

SNP and Green Groups Budget Motions

City of Edinburgh Council

10.00 am Thursday, 23rd February, 2023

Main Council Chamber, City Chambers

SNP and Green Groups Budget Motions

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Motion by the SNP Group and Green Group

The City of Edinburgh Council

23 February 2023

4.1 – Revenue & Capital Budget - Revenue Budget Framework 2023/27; Sustainable Capital Budget Strategy 2023/2033

1. Introduction

The SNP and Green parties are proposing a joint budget to create a progressive political alternative to the budget proposals submitted to date. Since May 2022, the climate change team has been disbanded, key work to address poverty has stalled and core services have declined.

For people in Edinburgh, the current cost-of-living crisis comes on the back of the ongoing Covid pandemic, which itself followed over a decade of austerity. Throughout these crises, women, people of colour, disabled people and other marginalised groups have borne the brunt, and the gap between rich and poor has grown further.

What's more, this pain and uncertainty is sitting against the backdrop of the looming climate and nature catastrophe. We know that the time to act on these emergencies is running out, and we are already seeing the impacts of extreme weather changes on the city which will only worsen unless concerted action is taken now. Apathy towards preventing and mitigating for climate change will not only be a moral failure of this Council, but it will end up costing the city significantly more money in the long-term too.

The Council has a vital role to play in targeting its spending towards those most in need across the city. This budget will help get things back on track, setting out real progress on the climate and nature emergencies, targeted help with the cost-of-living crisis and a focus on funding frontline services to give residents the best possible standards.

2. Financial context

This budget is taking place in the context of rampant inflation which the UK Tory Government has both partly caused and failed to control. While the Scottish Government budget has grown by 6.2% in 23/24, the inflationary pressure across spending has run at 10.7%, with Barnett consequentials down 5% in real terms since 21/22. This means an incredibly challenging financial year across all public services in Scotland.

To help relieve this pressure, the Scottish Government has committed to expanding powers in areas such as the transient visitor levy, workplace parking levy and has this year increased parking fines to better reflect the reality of urban parking needs. However, the Scottish Government also needs to go further and faster to deliver more powers to Councils which could provide significant revenue to protect public services.

The huge inflationary pressure also means that the Council needs additional help to meet the minimum

5% pay award that our hardworking staff deserve. The additional £100m in support for Councils approved in the Scottish Government's budget 23/24 now means a 4.2% pay uplift can be funded at present. We join all parties in calling for the additional funds to be met by Government, but we further note Council officers can take mid-year actions to raise millions of pounds by executing previous budget decisions in full to fund a fair pay offer following negotiations.

This year the Edinburgh Integrated Joint Board budget has increased by a total of £8.9m from the Scottish Government and we will pass this on in full to the IJB. The Scottish Government has made £1bn available across Scotland for NHS and Social Care in response to the challenges we face. Still, our EIJB faces budget pressures and a shortfall of £31m and demand pressures remain significant. We will return mid-year to examine the current policy and practice of clawbacks for those in receipt of self-directed support to help people keep more of the money paid in self-directed support on activities and support that is available and can help them manage conditions. This will be paid for within the envelope of the current settlement.

3. Shared aims and ambition for Edinburgh

This joint budget has been developed in recognition of the need for radical solutions that work for Edinburgh, and the many shared ambitions between our two parties.

Our collective approach is to face challenges head on and submit constructive suggestions which demonstrate how - by thinking differently and creatively - progressive politics can allow us to deliver effectively for our residents in these challenging times. To do this we're taking bold action, recognising the need for Council Tax reform, questioning assumptions about spending needs, and using surplus funds to protect classroom budgets, improve public safety, and make vital progress to fight climate change, among many other things.

A budget that delivers for Edinburgh's future requires a deep understanding of the different experiences and needs facing people in the city, as well as the wider global context of the climate and nature emergencies. Our joint budget proposals have been developed with equality and climate justice in mind, and are accompanied by climate and equality impact statements which have driven the budget choices we have made.

4. Budget amendment

4.1 We will take decisive action to reverse the current proposed cuts by:

4.1.1 Cancelling the proposed £5.6m cut to school budgets, protecting money in the classrooms and encouraging this to be focused on meeting additional needs;

4.1.2 Cancelling the £400k cut to education welfare officers, retaining capacity to support young people in need and better link in with schools to encourage take up;

4.1.3 Cancelling the cut to Speech and Language Therapy services, retaining these services to support young people and encourage schools to use available capacity;

4.1.4 Cancelling the plan to take £1.5m out of inclusion and support education in 24/25, protecting the provision of special schools and allowing parents and teachers to make choices with the best interests of the young person first and foremost;

4.1.5 Ensuring continued free travel for people under 22 years old on our expanded tram service, mirroring our commitment to funding over 60s travel on this sustainable transport option;

4.1.6 Reversing the £120k cut to the Taxicard scheme, which helps everyone to move more freely

around the city.

