


Business Bulletin

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 11th March 2025

Dean of Guild Courtroom, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh

Policy and Sustainability Committee

Convener:	Members:	Contact:
<p data-bbox="193 331 496 409">Convener: Councillor Jane Meagher</p> 	<p data-bbox="660 313 1190 1182">Councillor Jane Meagher (Convener) Councillor Danny Aston Councillor Jule Bandel Councillor Alan Beal Councillor Chas Booth Councillor Lezley Marion Cameron Councillor Kate Campbell Councillor Euan Davidson Councillor Sanne Dijkstra-Downie Councillor Stuart Dobbin Councillor Simita Kumar Councillor Kevin Lang Councillor Joanna Mowat Councillor Vicky Nicolson Councillor Alex Staniforth Councillor Mandy Watt Councillor Iain Whyte</p>	<p data-bbox="1257 320 1461 658">Jamie Macrae, Committee Officer Ashley Lowson Assistant Committee Officer</p>

Recent News	Background
<p><u>Edinburgh Safer Drug Consumption Facility and Edinburgh Drug Checking Service</u></p> <p>A report on the The Edinburgh Safer Drug Consumption Facility and Edinburgh Drug Checking Service was presented to the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) on 17th December. This work is being led by the Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership (EADP). The EIJB acknowledged the findings of the feasibility studies into the safer drug consumption facility (SDCF) and drug checking service (DCS).</p> <p>The EIJB agreed to develop costed proposals for a DCS and DCR which will include information on funding available and further updates will be provided to Policy and Sustainability Committee as these costed proposals are developed. Although supportive of further developing the proposals, the Scottish Government has not, at this point, committed to funding either a SDCF or a DCS.</p>	<p><u>Contact</u></p> <p><u>David Williams</u></p> <p>Programme Manager, Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership</p>
<p><u>Best Value Assurance Action Plan</u></p> <p>An update on the remaining open actions within the Council’s Best Value Assurance Action Plan was presented to Committee in August 2024. The action plan was developed on the back of the Council’s last Best Value Assurance Report, published by the Accounts Commission.</p> <p>In December 2024, the Committee was informed that the Accounts Commission had positively noted the Council’s progress against the action plan, albeit there remained some open actions.</p> <p>The last Best Value Assurance Action Plan update to Committee showed that five open actions remained and included a commitment to close all actions by April 2025. A separate agenda item will be brought to Committee in May 2025 outlining how each of the five actions have been fully addressed and recommending that those actions be closed.</p> <p>An interim update against each open action has been noted below:</p> <p>Action #1 – As part of its Adaptation and Renewal Programme, the council should prepare sustainable medium and long-term financial plans, and detailed workforce plans, to support its strategic priorities:</p> <p>An updated Budget Strategy (including the Medium-Term Financial Plan) was taken to Finance & Resources Committee in February 2025 outlining how future financial planning aligns to the Council’s strategic priorities, including the climate and nature</p>	<p><u>Contact</u></p> <p>Martin Clark</p> <p>Head of Financial Strategy & Best Value</p>

emergency. The Council's Strategic Workforce Plan was also approved in August 2024 which is informing ongoing service workforce planning.

Action #2 – The council should implement a strategic approach to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. This should include better demonstrating how it responds to feedback and scrutiny findings:

Continuous improvement is central to the Council's approach for an integrated planning and performance framework (PPF) aligned to the Council's Business Plan. This framework is underpinned by the 'plan, do, check, review/act' model and methodology, and is based on an annual cycle of service planning, service plan review and continuous performance monitor through our dashboards and benchmarking data.

The Council has recently undertaken two pilot Public Sector Improvement Framework (PSIF) assessments in collaboration with the Improvement Service, covering the Finance and Homelessness services. The Improvement Service led on the assessments and worked with the services on the assessment process and the development of the resulting service improvement actions. The Data and Performance Team are working with the services to evaluate the PSIF process and form recommendations for CLT on wider implementation across the Council. This action will be completed by April 2025.

The Council has also recently established a dedicated Financial Strategy & Best Value team within its Finance service. This team will play a critical role in ensuring the Council meets its statutory duty to have effective arrangements in place to deliver continuous improvement. This includes setting and implementing an effective Budget Strategy to enable sustainability and reform, performing detailed Best Value Reviews, and assessing Council performance in line with statutory guidance themes such as 'effective use of resources' and 'governance and accountability'.

