

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday 10 December 2024

Present

Councillors Watt (in the Chair), Beal, Booth, Lezley Marion Cameron (substituting for Councillor Meagher), Davidson, Dijkstra-Downie, Dobbin, Doggart (substituting for Councillor Whyte), Fullerton (substituting for Councillor Campbell), Graham (substituting for Councillor Day), Kumar, Lang, McFarlane (substituting for Councillor Aston), Mumford (substituting for Councillor Bandel – item 10 onwards), Mowat, Nicolson (substituting for Councillor Biagi), Rae (substituting for Councillor Bandel items 1- 9) and Staniforth.

1. Chair

Decision

In the absence of the Convener, Councillor Watt was appointed to the Chair.

2. Deputations

a) The Ripple Project (in respect of Item 7.4 – Supporting the Third Sector in Edinburgh)

The deputation supported the proposals with opportunities for the future and indicated that their work and outcomes contributed to numerous Council priorities. They felt that any sustainable long -term approach from the Council in the way in which it supported the third sector would not only benefit the third sector and the people they served, but would benefit the Council and the people it served as they were the same people.

The deputation stressed that any work that was done to bring them closer to the Council, to recognise the symbiotic relationship and to play to individual strengths was welcomed.

(see item 3 below)

b) FAIR Ltd (Family Advice Information Resource (in respect of Item 7.4 – Supporting the Third Sector in Edinburgh))

The deputation highlighted the real risks to charities and the people they worked with, the timelines and the dangers if there was not a solution achieved. They viewed themselves as a trusted partner and held a service level agreement based on this and, like other third sector organisations, moved over to the AIGB grant programme in 2019 and were one of the 64 organisations who looked like they would not receive funding from April.

The deputation had serious concerns about the lack of consultation with people with learning disabilities and felt there had not been an appropriate level of evaluation on the impact that the cuts of these services would have.

They stressed that organisations, without statutory funding from April 2025, may no longer be able to provide the services that so many of Edinburgh's most vulnerable citizens needed and felt that not having this funding would cause catastrophic consequences that could result in a huge strain on already stretched services.

(see item 3 below)

c) Edinburgh's TSI Reference Group and Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC) (in respect of Item 7.4 – Supporting the Third Sector in Edinburgh)

The deputation indicated that third sector organisations were at the forefront of prevention and early intervention and that the demands on resources were unrelenting, and decisions often shaped by immediate and critical need. They recognised that health and social care delivery contracts must be funded by the relevant authorities but core investment to underpin the essential work of the third sector required a fresh approach and they would welcome the opportunity to co -design that.

The deputation welcomed the report and the acknowledgement of the third sector but stressed that collaboration wasn't just about an agreement on paper but about valuing each other's roles and the recognition and contribution of each other to the shaping of how to deal with the city problems and the local problems. They asked the Committee to consider convening conversations that would bring the full strength of the third sector together for a strategic dialogue to work together, to share success and knowledge about what works and what doesn't work to avoid making mistakes of what doesn't work, and to facilitate the co -design of the way to work into actionable solutions for now, but also for the long -term sustainability.

(see item 3 below)

3. Supporting the Third Sector in Edinburgh

Details were provided on proposals for the delivery of savings which were required to be made by the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) and might include a reduction in the EIJB's grants programme, which if agreed could represent a significant challenge for the third sector organisations in Edinburgh who currently received these grants and could have wider impacts on the city's communities.

Motion

- 1) To note that the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) was required to put in place significant savings measures for 2025/26 and this might result in reductions to the EIJB's grants programme.

- 2) To agree that the Council would work with the EIJB to mitigate risks associated with potential changes to the EIJB's grants programme. Mitigating actions could include the provision of interim funding, which would be delivered through a framework of agreed criteria.
- 3) To note that an update on work set out in the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services would be provided in a briefing note in January to support budget discussions.
- 4) To agree the approach set out in the report for a wider review of the way the Council supported the third sector in Edinburgh, with a view to establishing a new sustainable long-term approach, aligned with the Council's Business Plan priorities, for implementation from 2026/27 onwards.

- moved by Councillor Watt, seconded by Councillor Graham

Amendment 1

- 1) To note that the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) was required to put in place significant savings measures for 2025/26 and this might result in reductions to the EIJB's grants programme.
- 2) To agree that the Council would work with the EIJB to mitigate risks associated with potential changes to the EIJB's grants programme. Mitigating actions could include the provision of interim funding, which would be delivered through a framework of agreed criteria.
- 3) To note that an update on work set out in the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services would be provided in a briefing note in January to support budget discussions.
- 4) To agree the approach set out in the report for a wider review of the way the Council supported the third sector in Edinburgh, with a view to establishing a new sustainable long-term approach, aligned with the Council's Business Plan priorities, for implementation from 2026/27 onwards.
- 5) Accepts that this is an ambitious plan that requires further information and collaboration. Therefore, in recognition of Accounts Commission findings, agrees officers should consider establishing a Short Life Working Group, inclusive of elected member representations, third sector organisations, and other stakeholders to ensure this is a collaborative process.
- 6) Agrees that all final decisions about grant funding and support to third sector organisations must be reported to the relevant committee(s) for approval..

- moved by Councillor Nicolson, seconded by Councillor Kumar

Amendment 2

- 1) To note that the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) was required to put in place significant savings measures for 2025/26 and this might result in reductions to the EIJB's grants programme.