4.2 We will allocate additional spending to support investment:

4.2.1 We will invest £300k to create a skilled council climate change team to lead efforts within the council and in partnerships across the city to help us reach our collective climate goals and fulfil the Council's Climate 2030 Strategy;

4.2.2 We'll also spend £200k on the council's strategic flood management team, to help support the city's response to climate change;

4.2.3 We'll invest in ground-breaking flood prevention and climate adaptation measures with £500k for street tree projects and raingardens within roads assets;

4.2.4 We will use existing resource allocated of £100k on an economic study on climate adaptation to set a roadmap of how all residents can be protected from the worst impacts of climate change in Edinburgh;

4.2.5 We'll increase the budget for tree maintenance by £60k to make sure the trees we do have are well looked after and thriving

4.2.6 We will invest £50k in an innovative property survey pilot project to help some home-owners take action to better insulate their homes, saving them money, reducing emissions, and providing useful learning for others;

4.2.7 We'll allocate funds towards the creation of a new Bike Hire scheme, supporting more residents and visitors to cycle around Edinburgh;

4.2.8 We will invest £100k in an Accessibility Commission for the city, integrating accessibility into our planning, transport and housing systems to enable equal access for all across our city;

4.2.9 We will invest an additional £500k in road and pavement repairs and spend £200k buying game-changing "pothole pro" machinery which can transform how we tackle road repair in an efficient way;

4.2.10 We will spend an additional £200k on street cleaning, repeating some of the deep cleans that have happened around the City, focusing on the city centre and areas most in need;

4.2.11 We'll use £400k to expand public toilet provision and upgrade existing public toilets, improving accessibility and making sure nobody is caught short in our popular parks;

4.2.12 We'll allocate funding for the Council's participation in Stonewall's accreditation scheme and fund equal provision of sanitary bins across Council buildings;

4.2.13 We will also allocate an additional £110k to increase provision of counselling and support services for victim survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence;

4.2.14 We will invest £100k to provide better lighting in parks, making the city a safer and more welcoming place, particularly for women;

4.2.15 We will put another £200k into supporting youth work across the city, recognising the long-lasting impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on our young people;

4.2.16 We will create a fund of £200k for our local community centres, at a time when those efforts are truly needed this funding will help them survive and thrive through the challenges of increased energy costs and other pressures;

4.2.17 We'll increase participatory budgeting by allocating an additional £200k to budgets of neighbourhood grants funds for those that run decision-making as a PB exercise, putting decisions in the

hands of communities;

4.2.18 Following the UK Government passing outrageous voter suppression legislation, we'll allocate £50k for the elections team to support those most likely to lose their rights to get what they need to vote;

4.2.19 We will fund the continuation of the Gaelic Implementation Officer post to ensure the plan to enhance Gaelic across the City stays on track;

4.2.20 We will match-fund the outstanding needs of the refurbishment funding to the King's Theatre, keeping this Edinburgh institution thriving for generations to come.

4.2.21 We'll borrow £500k to invest in the replacement for the Pride bridge, match-funding the gap in the project after the equivalent cost for demolition that we've already allocated;

4.2.22 We are allocating £60k to bring the Tollcross Clock back to its historic location;

4.23 And we have put in place consideration of pay awards which, when combined with Scottish Government funding, will help to bring some reassurance to our staff members that they will receive the pay increase they deserve.

4.3 We will fund these additional investment and reverse proposed cuts by:

4.3.1 Increasing parking fines (Penalty Charges Notices) to the new maximum level of fines - raising £2.4m. We'll also increase on-street car park charges to reach 20% for on-street locations excluding residents permit charges and town centres and will look to expand charging in destinations trouble spots to create new revenues and enforcement to raise revenue in future years;

4.3.2 Cutting the Lord Provost budget by £100k, recognising that our front-line services are more important than hospitality;

4.3.3 Saving a further £250k in property services by acknowledging the under-occupancy in buildings following changes to working patterns and beginning processes to let out Waverley Court;

4.3.4 Saving £450k by building on work already delivered across departments to control agency staff spend, focusing on filling vacancies rather than relying on expensive agency workers or overtime;

4.3.5 Reducing the Council's communication budget by £100k reflecting the increasing ability to get key messages out to residents digitally and need to prioritise money in front-line services;

4.3.6 Saving £100k by reducing the number of Service and Policy Advisors in the Council, reflecting the halving of senior Councillors this team works to;

4.3.7 Raising £40k through increasing some of the fees and charges on things like external catering and room hire, but excluding services people rely on like school meals, access to outdoor space, and funerals;

4.3.8 We'll also put in motion plans to release further savings in year by exploring agreement to jointly procure services with other councils in the region, supporting staff out of the redeployment pool and releasing one-off monies through selling assets to raise vital cash for lifeline services.

