



## ***Another step towards a TVL***

I'm delighted with the progress we're making in developing our plans for a Transient Visitor Levy (TVL) for Edinburgh. We are now [seeking views from all city stakeholders](#) but, in particular, the hospitality and tourism sector, plus city businesses and investors, culture partners, visitors and residents, concerning the best possible arrangements for introducing a levy.

Our draft proposal – laid out last month – suggested a charge of either 2% or £2 per room per night, chargeable all year round on all forms of accommodation, including short-term lets, but capped at seven nights. We're asking respondents for their views on the details of the scheme but also, importantly, what any income raised should be spent on.

We have always acknowledged the need for legislation in taking this forward but we as a Council have also maintained the need to develop our own plans to make sure it's not just any TVL but the right TVL for Edinburgh, taking account of our local circumstances.

Our plans have been developed through engagement with industry – absolutely the right approach. So, I welcome the Scottish Government's recent announcement of a national conversation with key stakeholders, helping to shape the wider context for any potential TVL. We are very much listening to everyone involved around what they believe is a fair, simple and workable policy.

## ***Preparing for Bonfire Night***

I'm sure you were as appalled as I was by the violence and antisocial behavior that marred last year's Bonfire Night celebrations. To ensure we don't see a repeat of those disgraceful scenes – which put lives at risk, including those of the emergency services – we have created a dedicated Bonfire Community Improvement Partnership.

Representatives from the Police, Fire Service and Trading Standards, plus Environmental Wardens, Transport and Community Justice teams, are all involved, united in their commitment to preventing the actions of the minority causing havoc and intimidation across our communities.

Plans include exploring ways of engaging young people in the lead up to 5 November, raising awareness of the hazards of irresponsible use of fireworks and bonfires, and, over the weekend itself, committing additional staff and resources to support partners. This will include community patrols and responding to reports of illegal bonfires.

We will also promote how best to take part in the festivities legally and, most importantly, safely – and you can help. Fly-tipping can be a major cause of fire so, if you see fly-tipping or notice an area where there is a build-up of refuse, please [email our waste team](#) and they will clear it up.

## ***Change for the better***

We are nearing the end of the first month of public engagement on developing a four-year strategy to meet the changing demands of our city and its services – my thanks to everyone who has taken the time to submit their views so far. There is still plenty of time to get involved and tell us what your priorities are.

This year, we are taking a longer-term approach towards budget planning and service provision – and hearing your thoughts on how we can continue to prioritise our investment in key services whilst delivering necessary savings.

We have saved over £240 million since 2012, but are facing a projected funding gap of around £28 million for 2019/20 and a £106 million shortfall by 2022/23. Meeting these challenges will require tough choices, which is why we need to embrace a forward-thinking and ambitious change strategy.

Please complete our [online survey](#) or try your hand at [balancing our budgets](#) by 7 December. Your feedback will be used to develop this long-term plan and influence how the 2019/20 budget is set in February.

## ***Your city needs you***

The search is now on for one of the [most exciting and unusual jobs going in Scotland](#). As part of the 2050 Edinburgh City Vision campaign, three inquisitive candidates will be recruited as official 'futurists' for the city and sent to Dublin, Copenhagen or Helsinki to research how these pioneering cities plan for their futures.

Applications are now open to residents aged 18 and over to submit a successful video entry on why they deserve to land the dream role. It is the latest move in our citywide campaign to develop an all-encompassing and inspiring City Vision for Edinburgh 2050. If you've already shared your vision, thank you. If not, please help us [shape the Edinburgh of the future](#).

## ***Closing the poverty gap***

Our Vision as an administration is that all Edinburgh residents should have the opportunity to share in our city's undoubted success; they should have enough money to live on, a good place to live and access to education, training and work. Clearly there is still much work to be done for this to become a reality.

As many as 82,000 people in Edinburgh live below the poverty line. The gap in life expectancy between different parts of the city can be as much as 24 years. And 54% of all people in poverty are living in a household where at least one adult is in work. None of this is remotely acceptable.

One way we are seeking to address this is through setting up Edinburgh's new Poverty Commission and we recently appointed national expert and associate director of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, [Doctor Jim McCormick](#), as its Chair – with Deputy Leader, Cammy Day, as vice.

The Commission will listen carefully to the unique and lived experiences of our residents as it works with key partners to tackle the issues in a supportive and effective way. If we are going to make a difference, we need everyone in the city to work together around our common goal.

## ***Homes for the future***

Very much with the above in mind, I'm pleased with the progress we're making against our commitment to deliver 20,000 new affordable homes with our housing association partners in the next 10 years.

A [major new development in Craigmillar](#) will see 194 new homes for affordable and market rent completed by 2020. Residents will have access to amenity areas and a large public green space will be at its heart. It's great to see progress being made on the regeneration of the area with quality affordable housing and plenty of outdoor space.

Meanwhile, we're in the process of handing over the keys to tenants for their new homes in Clermiston and Wester Hailes in the west of the city and West Pilton Grove in the north. This is particularly welcome given all of these homes are for social rent.

More widely, we currently have 800 affordable homes under construction across the city and nearly 3,000 more in design development. Close to 1,000 affordable homes were completed in 2017/18 with another 1,000 expected to be finished in the next six months.

## ***Meadowbank clears another hurdle***

We've recently hit another milestone in our project to redevelop Meadowbank, with this month's pledge of £5m from SportScotland and the [appointment of a contractor](#) to deliver the city's new £45m sports centre.

Once up and running, the revamped centre promises to offer some of the best sporting facilities in the country. And with a track record working with the Council on a range of projects – most recently St John's RC Primary in Portobello where feedback has been very positive throughout – Graham Construction is well placed to take forward our designs.

Meadowbank is fast becoming one of the most important redevelopments taking place in the city; an investment in the health and wellbeing of our residents, now and for generations to come.

As a Council, we have a duty to plan for the current and future needs of our local communities, and the wider site offers a valuable opportunity to consider additional development on the site which caters for local aspirations. You can [share your views online](#) on the options for mixed-use development until the end of this month.

## ***Brown bin boost***

We've seen some big changes to bin collections across the city over recent weeks, and I want to thank residents for their patience as we have moved to introduce four-day bin collection rotas alongside our new garden waste service.

Householders have now registered a total of 70,747 brown bins for the new, improved service following the second registration window, demonstrating the appetite for recycling amongst residents – we collected around 340 tonnes of garden waste in the first week of the service alone!

Importantly, the high volume of sign-ups, which has surpassed our targets, will also help us to save over £1.4m towards other, essential services – the ones that you have told us matter most to you.

For anyone who didn't sign up this time, there will be further opportunities – look out for our next registration window in February.

## ***Get involved***

Keep up to date with all council news via our [news section online](#). You can watch live council and committee meetings via our [webcast](#) service and join the debate on Twitter using #edinwebcast. If you wish to unsubscribe, please [email](#) us.

[Follow us on twitter](#)



[Follow us on Facebook](#)

