



First word

Welcome to my first Council Leader's report. I hope you find it interesting and would welcome your comments or suggestions for future content.

I'm sure my 62 colleagues would agree: it is an enormous honour to be elected to represent the people of this great city and one that I have relished since becoming a councillor in 2012.

And as the city's youngest ever Council Leader, which I became yesterday (22 June), I'm keen to build on my experience over the past five years while bringing a new improved vision to our exciting and vibrant Capital.

We know from the various awards and accolades that the city receives just how good it can be to live, study or visit here – indeed, we only have to look out the window – but we also know that a quarter of our children live in poverty. How can this be right?

Clearly, just like other successful cities, we also face significant challenges and I promise to implement a progressive policy agenda, prioritising improvement of our core public services and dealing with the *real* issues facing the people of Edinburgh.

Hitting the ground running

Last Friday, I joined Labour Group Leader, Cammy Day, in signing a coalition agreement to run the Council, pledging to work closely with other groups to deliver improved services for residents and communities over the next five years.

We will focus on several key areas, including the construction of 20,000 affordable new homes, investment in transport, improving waste services and roads maintenance and the delivery of a City Region Deal. We will also target educational attainment, building two new secondary schools and 10 new primaries by 2021.

While it has undoubtedly been a frustrating few weeks since the local elections on 4 May, I haven't let the time go to waste and I can assure you that, having now formed an administration and [agreed a new and improved committee structure](#), we are ready to get to work for the city.

We stand with you

Our friends in London and Manchester have endured a truly devastating series of events over the past few weeks. My deepest sympathies go to the families and friends of those who have lost their lives in the recent terrorist atrocities and the horrendous fire in Grenfell Tower.

The emergency services surpassed themselves with the speed of their response and the incredible courage they demonstrated in rushing to the aid of those in danger. And, once again, local communities pulled together magnificently to help and comfort those in need – as they are still doing today.

Understandably, the Grenfell Tower fire caused concern for residents in our own tower blocks. Our housing teams immediately sought to reassure residents about the fire safety approach in their buildings and a full review of fire safety is under way. We want our residents to feel as safe as they possibly can in their homes and we will do everything we can to make this happen.

The latest [Tenants' Courier](#) has advice and the Fire Service also offers free safety visits and can fit homes with free smoke alarms. To book a free fire home safety visit call **0800 0731 999** or text **'FIRE' to 80800**.

Festival City

Finally, I spoke above of the many benefits of living in Edinburgh – and having [11 thriving international festivals](#) right here on our door step is definitely one of them. You can't help but feel the buzz beginning to build as the summer festivals approach.

Following premieres on Wednesday, the Film Festival is now in full swing and the Jazz Festival will follow suit on 14 July. Marking 70 years of our city's festivals in 'Bloom', the opening ceremony for the Edinburgh International Festival is now only a few weeks away.

A highlight of the summer and a spectacular sight every year, the closing night Festival Fireworks Concert will once again take place at the Ross Bandstand. With a design competition approaching its climax, it will be exciting to see which of the [seven shortlisted designs](#) will be progressed and how the venue takes shape over the next few years. The designs are on display in the City Art Centre until 30 July and, while the winner will be chosen by an expert panel, they're keen to hear your views.

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