4.4 Council tax:

4.4.1 Fairness in Household Incomes

We believe that the present system of Council Tax constrains local government's ability to raise revenue fairly. In our current decision-making context, the most pressing immediate concern during a cost-of-

living crisis is the need to shield households in lower bands from having to pay the same increases as those in higher bands.

The proposal we would have wished to put to council is to set a Council Tax rate under section 93 of the 1992 Local Government Finance Act that is 20% higher than the 2022-23 level, and creating a targeted discount scheme under Section 20 of the 2003 Local Government in Scotland Act where Council itself meets part of the Council Tax bill. That would offset increases so that occupied primary residences in Bands A and B would be frozen, paying no more than at present, in Bands C and D pay 3% more, and in Band E, F, G and H pay 5%, 10%, 15% and 20% more respectively. This would ensure that Council Tax bills correspond more progressively to the value of properties. For the reasons below we are not able to propose this option.

We welcome the legal advice sought by officers, which gives confidence that Council may pay grants to households to support their financial well-being and helpfully identifies the other provisions of the 1992 Act which would interact with our proposal and need to be taken into consideration and negotiated in any attempt at implementation.

We believe this provides a solid base to build a fairer system for Edinburgh.

An interim proposal to help households more likely to face cost-of-living pressures in the coming year is to pay £100 grants to households who occupy Band A-D homes that are sole residences. Despite advice that a scheme could have been be lawful, and deliverable it has unfortunately been advised that this cannot be considered at this meeting.

4.4.2.1 We therefore propose the establishment of a Council working group, with representation from all parties committed to a fairer system, to develop proposals that can be delivered in next year's budget and prepare the necessary infrastructure to administer them.

4.4.2.2 We further ask officers to pursue further statutory guidance from the Scottish Government under Section 21 of the 2003 Local Government in Scotland Act on the intended extent of the powers in the Act and necessary changes to enable local government to set fairer rates in the context of the Council Tax continuing in a similar form for the foreseeable future.

4.4.2.3 We therefore – reluctantly – are forced to propose to increase Council Tax by 5.99% and we will revisit the issue of direct financial support to households in-year in the context of point 4.4.2.2 and 4.4.2.1.

Conclusions

Council notes the following reports from the Executive Directors of Corporate Services and the Chief Executive:

Council Budget Reports

(a) Revenue Budget Framework 2023/27 – Progress Update - referral from the Finance and Resources Committee

(b) Revenue Budget Framework 2023/24 – Further Update – report by the Chief Executive

(c) Council Revenue Budget Framework – (2023/24) - Integrated Impact Assessments – report by the Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services

(d) Revenue Budget 2023/24 - Risks and Reserves - referral from the Finance and Resources Committee

(e) Sustainable Capital Budget Strategy 2023-2033 – referral from the Finance and Resources Committee

Council therefore approves:

- The Revenue Budget 2023/24 as set out in the reports appended to this motion, as amended by the changes/allocations included in Appendix 1;
- A band 'D' Council Tax of £1,461.34 for 2023/24;
- The Council Tax and Rating resolution set out in Annex 2 to this motion;
- The 2023/33 Sustainable Capital Budget Strategy as set out in the report by the Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services, as amended by the changes shown in Annex 3;
- A further report to be submitted to seek approval of revised charges for Council services, the financial impact of which is contained in Appendix 1 to this motion; and
- A further report to be submitted to seek approval of the prudential indicators arising from this motion.

Appendix 1: Climate impact statement

Following a Green amendment at Policy & Sustainability committee on 17th November 2022, it was agreed that officers should “provide high level guidance for political groups to complete a climate impact assessment of proposed budgets in the run up to the Council’s budget setting process in February” and it was recommended that “all budget motions should include an accompanying statement to their proposals which sets out how their spending plans align with the Council’s climate strategies, including this as an appendix”. This Appendix (1) addresses that recommendation, building on the officer climate impact template which was shared with all political groups in December 2022. We have also produced an equalities impact statement which is found in Appendix 2.

This impact statement is not a substitute for a full climate impact assessment or carbon budget. Further, this statement does not cover all budget lines or “missed opportunities” from unfunded projects which would otherwise have a positive impact on climate targets. Instead, the focus has been to produce a counterfactual analysis of the climate impact of the proposed budget by noting specific budget line insertions, edits and deletions, compared to the officer budget presented at Finance & Resources committee on 7th February 2023.

In future years we hope it will be possible for groups to conduct a fuller impact assessment of budget proposals. We welcome thoughts from officers and political groups about how this might be realised.