Action #3 – In order to make community engagement an integral part of service improvement and delivery, the council should embed the lessons from effective community engagement activity and clearly communicate the results of, and the council's response to, community consultation:

The Council has introduced an updated Consultation and Engagement Policy and process which requires that all consultation and engagement owners provide an update on progress of their activity within one month of closing, and then also provide a summary of the outcome" we asked, you said, we did" within one year of closing. The Council communicates individually to all consultation/engagement owners the process for reporting updates/outcomes before they launch their activity.

The Council also monitors high level consultation and engagement activity to check on outcome reporting and will remind owners to provide this if it has not been carried out already.

An approach is currently being piloted to directly email individuals who have participated in consultation or engagement activity to get permission for recontact. This approach will use a UK government solution for mass emails. Colleagues who regularly conduct consultation and engagement activity will be trained, and the Council will brief colleagues through the Consultation Network and change reported performance information to include the percentage of services who are closing the loop with participants through direct contact. This pilot exercise will be completed by April 2025.

Action #4 – The council should work with the Edinburgh Partnership Board to implement its new governance arrangements, effectively involve community representatives and deliver improved outcomes for communities:

The Edinburgh Partnership Board has committed to a Transformation and Improvement Programme. The programme is based on the Service Design model and involves broad engagement with stakeholders to discover and define issues before developing and delivering the improvements. A critical aspect of the programme is defining clear roles and responsibilities within the new governance structure to ensure a unified approach and commitment to community planning among all partners.

The Partnership Board has already considered a new framework for community planning. Engagement on this new approach has taken place, and the subsequent implementation and monitoring plan will be considered by the Board in March 2025.

The Council and the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils have established an improvement plan focusing on their relationship, aiming to enhance communication and engagement.

Action #5 – The Council should work with the Edinburgh Partnership Board to produce progress reports with clear targets, accountable leads and links between the actions taken and the impact on performance:

Work is underway to develop an integrated performance framework, with completion targeted for March 2025. This framework will equip the Edinburgh Partnership and its associated strategic and Locality Community Planning Partnerships with clear targets, accountable leads, and a direct correlation between actions taken and performance impact. Target setting and milestone establishment will be guided

through the Transformation and Improvement Programme.

Recommendations from the Jo Cox Civility Commission – training available for elected members

At its meeting held on 22 October 2024, the Policy and Sustainability Committee considered a report, which had been in response to a decision by the Council, to detail how the Council has responded to the recommendations made by the Jo Cox Civility Commission.

During its consideration, the Committee, following an Addendum which was agreed, *“requested that officers explore the possibility of additional training for councillors on conflict resolution, conflict de-escalation, and managing online harms, as suggested in COSLA’s Lone Working Guidance, and to provide a Business Bulletin update within two cycles”*

Officers undertook a review of what was currently provided to elected members by the Council, what was available that could potentially be provided and what did other local authorities across Scotland provide to their elected members.

It became clear that the information being provided on the Orb (available [here](#) (only available to councillors and officers)) for elected members matched that which other local authorities were providing to their members. The information made available to City of Edinburgh Council elected members covers a wide range of areas including lone working guidance, cyber security and advice from Police Scotland specifically for councillors. Investigations by officers did not identify anything which would enhance this offering further.

An officer from the Council’s Health and Safety team was a part of the officer resource involved in this work and identified the feasibility of providing briefings for elected members on the following subjects:-

- An understanding of lone working
- An understanding of the hazards and risks around lone working
- An understanding of control measures to reduce the risk from lone working

A date of 18 March 2025 has been identified for an ell-elected members training session on these areas. Elected Members will have received an invitation to join this session.

Additionally, Police Scotland has informed officers that it is providing a briefing to all councillors across Scotland on Operation Ford which is specifically focussed on the safety of councillors. An email has been issued informing members of the dates of the briefing and a link to join them. The specific dates are:-

3 March – 2pm
17 March – 10am

Contact

[Andrew Rose](#)

Democratic
Services Manager

31 March – 9am
 16 April – 1pm
 29 April – 11am
(please note that this is one briefing being provided multiple times so members should only attend one session)

Update on progress within 6 months of the Development Officer’s starting date.

Officers have been able to deliver a significant increase in access to products with the staffing resource currently in place. This has resulted in almost the entire budget being used for the provision of free products, as is the key purpose of the funding. Therefore, we are not intending to increase the staffing resource at this time. We will continue to monitor demand and if in the future uptake drops from current levels, we will review this.

In recognition that the work carried out to date has resulted in increased demand for products, and to continue to deliver a service that meets people’s needs, a survey has been drafted. This seeks feedback on the availability, accessibility and types of period products, and asks venues to highlight any issues/successes which we will use to ensure the service is meeting needs. The results of this work can be presented in a further update to the Business Bulletin.