- 2) To agree that the Council would work with the EIJB to mitigate risks associated with potential changes to the EIJB's grants programme. Mitigating actions could include the provision of interim funding, which would be delivered through a framework of agreed criteria.
- 3) To note that an update on work set out in the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services would be provided in a briefing note in January to support budget discussions.
- 4) To agree the approach set out in the report for a wider review of the way the Council supported the third sector in Edinburgh, with a view to establishing a new sustainable long-term approach, aligned with the Council's Business Plan priorities, for implementation from 2026/27 onwards.
- 5) Thanks officers for their quick engagement on this issue and recognition of the importance of third sector organisations to the wellbeing of people across the city.
- 6) Welcomes the proposals for a review and reset of the relationship between the Council, Edinburgh Partnership and the public sector including third sector organisations, reflecting the understanding that third sector organisations are often the best placed to deliver services key to the Council's priorities.
- 7) Requests a report to March Policy and Sustainability Committee setting out the scope of this review including an indicative timeline, resourcing considerations, and reporting proposals, understanding that some decisions around funding sit outwith the Council's control.
- 8) Notes that the motion agreed by the Finance & Resources Committee requested that "work is done to determine where there is crossover between the projects funded by the IJB and projects funded through other Council grant schemes, both in terms of organisations and project focus" and does not believe this has yet been undertaken – therefore requests this is included in the work going forward, and information is circulated in the January briefing note to parties.
- 9) Notes that since this paper was published, a group of third sector organisations facing disinvestment by the EIJB have produced a briefing note requested a limited extension to the grants programme which would enable them to co-produce a solution which would "maximise collective resources and improve outcomes for those who depend on us most", and requests that officers include this briefing note in their ongoing discussions and engagement.

- moved by Councillor Staniforth, seconded by Councillor Rae

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 2 was accepted as an addendum to the Motion.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 2 was accepted as an addendum to Amendment 1.

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the Motion (as adjusted) - 9 votes

For Amendment 1 (as adjusted) - 8 votes

(For the Motion (as adjusted): Councillors Beal, Lesley Marion Cameron, Davidson, Dijkstra-Downie, Duggart, Graham, Lang, Mowat and Watt.

For Amendment 1 (as adjusted): Councillors, Booth, Dobbin, Fullerton, Kumar, MacFarlane, Nicolson, Rae and Staniforth.)

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Watt:

- 1) To note that the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) was required to put in place significant savings measures for 2025/26 and this might result in reductions to the EIJB's grants programme.
- 2) To agree that the Council would work with the EIJB to mitigate risks associated with potential changes to the EIJB's grants programme. Mitigating actions could include the provision of interim funding, which would be delivered through a framework of agreed criteria.
- 3) To note that an update on work set out in the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services would be provided in a briefing note in January to support budget discussions.
- 4) To agree the approach set out in the report for a wider review of the way the Council supported the third sector in Edinburgh, with a view to establishing a new sustainable long-term approach, aligned with the Council's Business Plan priorities, for implementation from 2026/27 onwards.
- 5) To thank officers for their quick engagement on this issue and recognition of the importance of third sector organisations to the wellbeing of people across the city.
- 6) To welcome the proposals for a review and reset of the relationship between the Council, Edinburgh Partnership and the public sector including third sector organisations, reflecting the understanding that third sector organisations were often the best placed to deliver services key to the Council's priorities.
- 7) To request a report to March Policy and Sustainability Committee setting out the scope of this review including an indicative timeline, resourcing considerations, and reporting proposals, understanding that some decisions around funding sat outwith the Council's control.
- 8) To note that the motion agreed by the Finance and Resources Committee requested that "work is done to determine where there is crossover between the projects funded by the IJB and projects funded through other Council grant schemes, both in terms of organisations and project focus" and does not believe

this has yet been undertaken – therefore requests this be included in the work going forward, and information circulated in the January briefing note to parties.

- 9) To note that since this paper was published, a group of third sector organisations facing disinvestment by the EIJB had produced a briefing note requested a limited extension to the grants programme which would enable them to co-produce a solution which would “maximise collective resources and improve outcomes for those who depend on us most”, and request that officers include this briefing note in their ongoing discussions and engagement.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

4. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Policy and Sustainability Committee of 22 October 2024 as a correct record.

5. Policy and Sustainability Committee Work Programme

The Policy and Sustainability Committee Work Programme for 10 December 2024 was presented.

Decision

To note the Work Programme.

(Reference – Work Programme 10 December 2024, submitted.)

6. Policy and Sustainability Committee Rolling Actions Log

Details were provided of the outstanding actions arising from decisions taken by the Committee.

Decision

- 1) To agree to close the following actions:
- **Action 3** – Extreme Heat, Climate Adaptation and Resilience
 - **Action 4(1)** – Business Bulletin
 - **Action 5** – Harassment Policies – Amendment Update
 - **Action 10** – End Poverty in Edinburgh Annual Progress Report
 - **Action 11** – Council Emissions Reduction Plan – Annual Progress Report
 - **Action 12(1)** – Sponsorship of non-UK nationals
 - **Action 13** – Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Update
 - **Action 14** – Gender Recognition Reform
 - **Action 15** – Islamophobia –update on engagement
 - **Action 16** – City of Edinburgh Council: 16 Days of Action on Gender-based Violence – Motion by Councillor Watt

- **Action 24** – Business Bulletin
- **Action 25(1)** – The City of Edinburgh Council Gaelic Language Plan: Progress
- **Action 28** – Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce Trade Mission to Shenzhen
- **Action 29(2)** – An Older People’s Pathway
- **Action 31** – City of Edinburgh Council: People Strategy 2024-2027 – referral from the Policy and Sustainability Committee
- **Action 34(3)** – Business Bulletin
- **Action 35(3)** – The City of Edinburgh Council British Sign Language Plan for 2024-2030
- **Action 36** – Proactively Maximising Income – Response to a motion
- **Action 39** – Carbon impact of international travel
- **Action 41** – City Strategic Investment Fund – Strategic Programmes
- **Action 42** – Adults with Incapacity
- **Action 51** – City of Edinburgh Council: UNISON's End Violence at Work Charter – Motion by Councillor Nicolson
- **Action 53** – Supporting the LGBT+ Community
- **Action 56** – Barriers to Elected Office 2024
- **Action 65(3)** – Council Business Plan Progress
- **Action 66** – City Strategic Investment Fund – Reallocation of Funds to Edinburgh Waterfront Programme – referral from the Finance and Resources Committee
- **Action 68(3)** – City of Edinburgh Council: Motion by Councillor Macinnes - Addressing the Health Impacts of Austerity on Edinburgh Residents
- **Action 70** – City of Edinburgh Council: Motion by Councillor Flannery - Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)
- **Action 71(1)** – End Poverty in Edinburgh Annual Progress Report

2) To note the remaining outstanding actions.

(Reference – Rolling Actions Log 10 December 2024, submitted.)