Climate impact statement

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that its policies, plans and strategies take account of: i) carbon impacts; ii) adaptation to climate change and iii) sustainable development. The climate impact statement is structured around these themes.

i) Carbon impacts

The carbon impact of budget proposals can be assessed in terms of: a) buildings and energy use, b) infrastructure and energy use; c) transport and d) resource use and waste. Compared to the officer budget presented at Finance & Resources committee on 7th February 2023 it is considered that the budget proposals will result in a greater decrease of carbon emissions in the short and long term.

a) Buildings and energy use	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<p>1. The budget proposals reinstate the investment programme to deliver 100% of existing council homes to EESH2 standards compared to just 81% from the officer budget. This will result in a greater decrease of energy usage and therefore a greater decrease of carbon emissions in the short and long term.</p>	<p>1. The budget proposals include new public toilets which will lead to an increase of carbon emissions from construction in the short term. Mitigations should be put in place to ensure construction is as low carbon as possible. The provision of new, accessible public toilets has other positive benefits which are considered to outweigh the negative carbon impact, especially over the longer term.</p>
<p>2. The budget proposals include an investment in property surveys to support residents in the private sector to reduce energy costs. This will result in a decrease of energy usage and carbon emissions in the short and long term. This is not included in the officer budget.</p>	
<p>3. The budget proposals include plans to reduce the use of some council buildings in line with the 20-minute neighbourhood model. This will result in a decrease of energy usage within the council and therefore a decrease of</p>	

<p>carbon emissions in the short and long term, in line with the CERP. Despite this, the impact on city-wide emissions may be negligible as buildings are used by other groups whose energy usage contributes to emissions in the city.</p> <p>4. The budget proposals include investment in an Energy Officer as part of the Climate Team to prioritise development of low carbon and sustainable energy. This work will result in a greater decrease of carbon emissions across all council business in the long term. This post is not included in the officer budget.</p>		
b) Infrastructure and energy use		
Positive impacts	Negative impacts	
<p>1. The budget proposals include investment in a Partnerships & Programme Manager and PMO Officer post as part of the climate team. These posts will support delivery of the 2030 Climate Strategy and actions to decarbonise infrastructure therein. Accordingly, these posts will result in a greater decrease of carbon emissions in the long term. Funding for these posts is not included in the officer budget</p>	<p>1. The budget proposals include construction of new street and parks lighting which will have a negative impact on biodiversity (light pollution) and energy usage. Mitigations should be put in place to ensure that new lights are energy efficient and use appropriate coloured bulbs. The provision of increased street and park lighting has other, long term positive benefits which are considered to outweigh the negative carbon impact.</p>	
c) Transport		
Positive impacts	Negative impacts	
<p>1. The budget proposals include investment in cycling provision, including for further development of a business case for a city-wide cycle hire scheme. Investment to support people to take up cycling will result in modal shift and lead to a reduction in transport emissions in the long term. This is not included in the officer budget.</p> <p>2. The budget proposals include an increase in parking charges compared to the officer budget. This encourages modal shift and will lead to a reduction in transport emissions in the long term.</p> <p>3. The proposals include concessions for U22s tram travel to encourage modal shift amongst younger people. This will have a positive impact on carbon emissions relating to transport. This is not included in the officer budget.</p>		

d) Resource use and waste	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<i>There are no additional proposals / changes which affect resource use / waste</i>	<i>There are no additional proposals / changes which affect resource use / waste</i>

ii) Climate resilience impacts

The climate resilience impacts of the budget proposals can be assessed in terms of their impact on: a) communities, b) infrastructure and service delivery and c) biodiversity and land use. Compared to the officer budget presented at Finance & Resources committee on 7th February 2023 it is considered that the budget proposals will reduce the vulnerability of residents to climate change, reduce the effects of climate change on the city and improve biodiversity.

a) Communities	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The budget proposals include investment in a Stakeholder Engagement & Communications Officer as part of the climate team. This role would support engagement with communities on climate action, improving residents' understanding of the climate emergency and resilience in the face of it. This post is not funded in the officer budget. 2. The budget proposals include investment in public toilets which include public access to water sources, important during periods of extreme heat. This means that the city will be better equipped to deal with extreme weather arising from the climate crisis. This investment is not included in the officer budget. 3. The budget proposals include funding for a full economic study to be undertaken looking at climate adaptation measures. This economic study will inform considerations needing to be made around climate adaptation measures in the city, including their impacts on communities. 	
b) Infrastructure and service delivery	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The budget proposals reinstate the investment programme to deliver 100% of existing council homes to EESH2 standards compared to just 81% from the officer budget. This will ensure all council homes are "climate ready" and comfortable during periods of extreme heat / cold. 2. The budget proposals include an 	

