways to join in. Visit the websites for further details.

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