7. Business Bulletin

The Policy and Sustainability Committee Business Bulletin was presented.

Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – Business Bulletin 10 December 2024, submitted.)

8. Council Emissions Reduction Plan – Annual Progress Report

The third annual update and the first review on the Council Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) was presented which detailed progress against each of the 73 actions and 53 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the original CERP. A review was provided of each of the actions and KPIs based on three years of learning and changes in the environmental and economic contexts since first approved together with an update on how the Council was delivering against its Climate Compact commitments which were signed in December 2020.

Motion

- 1) To agree the third annual progress report against the Council's Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) and note:
- 2) To note that the Council's organisational emissions were updated annually and reported to the Scottish Government through the Public Bodies Climate Change Duty Reporting (PBCCD), which was the subject of a Business Bulletin update for Committee at this meeting.
- 3) To note that this annual progress report focussed on Council emissions only. An update on the city-wide emissions and progress on the Climate Strategy would be presented to Policy and Sustainability Committee in March 2025.
- 4) To note that the total emissions as reported in the second annual progress report were recalculated as a result of data quality issues.
- 5) To note that this annual report had reviewed, updated and prioritised actions based on three years of learning since the CERP had been agreed.

- moved by Councillor Watt, seconded by Councillor Graham

Amendment 1

- 1) To agree the third annual progress report against the Council's Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) and note:
- 2) To note that the Council's organisational emissions were updated annually and reported to the Scottish Government through the Public Bodies Climate Change Duty Reporting (PBCCD), which was the subject of a Business Bulletin update for Committee at this meeting.
- 3) To note that this annual progress report focussed on Council emissions only. An update on the city-wide emissions and progress on the Climate Strategy would be presented to Policy and Sustainability Committee in March 2025.
- 4) To note that the total emissions as reported in the second annual progress report were recalculated as a result of data quality issues.
- 5) To note that this annual report had reviewed, updated and prioritised actions based on three years of learning since the CERP had been agreed.
- 6) Committee also notes that it has not been possible to entirely fulfil committee's decision of October 2023 when the annual report was last discussed, for a

variety of understandable reasons, and therefore agrees that so far as possible, next year's annual update report should identify new actions to eradicate or significantly reduce the emissions gap to net zero, should be set within the context of the Climate Strategy, Climate Ready Edinburgh and other relevant strategies in line with a climate justice approach, and where relevant next year's report should also include a strategy to finance new actions as prioritised within this wider context;

- 7) Committee notes that one of the main barriers to accelerated carbon reduction in buildings and fleet is insufficient finance, in particular revenue funding to allow surveys and feasibility studies for deep retrofit, but also capital to allow the work to be carried out, and therefore agrees:
 - a) the council will write to the Scottish Government to urge them to do more to unlock revenue finance for feasibility studies and capital finance for deep retrofit,
 - b) the council will raise this issue at Cosla, and
 - c) that officers ensure all parties have sufficient information to consider ways to address this as part of the current budget process.
- 8) Committee notes that "the main barrier to fully decarbonise our fleet is currently due to an insurance restriction identified through the FAR [Fleet Asset Replacement programme]" (p.22 in the report by the Interim Executive Director of Place) and therefore calls for a written briefing to members, which should also be shared with members of Finance and Resources Committee, setting out the background and how this can be addressed.
- 9) Committee notes that the main reason for the lack of progress in meeting the Council's climate targets is a woeful lack of political leadership from this administration, calls on the administration to publicly apologise on behalf of the council for missed climate targets and to urgently convene a meeting of the climate and sustainability APOG at the earliest opportunity to discuss ways to get the council back on track to meet its climate targets.

- moved by Councillor Booth, seconded by Councillor Staniforth

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), the amendment was adjusted and accepted as an addendum to the motion.

At this point in the proceedings the following Amendment 2 was proposed:

Amendment 2

To approve the motion as originally moved by Councillor Watt.

- moved by Councillor Mowat, seconded by Councillor Doggart

Voting

Vote 1

The voting was as follows:

For the Motion (as adjusted)	-	7 votes
For Amendment 1	-	8 votes
For Amendment 2	-	2 votes

(For the Motion (as adjusted): Councillors Beal, Lesley Marion Cameron, Davidson, Dijkstra-Downie, Graham, Lang and Watt.

For Amendment 1: Councillors, Booth, Dobbin, Fullerton, Kumar, MacFarlane, Nicolson, Rae and Staniforth.

For Amendment 2: Councillors Doggart and Mowat.)

There being no overall majority, Amendment 2 fell and a second vote was taken between the Motion (as adjusted) and Amendment 1.

Vote 2

The voting was as follows:

For the Motion (as adjusted)	-	9 votes
For Amendment 1	-	8 votes

(For the Motion (as adjusted): Councillors Beal, Lesley Marion Cameron, Davidson, Dijkstra-Downie, Doggart, Graham, Lang, Mowat and Watt.

For Amendment 1: Councillors, Booth, Dobbin, Fullerton, Kumar, MacFarlane, Nicolson, Rae and Staniforth.)

Decision

To approve the following adjusted Motion by Councillor Watt:

- 1) To agree the third annual progress report against the Council's Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) and note:
- 2) To note that the Council's organisational emissions were updated annually and reported to the Scottish Government through the Public Bodies Climate Change Duty Reporting (PBCCD), which was the subject of a Business Bulletin update for Committee at this meeting.
- 3) To note that this annual progress report focussed on Council emissions only. An update on the city-wide emissions and progress on the Climate Strategy would be presented to Policy and Sustainability Committee in March 2025.
- 4) To note that the total emissions as reported in the second annual progress report were recalculated as a result of data quality issues.
- 5) To note that this annual report had reviewed, updated and prioritised actions based on three years of learning since the CERP had been agreed.
- 6) To also note that it had not been possible to entirely fulfil committee's decision of October 2023 when the annual report was last discussed, for a variety of

understandable reasons, and therefore agree that so far as possible, next year's annual update report should identify new actions to eradicate or significantly reduce the emissions gap to net zero, should be set within the context of the Climate Strategy, Climate Ready Edinburgh and other relevant strategies in line with a climate justice approach, and where relevant next year's report should also include a strategy to finance new actions as prioritised within this wider context;