<p>investment in property surveys to support residents in the private sector to retrofit homes. This will support residents to ensure their homes are “climate ready” and comfortable during periods of extreme heat / cold. This proposal is not included in the officer budget.</p> <p>3. The budget proposals include funding for a full economic study to be undertaken looking at climate adaptation measures. This economic study will help us to understand the effect climate change might have on council services and infrastructure, and help us to reimagine service delivery in this context.</p> <p>4. The budget proposals include investment in a flood management team to design more surface water management schemes. This will lessen the effect climate change will have on city infrastructure by decreasing the likelihood of flooding and drainage infrastructure failure. This investment is not included in the officer budget.</p> <p>5. The budget proposals include investment in street tree projects and rain gardens within roads asset management. This will mitigate the effect climate change could have on roads infrastructure and reduce the likelihood of flooding and drainage infrastructure failure. This investment is not included in the officer budget.</p>		
c) Biodiversity and land use		
Positive impacts	Negative impacts	
<p>1. The budget proposals include investment in a tree maintenance team to ensure that newly planted trees survive. This will improve biodiversity, increase climate resilience through increased canopy cover and shade, and reduce climate emissions. This investment is not included in the officer budget.</p> <p>2. The budget proposals include investment in street tree projects and rain gardens within roads assets. Rain gardens are an example of nature-based solutions to climate change, providing habitats to increase biodiversity. This investment is not included in the officer budget.</p> <p>3. The budget proposals include greater</p>	<p>1. The budget proposals include an increase in housebuilding which can lead to habitat destruction and soil sealing, as well as increased energy consumption. Mitigations should be put in place to ensure that development is “nature positive” and happens on appropriate sites. The positive benefits of house building in the city are considered to outweigh the negative impacts development might otherwise have.</p>	

investment in street cleansing. This intervention can improve biodiversity.	
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iii) Sustainable development impacts

The sustainable development impacts of the budget proposals can be assessed in terms of their impact on: a) social justice, b) economic development and c) environmental good stewardship. Compared to the officer budget presented at Finance & Resources committee on 7th February 2023 it is considered that the budget proposals will improve opportunities for “green” economic development and improve environmental good stewardship. The impact of budget proposals on social justice are considered as part of the equalities impact statement (Appendix 2).

a) Social justice	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
The impact of budget proposals on social justice will be considered as part of the equalities impact statement (Appendix 2)	
b) Economic development	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The budget proposals include investment in a Green Finance Officer as part of the climate team. This post will secure funding for climate projects in the Council / city whilst also supporting Edinburgh’s wider green economy, skills and supply chains, and encourage job creation. This investment is not included in the officer budget. The budget proposals include investment in further climate training for council staff. This will develop skills in the green economy amongst the workforce. This investment is not included in the officer budget. 	
c) Environmental good stewardship	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The budget proposals include investment in cycling provision, including for further development of a business case for a city-wide cycle hire scheme. This is not included in the officer budget. Investment to support people to take up cycling will result in modal shift and improve air quality. The budget proposals include an increase in parking charges compared to the officer budget. This encourages modal shift and will improve air quality. The budget proposals include concessions for U22s tram travel. This will encourage modal shift and improve 	

air quality.

4. The budget proposals include greater investment in street cleansing. This intervention demonstrates environmental good stewardship.

Appendix 2: Equalities impact statement

Budget decisions made by local authorities do not have the same impact on all people. Pre-existing inequalities can be exacerbated by failure to account for this in how spending is directed and cuts made.

The cost-of-living crisis is having a disproportionate impact on women, people of colour, disabled people, and other people who have been historically discriminated against. Those on lower incomes, in precarious work, more reliant on social security and with greater caring responsibilities, will bear the brunt of cuts and other austerity measures. Compounding this for women, many of the service areas that local authorities have jurisdiction over - including schools, public transport, licensing, community centres and housing and homelessness - are of particular concern to the lives of women who are the majority of care providers, public transport users, and who have particular needs and experiences relating to public space and safety.

This equalities impact statement should not be seen as a full impact assessment, nor has our budget proposal undergone a full gender budget analysis. Rather this is an attempt to set out the equalities considerations that have formed part of the creation of this budget proposal and is focused on those areas where our budget proposal diverges from the officer budget presented to the Finance and Resources Committee on 7th February 2023, and is based on the gender-budget analysis guidance from the European Institute of Gender Equality.

Information on the Officer Budget

The council's current approach to assessing both existing inequalities, and the impacts of budget decisions is deeply disappointing. Only five proposals for cuts and spending were deemed in need of an Integrated Impact Assessment, therefore there is no analysis of the impact that the overall officer budget proposals will have on different groups of people in Edinburgh.

In many cases data is simply not gathered - or is not being made publicly available - to enable a robust understanding of the needs and experiences of people in Edinburgh and the impact of spending decisions. In future years, we hope that fuller information will be made available in this space and we welcome thoughts from officers and political groups about how this might be realised.

SNP-Green joint budget aims

This budget has been created from the guiding principles that, despite the immense pressures facing local authorities, we must maximise spending for the benefit of the people of Edinburgh, as well as making investments to tackle and mitigate for the climate emergency.

