



November 2016

Still time to play your part



There's still time to play your part in our [public engagement](#) about council services.

The response so far has been really encouraging and I would like to thank the 2,000 of you who have already taken the time to have your say. We're keen to hear as many views as possible and have extended our deadline until Monday, 21 November.

Last week, attention turned to our Question Time event, giving members of the public the opportunity to quiz our panel of senior councillors (including myself!) on the council services that mattered to them.

It was a lively debate, with the Chair, Evening News deputy editor Euan McGrory, taking contributions from the floor and from those watching at home. Around 80 people attended and several hundred more tuned in live to the webcast. If you didn't catch the event, remember you can still [watch it online](#) on our archive.

Please take the time to have your say, if you haven't already, as we will consider all feedback prior to setting the final budget on 9 February 2017.

New Queensferry High School

I'm delighted that our proposals for a new Queensferry High School have moved a step closer to fruition. The feasibility study has been completed and we are now looking to work with our development partner on the future plans for a replacement school for the 1,200 pupils.

This will be the latest in a long list of high quality education facilities being provided in the city, with the new Portobello High School having opened its doors for the first time to pupils last month, a day after James Gillespie's High School was officially opened.

We will of course keep staff, parents and the local community fully updated as plans for the new Queensferry High School progress.

On the up and up

The New Waverley development, on our very doorstep on East Market Street, is now well underway – creating a noticeable buzz in a previously disused part of the Old Town.

In order to make the area more attractive during the construction period, the New Waverley Community Fund was set up and, earlier this week, the second phase of funding of £100,000 was announced.

Projects include much-needed improvements to Jacob's Ladder, making the steps between Calton Road and Regent Road more useable outside daylight hours and generally safer and more pleasant. Others include lighting up 'The Arches', art installations and a graveyard planting scheme.

The area was given a significant facelift using the first phase of funding (over £80,000) last autumn with [projects](#) ranging from community gardens to festival lighting for the Canongate.

Top technology award for city

So, Edinburgh has received yet another accolade, this time having been voted the Best European City for Technology to locate in 2016.

It is well deserved confirmation that this sector is buzzing in the Capital and I'm told that we saw off strong competition from Amsterdam, London and Barcelona in receiving votes from the readers of European Business Magazine.

Our tech sector has grown rapidly over the last 10 years with major tech companies such as Amazon and Microsoft making the city their home. We also have our own hugely successful home grown companies, such as our two 'unicorns' Skyscanner and FanDuel. Codebase, the UK's largest tech incubator also houses over 80 tech companies in Edinburgh and offers co-working space to start up businesses.

Countdown to Christmas

Christmas is fast approaching and plans are now well under way for our world-famous Winter Festivals. No other city compares to Edinburgh during this time of year and the Christmas and Hogmanay festivities remain a huge draw for visitors from all over the world.

Edinburgh's Christmas will kick off this weekend with 'Light Night' on Sunday, 20 November. When the button is pressed by Olympic cycling hero, Callum Skinner, 3,000 lights which decorate the 18m Mound

Christmas tree and more than 60,000 lights stretching across George Street for the 'Street of Light' will create Edinburgh's trademark Christmas glow.

After glistening for Christmas, the city will play host to three days of Hogmanay celebrations. The Concert in the Gardens, set in the Ross Bandstand against the backdrop of Edinburgh Castle, is already a sell-out with Paolo Nutini headlining. But there are plenty of other ways to join in from the Street Party to the Torchlight Procession. Find out more at [Edinburgh's Christmas](#) and [Edinburgh's Hogmanay](#).

Winter's coming

Winter is upon us and, whether it's a chilly one or not, it's good to know we're well prepared for whatever the weather has in store. Our salt supplies are stockpiled, gritting lorries have been serviced and staff are trained up and ready to go.

We're already monitoring road and pavement conditions 24/7 with gritters on standby and continuing to top up salt bins across the city where necessary. What's more, we're using leaflets, posters, social media and live winter weather web pages to keep people up-to-date and help them get ready for winter too.

Fortunately, it's been a few years since the last time we had really severe winter weather here in Edinburgh, but I would still encourage everyone to ensure they're well prepared by picking up a Ready for Winter leaflet or [reading the information](#) on our web pages.

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