- 7) To note that one of the main barriers to accelerated carbon reduction in buildings and fleet was insufficient finance, in particular revenue funding to allow surveys and feasibility studies for deep retrofit, but also capital to allow the work to be carried out, and therefore agree:
 - a) the council would write to the Scottish Government to urge them to do more to unlock revenue finance for feasibility studies and capital finance for deep retrofit,
 - b) the council would raise this issue at Cosla, and
 - c) that officers ensure all parties had sufficient information to consider ways to address this as part of the current budget process.
- 8) To note that “the main barrier to fully decarbonise our fleet is currently due to an insurance restriction identified through the FAR [Fleet Asset Replacement programme]” (p.22 in the report by the Interim Executive Director of Place) and therefore calls for a written briefing to members, which should also be shared with members of Finance and Resources Committee, setting out the background and how this could be addressed.

(References – Policy and Sustainability Committee of 30 November 2021 (item 7); report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

9. Accounts Commission Findings on Best Value in the City of Edinburgh Council

Details were provided on the Accounts Commission's findings, following the Controller of Audit's recent report on Best Value in The City of Edinburgh Council, published in October 2024.

Motion

- 1) To note the Accounts Commission's findings, following the Controller of Audit's recent report on Best Value in The City of Edinburgh Council, published in October 2024.
- 2) To note whether the Commission's findings were noted/accepted/not accepted and the Council responses to each finding.
- 3) To note that the remaining open actions from the Best Value Assurance Action Plan, which was presented to Committee in August 2024, would be closed out by June 2025 in line with the previously established timeline.

- 4) To refer the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services onto Council for further consideration of the Accounts Commission's findings and the Council's proposed actions, as required by the Accounts Commission.

- moved by Councillor Watt, seconded by Councillor Graham

Amendment

- 1) To note the Accounts Commission's findings, following the Controller of Audit's recent report on Best Value in The City of Edinburgh Council, published in October 2024.
- 2) To note whether the Commission's findings were noted/accepted/not accepted and the Council responses to each finding.
- 3) To note that the remaining open actions from the Best Value Assurance Action Plan, which was presented to Committee in August 2024, would be closed out by June 2025 in line with the previously established timeline but regrets the completion of the findings from the Best Value Assurance Report will have taken almost five years, even if the timeline is achieved.
- 4) Notes in Finding 4, there remains outstanding work in setting realistic costings and resource requirements.
- 5) Notes in Finding 6, the results of the 25/26 budget engagement work will not be fully available for the budget setting process.
- 6) To refer the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services onto Council for further consideration of the Accounts Commission's findings and the Council's proposed actions, as required by the Accounts Commission.

- moved by Councillor Doggart, seconded by Councillor Mowat

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), the amendment was accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Watt:

- 1) To note the Accounts Commission's findings, following the Controller of Audit's recent report on Best Value in The City of Edinburgh Council, published in October 2024.
- 2) To note whether the Commission's findings were noted/accepted/not accepted and the Council responses to each finding.
- 3) To note that the remaining open actions from the Best Value Assurance Action Plan, which was presented to Committee in August 2024, would be closed out by June 2025 in line with the previously established timeline but regrets the completion of the findings from the Best Value Assurance Report will have taken almost five years, even if the timeline is achieved.
- 4) Notes in Finding 4, there remains outstanding work in setting realistic costings and resource requirements.

- 5) Notes in Finding 6, the results of the 25/26 budget engagement work will not be fully available for the budget setting process.
- 6) To refer the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services onto Council for further consideration of the Accounts Commission's findings and the Council's proposed actions, as required by the Accounts Commission.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

10. Emergency Motions by Councillors Kumar and Booth – Allegations of Misconduct – Council Leader Resignation

The Convener ruled that the following item, notice of which had been given at the start of the meeting, be considered as a matter of urgency to allow the Committee to give early consideration to this matter.

The following motions by Councillors Kumar and Booth were submitted in terms of Standing Order 17 and verbally adjusted in terms of Standing Order 22(6):

(a) Motion by Councillor Kumar

“Committee notes with deep concern the serious allegations made against Council Leader, Councillor Cammy Day and calls for his immediate resignation from the position of Council Leader.

Given the seriousness of these allegations, committee agrees to:

- 1) Assist with police investigations without fear or intimidation.
- 2) Provide staff and managers information on existing HR processes and the whistleblowing service via SafeCall to ensure staff and members of public feel safe and empowered to report any concerns.
- 3) Initiate an independent review of the council's policies and procedures to identify gaps that allowed this behaviour to occur, and to continue.
- 4) Ascertain if this behaviour could have been prevented through thorough investigation and stronger safeguards. Request a report to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee with findings in one cycle.
- 5) Offer support and reassurance to the Ukrainian community in Edinburgh as a matter of urgency by the Chief Executive.”

(b) Motion by Councillor Booth

“Committee:

- 1) Notes that Councillor Day is under police investigation for inappropriate behaviour and that he has been placed under administrative suspension by the Labour party while the allegations are being investigated and notes that he has now resigned as Council Leader.
- 2) Condemns unequivocally any sexual misconduct or inappropriate behaviour, sends support to those who may have experienced this type of behaviour, as well as anyone with experience of sexual harassment and

who may have been affected by this news, and notes that they can contact Victim Support Scotland on 0800 160 1985 or Rape Crisis Scotland on 08088 01 03 02 for advice and support.

- 3) Urges anyone who has evidence to support the police's investigation to contact the police and the Ethical Standards Commissioner, or the council's whistleblowing service, as appropriate.
- 4) Further believes Councillor Day should exclude himself from all Council buildings while these investigations are ongoing.
- 5) Calls for an urgent meeting of all party group leaders to discuss the leadership of the Council.

Motion

To approve the motion by Councillor Kumar.

- moved by Councillor Kumar, seconded by Councillor Nicolson

Amendment 1

To approve the motion by Councillor Booth.