The budget proposal recognises that failure to make this spending now will have a significant financial impact in the future, and therefore its aim is to be fiscally responsible whilst also responding to the moral imperative to take action for social and climate justice.

How will the SNP/Green budget proposals impact on different groups of people and increase equality?

Reversing cuts

Education

The officer budget proposes a number of cuts to education services including speech and language therapy, welfare officers, and transition teachers. While this may have an impact on all young people, there are clearly groups who benefit more from additional support - including care experienced young people, children experiencing poverty, and disabled children – who will be disproportionately impacted by these cuts.

Following the disruption in education we have seen throughout the pandemic, stability and support for young people is vital. Additionally, the stated rationale for the removal of some posts being that they were temporary

interventions during the covid crisis ignores the reality that the pandemic is not over for many people in the city, particularly disabled people and people with long-term conditions.

As well as young people, we know that women still undertake the vast majority of childcare in Scotland and bear the overwhelming responsibility for school-related administration. Removing support which provides a lifeline for many young people will also have a knock-on impact on women's time, resources, and wellbeing.

Continuing Tram Concessions for under 22s, and the Taxicard scheme

As well as environmental aspirations relying on a significant reduction in private car use and investment in public transport, decent and affordable public transport is an issue of equality. Women are far less likely to be car owners than men, the increasing costs of fuel create a financial barrier for poorer people, and lack of accessible infrastructure prevents many disabled people from traveling as they wish.

Continuing free tram travel for under 22s is beneficial for young people – creating parity with over 60s – as well as marginalised groups within this age bracket. The Taxicard scheme offers travel options for disabled people across Edinburgh and while the parameters of the scheme should be revisited to ensure it is providing the right level of support, to cut it outright would have a significant impact on disabled people. The majority of disabled people and carers of disabled people in Scotland are women.

Additional spending with a focus on equality

Climate change

The impacts of climate change will hit the poorest in Edinburgh hardest. The ability to respond to the impacts of extreme heat, flooding and economic shocks will all be dependent on socio-economic status, job security, physical health, caring responsibilities and other issues. As well as spending on measures to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change, our spending proposals look at adaptation. By investing in nature-based solutions to prevent flooding and mitigate other climate changes, we will improve people's living environment – providing access to green space, shade, and better air quality.

Public toilets

Public toilets are an equalities issue. They are more likely to be needed by women, people providing care for children and adults (mostly women), and disabled people. The budget proposal to prioritise spending on increasing and improving the accessibility of public toilets will provide a vital public service to people.

Additionally, the increased provision of temporary toilets in key parks over the summer months will have a positive impact on all users of public space by providing facilities, reducing incidences of public nudity, and keeping our parks safe and sanitary.

Supporting enfranchisement

The UK Government's new voter identification legislation will have a disproportionate impact on certain groups of people, including those with severely limiting disabilities, unemployed people and unpaid carers, first time voters, and people without formal education or qualifications. Women, people of colour, migrants and disabled people are more likely to fall into these groups, therefore the enfranchisement spending in this budget proposal will have a positive impact on these groups.

Equalities and Access spending

This budget includes specific equalities spend including money for the Stonewall accreditation scheme which will benefit LGBTI people, and increased money for domestic abuse and sexual violence charities which will support women - particularly women of colour - and young people.

Increased funding for youth work and community centres targets spend towards young people, many of whom experience multiple discriminations, and work with particular groups of people done through community centres including older people, the bereaved, learning disabled adults, carers, and refugees.

Funding for an accessibility commission will work towards the mainstreaming of access and inclusion throughout our planning, housing and public transport systems, as well as considering provision of council services in the broadest sense. This will have positive benefits for disabled people who have varying needs.

Revenue raising

While increasing finances is vital to continue to provide the services the city needs, care has been taken to ensure increased revenue does not further increase inequality. Increased fees and charges come from non poverty-related services, and spending has been taken from non front-line service departments such as the Office of the Lord Provost.

Could the budget be used differently to address existing inequalities?

All spending done by the council should be subject to robust gender budget analysis and equalities impact assessments. This is not just about the figures that make up the budget, but the intention and policy behind how spending is targeted.

Investing in equality-focused initiatives alone will not be enough to successfully challenge the status quo and will continue to see growing inequality across Edinburgh. Core budget spending and assumptions about the services the city provides need to be scrutinised, and robust data must be gathered to ensure that we are not inadvertently discriminating against those with protected characteristics.

