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As of today (25 May), new data protection regulations (GDPR) come into effect, setting out the framework for how the Council handles personal information. Under the new rules, we must check that we have your correct email address and ask whether you still wish to receive my report each month.

If you wish to continue subscribing, and you haven't already done so, [please complete this short online form](#) by 31 May. Thank you!

Residents loving life in Edinburgh

I know how much I enjoy living and working in Edinburgh, and so, I'm glad to report, do the vast majority of our residents.

According to the latest [Edinburgh People Survey](#), 95% of respondents said they were satisfied with life in the Capital, with 89% content with their neighbourhood as a place to live. Meanwhile, 69% said they were satisfied with the way the Council manages the city – up 3% on last year.

That 84% of respondents reported feeling safe in their neighbourhoods after dark is particularly encouraging, as well as the fact that 86% were satisfied with our beautiful parks and greenspaces – while it can only be a good thing that people walk more frequently than any other mode of transport – 5.6 days a week.

Every year this survey gives us a real insight into the public's perception of Edinburgh and the services we provide – and the areas in which we can improve. Thanks to participants' feedback, these results will prove invaluable to our work on prioritising services as we move forward.

Building the case for a TVL

Very much with the above in mind, particularly residents' views on our thriving tourist economy, we are continuing to build a case around securing powers to introduce a transient visitor levy (TVL). We believe this is in the best interests of our residents, our tourism industry and ultimately also those who visit our beautiful city.

I think it is important to point out that this would not be a tax on business; rather a small contribution by tourists towards the services they use during their stay with us. Edinburgh welcomes millions of visitors each year who bring investment, diversity and energy to our city but they also bring a cost in terms of the impact on our core services.

Our research, published today, demonstrates that not only is a TVL unlikely to adversely affect Edinburgh's hotel industry, but that handled correctly, it can help to secure the ongoing sustainability and health of tourism in the city. The additional revenue could be invested into local services to the benefit of residents, visitors and the tourist industry itself, such as investing in parks, public spaces, clean streets and reduced ticket prices for cultural attractions.

I understand that there are those who remain to be convinced but I can assure them that this is only the beginning of a considered, thoughtful and professional engagement with our partners across the tourist and hotel industry, the people of Edinburgh and the tourists who would ultimately pay the levy.

New approach to Health and Social Care

Last week's meeting of the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board welcomed Judith Proctor in her role as Chief Officer. Her first major piece of business was the approval for outgoing chief Michelle Miller's [Plan for Immediate Pressures and Longer-Term Sustainability](#), which highlights areas of investment that will deliver continued and lasting improvements for the IJB and the people it supports.

Michelle described how we should fundamentally change our approach to delivering services; rebalancing them to ensure we have the right level of specialist community services, such as reablement, as well as mainstream homecare and care home places. This will also help develop our approach to housing solutions and models that can support people to live independently, or with minimal support, for longer.

Some of these approaches have been adopted on a trial basis since March and the results are hugely encouraging, with the backlog of assessments reducing steadily month on month.

I would like to thank Michelle for her valuable work on this during her time as interim Chief Officer and wish her a long and happy retirement from the Council.

Taking trams to Newhaven

During the first stage of public consultation on our plans to take Trams to Newhaven, we gathered thousands of comments from a wide range of residents, businesses and organisations. We are very grateful to everyone who took the time to give us their views.

A number of key themes emerged during the six-week conversation – ranging from public realm improvement to active travel consideration, the location of the Balfour Street stop to parking and loading. We are very aware of these issues and will be working closely with local stakeholders to explore how we can resolve these together during a series of community workshops planned for next month.

We will share the outcomes of these later this summer as we carry out further public engagement on our updated plans. We expect to make a final decision on whether to proceed with the project by the end of the year.

Support for our Suffragette City

As Council Leader, I know all too well the power of one single vote and, of course, the responsibility that comes with it as a voter and as an elected member. But what can sometimes get lost in the noise of a heated election is just how precious a fair and democratic vote is. For generations, people have had to fight to win their right to do so.

With that in mind, it will be a proud sight when thousands of people march through Edinburgh on Sunday 10 June, wearing the suffragette colours of green, white and violet. They will be celebrating the achievements of those first women who won the right to vote 100 years ago.

The Council has already unanimously agreed to close parts of Princes Street to allow the event to take place on the same streets women marched as suffragettes. I never fail to be impressed by how people in Edinburgh constantly stand up for what they believe in, and I am so glad that the echoes of those who stood up for their rights 100 years ago will be heard loud and clear here in the Capital. Women and girls of any age can [take part in the mass PROCESSIONS walk](#).

Get on your bike

Last week we were delighted to help Transport for Edinburgh announce their exciting partnership with Serco to introduce and operate the [city's innovative cycle hire scheme](#) later this year.

This project has long been an ambition of ours, in line with other major, modern cities around the world, so it was fantastic to see first-hand some of the brand new bikes and e-bikes which will soon be available for hire around Edinburgh.

We want to make cycling and active travel as easy and accessible as possible here in Edinburgh and this scheme will offer everyone – whether it's residents, visitors or commuters – the chance to try it out and to feel the associated benefits.

This, in tandem (pun intended) with our commitment to develop cycling opportunities across the city – developing new routes, enhancing cycle safety and improving infrastructure – will be pivotal to encouraging more people to explore the Capital on two wheels.

Nominate someone for the Edinburgh Award

Finally, with just over a week left until votes close on 4 June, make sure you don't miss your chance to [nominate someone for the Edinburgh Award 2018](#). As one of the most prestigious honours we can bestow, the Edinburgh Award is presented to people who make an outstanding contribution to the city.

Previous recipients include household names like J.K Rowling, Sir Chris Hoy and Professor Peter Higgs, but it has also been presented to some of the city's biggest community champions, such as the city's generous veteran Tom Gilzean and philanthropist Sir Tom Farmer, each of whom have been rewarded with a cast of their handprints set in stone outside the City Chambers and a Loving Cup presented by the Lord Provost.

There are plenty of deserving citizens who could join them, so please do nominate someone now.

Get involved

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