- moved by Councillor Booth, seconded by Councillor Mumford

Amendment 2

Committee

Deletes paragraphs 4 and 5 in the motion by Councillor Kumar, and inserts:

- “4) recommend that an independent review is initiated of a) the Council’s handling of the concerns which were raised directly with the Council in relation to Cllr Day’s alleged behaviour and b) the Council’s policies and procedures to identify any gaps, and that a report should come to the 6 February 2025 meeting of the Council with a recommendation from the chief executive on who should undertake this independent review, its detailed remit, and associated costs.
- 5) agrees that such a review should consider whether the alleged behaviour could have been prevented through investigation and stronger safeguards, and that the outcome of this review be considered by GRBV and full Council in due course.”

- moved by Councillor Lang, seconded by Councillor Dijkstra-Downie

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 1 was accepted as an addendum to the Motion, and Amendment 2 was accepted as an amendment to the Motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted Motion by Councillor Kumar:

- 1) To note with deep concern the serious allegations made against Council Leader, Councillor Cammy Day and call for his immediate resignation from the position of Council Leader.

Given the seriousness of these allegations:

- 2) To agree to assist with police investigations without fear or intimidation.
- 3) To provide staff and managers information on existing HR processes and the whistleblowing service via SafeCall to ensure staff and members of public felt safe and empowered to report any concerns.
- 4) To initiate an independent review of the council's policies and procedures to identify gaps that allowed this behaviour to occur, and to continue.
- 5) To agree that an independent review be initiated of a) the Council's handling of the concerns which were raised directly with the Council in relation to Councillor Day's alleged behaviour and b) the Council's policies and procedures to identify any gaps, and that a report should come to the 6 February 2025 meeting of the Council with a recommendation from the Chief Executive on who should undertake this independent review, its detailed remit, and associated costs.
- 6) To agree that such a review should consider whether the alleged behaviour could have been prevented through investigation and stronger safeguards, and that the outcome of this review be considered by Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee and full Council in due course.
- 7) To note that Councillor Day was under police investigation for inappropriate behaviour and that he had been placed under administrative suspension by the Labour party while the allegations were being investigated and to note that he had now resigned as Council Leader.
- 8) To condemn unequivocally any sexual misconduct or inappropriate behaviour, send support to those who may have experienced this type of behaviour, as well as anyone with experience of sexual harassment and who may have been affected by this news, and note that they could contact Victim Support Scotland on 0800 160 1985 or Rape Crisis Scotland on 08088 01 03 02 for advice and support.
- 9) To urge anyone who had evidence to support the police's investigation to contact the police and the Ethical Standards Commissioner, or the council's whistleblowing service, as appropriate.
- 10) To further believe Councillor Day should exclude himself from all Council buildings while these investigations were ongoing.
- 11) To call for an urgent meeting of all party group leaders to discuss the leadership of the Council.

11. Elected Member Suspension Proposal – Response to Motion by Councillor Nols-McVey

In response to a motion by Councillor Nols-McVey, details were provided on communications with the Scottish Government, the Convener of the Standards Commission and the Ethical Standards Commissioner seeking a change to legislation

to permit elected members who have been arrested on specific charges to be suspended from office.

Motion

- 1) To note the responses received from the Ethical Standards Commissioner, the Convener of the Standards Commission and the Scottish Government.
- 2) To acknowledge that no authority currently sat with any agency, including the Council, to suspend a councillor save for breaches of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.
- 3) To note the proposals contained in the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill which was currently progressing through the Scottish Parliament, to extend the criteria for disqualification from holding public office.
- 4) To note in the absence of any authority to suspend a councillor, the options available to the Council, in terms of committee membership and access to public buildings.
- 5) To note that any proposal to introduce legislation to permit the suspension of a councillor upon arrest of specific charges would require to be subject to a full consultation by the Scottish Government.

- moved by Councillor Watt, seconded by Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron

Amendment 1

- 1) To note the responses received from the Ethical Standards Commissioner, the Convener of the Standards Commission and the Scottish Government.
- 2) To acknowledge that no authority currently sat with any agency, including the Council, to suspend a councillor save for breaches of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.
- 3) To note the proposals contained in the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill which was currently progressing through the Scottish Parliament, to extend the criteria for disqualification from holding public office.
- 4) To note in the absence of any authority to suspend a councillor, the options available to the Council, in terms of committee and Council membership and access to public buildings.
- 5) Recognises that the Council has a duty of care to protect all staff, constituents, and the wider community. Acknowledges that elected members frequently engage with vulnerable children, young people, and adults.
- 6) Requests a report back to committee to explore whether all elected members could be required to undergo a comprehensive Protecting Vulnerable Group (PVG) check to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding and accountability are upheld. Additionally, the Council will explore options to support or cover the costs of PVG checks to ensure financial barriers do not hinder implementation.

- 7) Agrees that should Council become aware of any member of the Council being arrested; a report is brought to the subsequent Council, at the Monitoring Officer's discretion, to allow the Council to decide if it is appropriate to remove that member from committees or take any other action open to Council as deemed appropriate.
- 8) To note that any proposal to introduce legislation to permit the suspension of a councillor upon arrest of specific charges would require to be subject to a full consultation by the Scottish Government.

- moved by Councillor Kumar, seconded by Councillor Dobbin

Amendment 2

- 1) To note the responses received from the Ethical Standards Commissioner, the Convener of the Standards Commission and the Scottish Government.
- 2) To acknowledge that no authority currently sat with any agency, including the Council, to suspend a councillor save for breaches of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.
- 3) To note the proposals contained in the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill which was currently progressing through the Scottish Parliament, to extend the criteria for disqualification from holding public office.
- 4) To note in the absence of any authority to suspend a councillor, the options available to the Council, in terms of committee membership and access to public buildings.
- 5) To note that any proposal to introduce legislation to permit the suspension of a councillor upon arrest of specific charges would require to be subject to a full consultation by the Scottish Government.
- 6) Notes that there is lack of clarity over how and where elected members, staff members and the public should report inappropriate behaviour of Councillors, and by what process the Council will respond to any complaints of inappropriate behaviour.
- 7) Understands that this can create significant safeguarding concerns and the Council has a duty of care towards staff and the public.
- 8) Requests that the current process and channels for raising concerns is clarified and circulated to all staff and elected members, and made easily accessible on the CEC website.
- 9) Further requests that a report is brought within one cycle outlining any gaps in the provision for raising concerns and proposed solutions.