Moved by Councillor Lesley Macinnes

Seconded by Councillor Alys Mumford

**THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
SNP / GREEN BUDGET MOTION
REVENUE BUDGET 2023 - 2025**

	2023/24		2024/25	
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure to be Funded				
- Resource Allocation Totals	1,243,820			
- Add: Expenditure funded through Specific Grants	<u>56,559</u>			
		1,300,379		
- General Revenue Funding and Non Domestic Rates	(903,917)			
- Ring Fenced Funding	<u>(56,559)</u>			
		(960,476)		
To be Funded by Council Tax		<u>339,903</u>		<u>386,914</u>
Council Tax at Band D	£ 1,461.34		£ 1,505.18	
Increase on Previous Year	£ 82.59		£ 43.84	
- Percentage Increase	5.99%		3.00%	
Funding Requirement		339,903		386,914
Council Tax Income		<u>348,550</u>		<u>359,007</u>
		<u>348,550</u>		<u>359,007</u>
Funding (Excess) / Shortfall at Council Tax increase above as reported to Council, February 2023		(8,647)		27,907
Service Investment (see Appendix 1)	3,447		3,171	
Add / Less: Amendments to Draft Revenue Budget Framework (see Appendix 1)	9,440		11,550	
Less: Additional Savings (see Appendix 1)	<u>(4,240)</u>		<u>(6,065)</u>	
		8,647		8,656
Contributions to / (from) reserves (itemise)				
		-		-
Balance of Available Resources		<u>(0)</u>		<u>36,563</u>

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

**SNP / GREEN BUDGET MOTION
REVENUE BUDGET 2023 - 2025**

	2023/24	2024/25
SERVICE INVESTMENT	£000	£000
Reinstate funding from capital grant shortfall	85	
Additional capital investment		224
Property surveys for energy / net zero	50	
Community centres	200	
Youth work	200	
Rape crisis / equally safe	110	
Climate team / climate training	300	
Gaelic implementation post	60	
Trees	60	
Bicycle hire scheme	532	
Accessibility commission	100	
Street cleaning measures	200	
Roads and pavements	500	
Economic study climate adaptation	100	(100)
Funded from carry forward funds from 2022/23	(100)	100
Street tree projects and rain-gardens within road assets	500	(500)
Strategic flood management team	200	
Voter registration and ID requirement drive	50	
Increased funding for local grants (participatory budgets)	200	
Stonewall accreditation and equal sanitary provision	100	
TOTAL SERVICE INVESTMENT	<u>3,447</u>	<u>(276)</u>
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2023/27		
Review of Devolved School management (DSM) allocations (ECS6)	5,550	(250)
Education welfare officers	400	200
Speech and Language therapy	370	130
Taxicard	120	30
Review and alignment of inclusion and support		1,500
U22's tram concessions	3,000	500
TOTAL AMENDMENTS TO DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET FRAMEWORK	<u>9,440</u>	<u>2,110</u>
ADDITIONAL SAVINGS		
Lord Provost's Budget	(100)	
SPAs	(100)	
Communciation services	(100)	
Waverley Court / asset use reduction / locally based services	(250)	(1,000)
Increase penalty charge notices to the maximum level (£50 / (£100)	(2,400)	
On-street parking charges up to 20% increase	(800)	
Workforce control - reduction in agency and overtime	(450)	
Fees and charges (extra 1% on non-poverty related, excluding parking)	(40)	
Joint procurement contracts		(325)
Supporting staff out of redeployment pool		(500)
TOTAL ADDITIONAL SAVINGS	<u>(4,240)</u>	<u>(1,825)</u>

**THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL TAX / RATING RESOLUTION
SNP / GREEN BUDGET MOTION**

To recommend that in respect of the year to 31st March, 2024:

1. GENERAL FUND

Revenue Estimates - the Revenue Estimates as presented and adjusted be approved;

Council Tax - estimated expenditure from Council Tax of £348.550m be met and in terms of Sections 70(1) and 74(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the 1992 Act) Council Tax be levied in respect of properties in the bands defined in Section 74(2) of the 1992 Act, as amended by The Council Tax (Substitution of Proportion) (Scotland) Order 2016, as follows:

Band	Council Tax	Band	Council Tax
	£		£
A	974.23	E	1,920.04
B	1,136.60	F	2,374.68
C	1,298.97	G	2,861.79
D	1,461.34	H	3,580.28

2. RATING APPEALS TIMETABLE

In terms of Part XI of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1947 the following dates be approved:

Main Assessment Roll

Lodging of Appeals with the Executive Director of Corporate Services by
Hearing of Appeals by the Rating Authority

14 July 2023

15 September 2023

Amendments to Main Assessment Roll made subsequent to its issue

Lodging of Appeals with the Executive
Director of Corporate Services

Within six weeks of issue of Rate Demand or
in terms of Section 11 of the Rating and
Valuation (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 1984

Hearing of Appeals by the Rating Authority

Periodically

3. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Expenditure on Capital projects in progress be met.

4. BORROWING

The Council borrows necessary sums to meet the above capital expenditure.

**THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
SNP / GREEN BUDGET MOTION
CAPITAL BUDGET 2023 - 2028
ADDITIONS TO REVISED PROGRAMME**

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Available Resources for Distribution (if applicable)						
Reinstate funding from capital grant shortfall	1,100					1,100
Additional capital investment	160	5,800				5,960
	<u>1,260</u>	<u>5,800</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7,060</u>
Changes to recommended Capital Investment Programme						
Tollcross clock	60					60
Pride bridge	500					500
Park lights	100					100
Public toilets	400	200				600
Roads and pavements repairs equipment	200					200
King's Theatre		5,600				5,600
	<u>1,260</u>	<u>5,800</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7,060</u>

Motion by SNP Group and Green Group

The City of Edinburgh Council

**Item 4.2 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget
Strategy 2023/2024 – 2032/2033**

Council:

- 1.1 Notes that the officer proposals at Appendix 3 and 4 reduce the ten-year capital programme from £2.9bn to £1.6bn investment in council housing resulting in the council housebuilding programme coming to an end with no new homes being put into design and development, and the investment in energy efficiency reduced so that only 81% of homes will meet EESSH2 standards.
- 1.2 Agrees that an end to the council housebuilding programme would be catastrophic for Edinburgh, given the urgent need for more social housing.
- 1.3 Further agrees that this reduction in investment is unacceptable given the number of tenants suffering from damp and mould and the negative impact poorly insulated homes have on climate emission targets

2. Rent Increase

- 2.1 Therefore, agrees to a rent increase of 4.7% this year and commits to this level of increase for the next thirteen years, which would allow the capital programme to be brought back in line with previous targets on council house building and investment in improving existing homes.
- 2.2 Notes that 70-80% of tenants will have some form of assistance with paying their rent in the form of benefits from the UK Government but that some tenants will be liable for the increase, therefore agrees a tenant arrears fund as set out below (3.1-3.3).
- 2.3 Agrees that CEC must continue to make the case to COSLA and the Scottish Government for increased grant funding for new build social housing and for the investment required to bring housing stock up to the EESSH2 standard, and that any increase in funding in these areas should be used to offset the 4.7% increase in future years wherever possible.

3. Tenant Arrears Fund

- 3.1 Recognises that the Tenant Hardship Fund proposed by officers does not go far enough to mitigate the potential impact of a 4.7% increase on those tenants who would be liable to pay an increase themselves. Agrees to bring back detailed options in one cycle to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee on an alternative easy access fund which makes it straightforward and guarantees support for any tenant who might experience hardship due to the rent increase. These plans must follow offers of engagement with political groups to explore alternative models.

3.2 Agrees that £500k of the £4.744m additional revenue from the rent increase in 2023/2024 will be set aside for this purpose. If further funding is required in year, it will come off the amount allocated for Strategic Housing Investment as set out in the table below to replace Appendix 3. Also agrees that if the full £500k is not utilised any remaining sum will be allocated to Strategic Housing Investment.

	Projected Outturn 2022/23 (£m)	Proposed Budget 2023/24 (£m)	Movement £m
Net Income	103.169	107.913	4.744
Expenditure			
Housing Services	35.862	37.294	1.432
Property Maintenance	25.094	24.942	-0.152
Debt Charges	36.905	36.676	-0.229
Strategic Housing Investment	5.308	7.501	2.193
Tenant Hardship Fund	0.000	0.500	0.500
Damp and Mould	0.000	1.000	1.000
Total Expenditure	103.169	107.913	4.744

3.3 For future years beyond 2023-2024, agrees that officers will look at ways that this fund could be supplemented from funding outside of the HRA to support tenants on low incomes and protect the most vulnerable residents reporting back on this scoping exercise to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee.

4. Damp and Mould

4.1 Notes the unacceptable levels of damp and mould that too many tenants are experiencing and that previous calls for action have not been delivered on.

4.2 Agrees that the processes around damp and mould are not working, and therefore agrees for a task force will be put together to implement a rapid action plan for dealing with damp and mould with £1m funding available for immediate improvements for tenants.

4.3 The task force will take the data we already have around repairs, the additional information we are gaining from the stock condition survey and work out a plan for prioritising the capital investment in ESSH2 to target properties most impacted by damp and mould. The task force will also be in position to implement any management actions that come out of the damp and mould internal audit, and to look at guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator around 'Right First Time' repairs and how this can be achieved in damp and mould cases. In particular the task force will focus on why there are multiple visits from the same trades and often from

inspectors to the same property before effective action is taken to deal with damp and mould. An action plan will be developed to ensure that damp and mould is made an absolute priority by the council, with reports to CLT and Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work regularly to give an update on progress.

4.4 Does not agree Appendix 4, agrees that a new Appendix 4 will be brought back for approval alongside the HRA capital budget report based on a 4.7% increase over thirteen years.

Moved by Cllr Kate Campbell

Seconded by Cllr Ben Parker