- moved by Councillor Mumford, seconded by Councillor Booth

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 1 was accepted as an amendment to the Motion, and Amendment 2 was accepted as an addendum to the Motion.

At this stage in the proceedings the following Amendment 3 was proposed:

Amendment 3

- 1) To note the responses received from the Ethical Standards Commissioner, the Convener of the Standards Commission and the Scottish Government.
- 2) To acknowledge that no authority currently sat with any agency, including the Council, to suspend a councillor save for breaches of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.
- 3) To note the proposals contained in the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill which was currently progressing through the Scottish Parliament, to extend the criteria for disqualification from holding public office.
- 4) To note in the absence of any authority to suspend a councillor, the options available to the Council, in terms of committee and Council membership and access to public buildings.
- 5) Recognises that the Council has a duty of care to protect all staff, constituents, and the wider community. Acknowledges that elected members frequently engage with vulnerable children, young people, and adults.
- 6) Requests a report back to committee to explore whether all elected members could be required to undergo a comprehensive Protecting Vulnerable Group (PVG) check to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding and accountability are upheld. Additionally, the Council will explore options to support or cover the costs of PVG checks to ensure financial barriers do not hinder implementation
- 7) To note that any proposal to introduce legislation to permit the suspension of a councillor upon arrest of specific charges would require to be subject to a full consultation by the Scottish Government.
- 8) Notes that there is lack of clarity over how and where elected members, staff members and the public should report inappropriate behaviour of Councillors, and by what process the Council will respond to any complaints of inappropriate behaviour.
- 9) Understands that this can create significant safeguarding concerns and the Council has a duty of care towards staff and the public.
- 10) Requests that the current process and channels for raising concerns is clarified and circulated to all staff and elected members, and made easily accessible on the CEC website.
- 11) Further requests that a report is brought within one cycle outlining any gaps in the provision for raising concerns and proposed solutions.

- moved by Councillor Mowat, seconded by Councillor Doggart

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the Motion (as adjusted) - 15 votes
For Amendment 3 - 2 votes

(For the Motion (as adjusted): Councillors Beal, Booth, Lesley Marion Cameron, Davidson, Dijkstra-Downie, Dobbin, Fullerton, Graham, Kumar, Lang, McFarlane, Mumford, Nicolson, Staniforth and Watt.

For Amendment 3: Councillor Doggart and Mowat.)

Decision

To approve the following adjusted Motion by Councillor Watt:

- 1) To note the responses received from the Ethical Standards Commissioner, the Convener of the Standards Commission and the Scottish Government.
- 2) To acknowledge that no authority currently sat with any agency, including the Council, to suspend a councillor save for breaches of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.
- 3) To note the proposals contained in the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill which was currently progressing through the Scottish Parliament, to extend the criteria for disqualification from holding public office.
- 4) To note in the absence of any authority to suspend a councillor, the options available to the Council, in terms of committee and Council membership and access to public buildings.
- 5) To recognise that the Council had a duty of care to protect all staff, constituents, and the wider community. To acknowledge that elected members frequently engaged with vulnerable children, young people, and adults.
- 6) To request a report back to committee to explore whether all elected members could be required to undergo a comprehensive Protecting Vulnerable Group (PVG) check to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding and accountability were upheld. Additionally, to explore options to support or cover the costs of PVG checks to ensure financial barriers did not hinder implementation.
- 7) To agree that should Council become aware of any member of the Council being arrested; a report be brought to the subsequent Council, at the Monitoring Officer's discretion, to allow the Council to decide if it was appropriate to remove that member from committees or take any other action open to Council as deemed appropriate.
- 8) To note that any proposal to introduce legislation to permit the suspension of a councillor upon arrest of specific charges would require to be subject to a full consultation by the Scottish Government.
- 9) To note that there was lack of clarity over how and where elected members, staff members and the public should reported inappropriate behaviour of Councillors,

and by what process the Council would respond to any complaints of inappropriate behaviour.

- 10) To understand that this could create significant safeguarding concerns and the Council had a duty of care towards staff and the public.
- 11) To request that the current process and channels for raising concerns be clarified and circulated to all staff and elected members, and made easily accessible on the CEC website.
- 12) To further request that a report be brought within one cycle outlining any gaps in the provision for raising concerns and proposed solutions.

(Reference – Act of Council No 13 of 27 June 2024: report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

12. Edinburgh’s Position Statement on Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Details were provided on Edinburgh’s proposed Position Statement on Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) which all Local Authorities in Scotland were expected to have as a measure of the local implementation of the Equally Safe strategy. Equally Safe was co-owned by COSLA and the Scottish Government.

Decision

To take no action on the matter.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services, submitted.)

13. Response to Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2015 - Licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues – amendment by Councillor Fullerton

Decision

To note that the report had been withdrawn

(References – Policy and Sustainability Committee of 9 January 2024 (item 5); report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

14. Adults with Incapacity – Update on Recommendations

The ‘Authority to Discharge’ report, published by the Mental Welfare Commission in May 2021, identified issues across Scotland relating to practice amongst health and social work staff working to support adults who lacked capacity to be discharged from hospital to care home placements.

Details were provided on an action plan which had been developed to address the MWC recommendations arising from the report, commissioned a large-scale compliance audit in 2021, a follow up review audit in 2024 and an independent report by a subject matter expert, in order to understand and address practice and systemic issues relating to this group of individuals robustly. The independent report included recommendations relating

to investment in social work services, training programmes, recruitment and retention, review of policies and procedures and auditing.

Decision

- 1) To note the background to the report by the Chief Officer, Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, and in particular the recommendations arising from the independent review by Eileen Niblo; independent expert, in relation to practice issues in hospital discharge work with adults with incapacity.
- 2) To progress made in relation to the recommendations of the Independent Review.

(Reference – report by the Chief Officer, Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, submitted.)

15. Internal Audit: Audit Outcomes June to October 2024 – referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee had referred the Internal Audit: Audit Outcomes June to October 2024 to the Policy and Sustainability Committee for consideration of Management Action 5.4 on the recommendation regarding drug and alcohol consumption while driving.

Decision

To note the report by the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee of 31 October 2024 (item 5); referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, submitted.)

16. Internal Audit Open and Overdue Internal Audit Actions – Performance Dashboard as at 13 September 2024 – referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee had referred the Internal Audit Open and Overdue Internal Audit Actions – Performance Dashboard as at 13 September 2024 – to the Policy and Sustainability Committee for ongoing scrutiny.

Decision

To note the report by the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee of 31 October 2024 (item 7); referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, submitted.)

17. Policy Assurance Statement – Customer and Digital Services

An assurance update was provided on key policies and procedures within Customer and Digital Services in Corporate Services, including Corporate Debt Policy, Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief Policy, and ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

Decision

To note that the Customer and Digital Services policies detailed in the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services had been reviewed and were considered to reflect current legislative requirements and best practice and therefore remain fit for purpose.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

18. Annual Policy Update – Consultation and Engagement Policy

To ensure that Council policies reflected current legislative requirements, best practice and remained fit for purpose, all Council directorates and policy owners were required to review their policies on an annual basis. The third annual review of the consultation and engagement policy, with proposed minor amendments, was presented.

Decision

To continue consideration of the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services to the next meeting of the Committee.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

19. Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Update

An update was provided on progress with the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the period 2019-2024 which included some key highlights of progress made during this period and details of the refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for the period 2024-2027. Progress with the 2023-2024 annual action plan, and future action plans, would be reported to the Finance and Resources Committee.

Motion

- 1) To note progress with the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2019-2024).
- 2) To approve the proposed Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy for the period 2024-2028 and to note that future progress updates on the annual action plans associated with the lifespan of this Strategy would be reviewed at Finance and Resources Committee as part of the People Strategy theme 'foster a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion'.
- 3) To refer to People Strategy Theme: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Deep Dive presented to Finance and Resources Committee in November 2024 for further information on activity and progress.

- moved by Councillor Watt, seconded by Councillor Graham

Amendment

- 1) To note progress with the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2019-2024).
- 2) To approve the proposed Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy for the period 2024-2028 and to note that future progress updates on the annual action plans associated with the lifespan of this Strategy would be

reviewed at Finance and Resources Committee as part of the People Strategy theme 'foster a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion'.

- 3) To refer to People Strategy Theme: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Deep Dive presented to Finance and Resources Committee in November 2024 for further information on activity and progress.
- 4) Requests that the ongoing reporting to Finance and Resources Committee includes Business Bulletin updates on development of the anti-racist action plan and the pilot projects set out in 4.4.4;
- 5) Requests that officers engage with the National African and Black Association, who are already working with Dundee and Glasgow local authorities to support them in becoming anti-racist workplaces as part of the ongoing engagement with a range of equality organisations.

- moved by Councillor Mumford, seconded by Councillor Staniforth

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), the amendment was accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Watt:

- 1) To note progress with the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2019-2024).
- 2) To approve the proposed Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy for the period 2024-2028 and to note that future progress updates on the annual action plans associated with the lifespan of this Strategy would be reviewed at Finance and Resources Committee as part of the People Strategy theme 'foster a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion'.
- 3) To refer to People Strategy Theme: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Deep Dive presented to Finance and Resources Committee in November 2024 for further information on activity and progress.
- 4) To request that the ongoing reporting to Finance and Resources Committee include Business Bulletin updates on development of the anti-racist action plan and the pilot projects set out in 4.4.4 of the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services.
- 5) To request that officers engage with the National African and Black Association, who were already working with Dundee and Glasgow local authorities to support them in becoming anti-racist workplaces as part of the ongoing engagement with a range of equality organisations.

(Reference – report by Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

20. Violence at Work

In response to motions by Councillors Nicolson and Campbell details were provided on the consideration given to the standards required to sign up to the Unison Violence at Work Charter together with an update in respect of the Corporate Services Risk Register and actions from the work of the Violence at Work Short Life Working Group.

Decision

1) To note the response to the agreed motions below:

a) Motion approved at Full Council - 27 June 2024 - UNISON's End Violence at Work Charter (Councillor Nicolson)

“Notes that there have been 51 violent incidents at work in the city of Edinburgh, with as many as twenty incidents recorded in one single year. Notes there have been thousands of violent incidents against council and school workers in the UK since 2015 and according to Freedom of Information data obtained by UNISON, 1 in 40 local government workers were the victims of violent incidents in a single year. Workers in our councils or schools are 75% more likely to be a victim of violence at work than other workers. Agrees this is unacceptable and all steps must be taken to protect council workers from workplace violence.

Agrees a report to Policy and Sustainability Committee on the what steps Edinburgh Council would need to take in order to sign up to UNISON's End Violence at Work Charter ([URL:https://www.unison.org.uk/unison-health-and-safety/violence-atwork/](https://www.unison.org.uk/unison-health-and-safety/violence-atwork/)) which sets out standards for local government employers to put in place, including monitoring, support, safeguarding and training”.

(b) Subsequent Motion at Governance Risk and Best Value Committee – Item 8.3: Corporate Services Risk Report – 17 September 2024 (Councillor Campbell)

“Notes with concern that “The Council is observing a persistently high level of incidents relating to Unacceptable Behaviour (Violent incidents)”. Notes that there is already a report, following a motion by Cllr Nicolson, that will go to Policy and Sustainability Committee asking for the council to determine what steps it would need to take in order to sign up to UNISON’s End Violence at Work Charter.

Agrees that report should make reference to the inclusion of violent incidents on the risk register and this this committee’s concern at the persistently high level.

Agrees to receive an update, in a future risk report, on all further actions taken to reduce violent incidents including work with the trade unions and the high-level outcomes of that report to Policy and Sustainability Committee”.

(References – Act of Council No 16 of 27 June 2024: Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee of 17 September 2024 (item 8); report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

21. Impact of Budget on Edinburgh Health and Social Care Services and Renters – Motion by Councillor Kumar

The following motion by Councillor Kumar was submitted in terms of Standing Order 17:

“Notes

- 1) That the UK Chancellor has recently increased National Insurance (NI) contributions for employers to 15% and reduced earning thresholds from £9100 to £5000 annually.
- 2) The increase in employers’ National Insurance contributions is estimated to cost Scotland’s public sector approximately £500 million, reflecting its proportionally larger workforce compared to the UK average. Of this total, £265 million is expected to fall on local government, while commissioned health and social care services face an additional burden of £85 million.
- 3) That the UK Chancellor has also chosen to freeze the Local Housing Allowance – which is used to calculate the maximum amount of housing benefit payment or universal credit that can be claimed for.

Recognises

- 4) That the increase in NI is likely to have a significant negative impact on pharmacies, care homes, hospices, and third sector organisations who help deliver essential health and social care services to vulnerable people.
- 5) That the additional financial constraint will mean limiting wage increases, cutting jobs, or reduce/freezing hiring – hindering growth. For some charities, this may mean permanent closure. Further noting discussions at EIJB at the future of funding for third sector organisations.
- 6) That freeze in housing benefits means many low-income renters will not be able to keep up with rising rents due to increasing financial hardship and hinder those already struggling to afford housing in Edinburgh. That this has potential impact on rising homelessness and poverty with impact on health and wellbeing.

Agrees

- 7) To address this financial strain, it is proposed that the Council Leader writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging the UK Government to fully fund these additional costs. This would help protect essential services and mitigate the risk of further cuts in already stretched sectors such as health, social care, and local government operations.
- 8) That Council Leader expresses Council's views and highlighting the disastrous impact on Edinburgh and its residents while highlighting the recommendations of the Poverty Commission and urge Chancellor to:

- a) fully fund the increase in NI contributions for health and social care partners
 - b) to implement measures to mitigate the impact of the increase using strategies such as tax relief or grants.
 - c) increase housing benefits of LHA rates to ensure low-income households can afford adequate housing b) offer targeted support such as increased in benefits or tax credits
 - d) implement a mechanism to regularly review and update LHA rates to reflect changes in the housing market in Edinburgh.
- 9) That this letter should be shared with all elected members for information.”

Motion

To approve the motion by Councillor Kumar

- moved by Councillor Kumar, seconded by Councillor Dobbin

Amendment 1

Committee

- 1) In “Notes” paragraph 1 of the motion by Councillor Kumar, deletes “increased” and inserts “announced plans to increase”.
- 2) Deletes 4(i) - (iv) in the motion and inserts;
 - “i) exempt those organisations which provide health and social care services from the proposed increase in employer national insurance contributions.
 - ii) reform how Local Housing Allowance is calculated so it is automatically linked to the real level of rents, and ensures it always covers rents in at least the bottom third of the local housing market.”

- moved by Councillor Dijkstra-Downie, seconded by Councillor Davidson

Amendment 2

- 1) Inserts new paragraph 6 in the motion by Councillor Kumar and re-numbers accordingly:
 - “6) The additional financial burden on all employers will see the same impact outlined in paragraph 5 in terms of growing businesses across the city. Such impacts will affect the Council’s budgeting for routine services provided to the Council by businesses; notwithstanding the increased costs that will hinder the Council’s ability to deliver its Capital programme within current budgets;
- 2) In the original numbering, replaces paragraphs 8a and 8b of the motion with:
 - “a) reverse the catastrophic increase to the rate of employer National Insurance Contributions and the reduction in the salary level at which such increased NICs take effect.”

- moved by Councillor Doggart, seconded by Councillor Mowat

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendments 1 and 2 were adjusted and accepted as amendments to the Motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Kumar:

- 1) To note that the UK Chancellor had recently announced plans to increase National Insurance (NI) contributions for employers to 15% and reduced earning thresholds from £9100 to £5000 annually.
- 2) To note the increase in employers' National Insurance contributions was estimated to cost Scotland's public sector approximately £500 million, reflecting its proportionally larger workforce compared to the UK average. Of this total, £265 million was expected to fall on local government, while commissioned health and social care services faced an additional burden of £85 million.
- 3) To note that the UK Chancellor had also chosen to freeze the Local Housing Allowance – which was used to calculate the maximum amount of housing benefit payment or universal credit that could be claimed for.
- 4) To recognise that the increase in NI was likely to have a significant negative impact on pharmacies, care homes, hospices, and third sector organisations who helped deliver essential health and social care services to vulnerable people.
- 5) To recognise that the additional financial constraint would mean limiting wage increases, cutting jobs, or reduce/freezing hiring – hindering growth. For some charities, this might mean permanent closure. To further note discussions at EIJB at the future of funding for third sector organisations.
- 6) To recognise the additional financial burden on all employers would see the same impact outlined in paragraph 5 in terms of growing businesses across the city. Such impacts would affect the Council's budgeting for routine services provided to the Council by businesses; notwithstanding the increased costs that would hinder the Council's ability to deliver its Capital programme within current budgets.
- 7) To recognise that freeze in housing benefits meant many low-income renters would not be able to keep up with rising rents due to increasing financial hardship and hinder those already struggling to afford housing in Edinburgh. That this had potential impact on rising homelessness and poverty with impact on health and wellbeing.
- 8) To address this financial strain, to agree that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging the UK Government to fully fund these additional costs. This would help protect essential services and mitigate the risk of further cuts in already stretched sectors such as health, social care, and local government operations.

- 9) To agree that Council Leader express Council's views and highlighting the disastrous impact on Edinburgh and its residents while highlighting the recommendations of the Poverty Commission and urge Chancellor to:
 - a) reverse the catastrophic increase to the rate of employer National Insurance Contributions or exempt those organisations which provide health and social care services from the proposed increase in employer national insurance contributions; or
 - b) fully fund the increase in NI contributions for health and social care partners, and reduce the salary level at which such increased NICs take effect;
 - c) increase housing benefits of LHA rates to ensure low-income households can afford adequate housing and offer targeted support such as increased in benefits or tax credits;
 - d) reform how Local Housing Allowance is calculated so it is automatically linked to the real level of rents, and ensures it always covers rents in at least the bottom third of the local housing market.
- 10) To agree that this letter should be shared with all elected members for information.