Contact

[Linda Lees](#)
 Head of Wider Achievement and Life Long Learning, Children, Education and Justice Services

Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-27: Delivery update 2024

The [Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-27](#) (EBAP) is delivered by the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership (EBP), a group of more than 30 stakeholders led by the Council. The Partnership includes Council services, government agencies, research and conservation organisations, environmental trusts, charities and volunteer organisations. The EBAP 2022-27 is a wide- ranging programme of over 200 actions, which was first produced in 2000, and it meets the Council’s statutory duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 for all public bodies to ‘further the conservation of biodiversity’ and supports the delivery of the [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy](#).

A [delivery update for 2024](#) has been prepared which summarises key activity across the Council and the Partnership. Council activity in 2024 included securing additional budget to support the response to the nature emergency. New colleagues have been appointed in:

- Outdoor Learning;
- Parks and Greenspace;
- Planning; and
- Strategy and Insight.

Other strategic work includes embedding outcomes for nature in the draft [Climate Ready Edinburgh](#) plan, adopting [City Plan 2030](#) (with new policies for biodiversity), and updating the [Edinburgh Design Guidance](#),

Contact

[Caroline Peacock](#)
 Planning (Biodiversity) Officer
 Planning and Building Standards, Sustainable Development, Place Directorate.

with a draft approved in December 2024 for public consultation. The success of the action plan is driven by the range of Council services and partners delivering positive activities for biodiversity. Delivery highlights include:

- [Historic Environment Scotland Ranger Service](#) and the Council's Natural Heritage Service managing and improving Edinburgh's most important sites including Holyrood Park SSSI, eight Local Nature Reserves and Pentland Hills Regional Park. Activities include habitat management, habitat creation, priority species monitoring and conservation, community and volunteer engagement;
- The Council's Parks and Open Space team delivering project work to naturalise greenspace, including Million Tree City, and Nature Networks;
- The Council's Planning service embedding the new [NPF4](#) policies for biodiversity in Planning decisions, with training and [updated guidance](#) to support this;
- [Water of Leith Conservation Trust](#) delivering habitat improvements, invasive species control, maintaining the ecological health of the river through regular clean ups, and monitoring species. This involves using volunteers across the whole river catchment;
- [Edinburgh Lothian Greenspace Trust](#) supporting communities to improve local parks for nature and delivering the city wide Tree Time project;
- [Scottish Wildlife Trust](#) managing their nature reserves in the city and Pentland Hills, including reintroduction of rare plant species and insect monitoring;
- [RSPB](#) delivery of priority species conservation and specific projects, such as the Nature Prescriptions project officer embedded in the Western General Hospital;
- [The Conservation Volunteers](#) have secured funding for a four-year Green Skills John Muir Way project, with the Council as one of four partners. The project will deliver a work training programme for 24 young people, supporting biodiversity improvements in Council parks;
- [The Wildlife Information Centre](#) have promoted and supported wildlife recording and surveying, and increased the records held for Edinburgh to over 448,000; and

The [University of Edinburgh](#) and [NHS Lothian](#) supporting biodiversity improvements through changes in estate management and other initiatives.

Alignment of Community Planning and Climate Change

A review of the third sector is currently underway which will aim to support a renewed relationship to deliver on the climate emergency through communities.

The third sector interface (EVOG) was previously funded to deliver on an annual climate change programme, however this is now being revised as it is recognised that climate action must be fully aligned and integrated with community planning and poverty alleviation workstreams, and not as a stand alone function.

A new community network to support climate action has been created in Edinburgh called the Edinburgh Community Climate Action Network (ECCAN). This network is funded by the Scottish Government and meets with the Council frequently for support and to organise community events. The alignment between the third sector and ECCAN is still developing and over the coming months further work will be undertaken to establish roles of each organisation, and how to fully integrate this with community planning.

Contact

[Christine Downey](#)
Strategy Manager,
Climate & Nature,
Chief Executive's
Office

Edinburgh Fair Trade Towns Conference 30 -31st August 2025

The Edinburgh Fairtrade City Steering Group (EFTCSG) and Scottish Fair-Trade Forum was successful in securing the opportunity to host the International Fair-Trade Towns Conference in August 2025.

The event theme will focus on Fair Trade communities and local action to achieve sustainable development goals.

Conference planning is underway with tickets now available at:

[Get Tickets – 18th International Fair Trade Towns Conference 2025 – The Nucleus Building, University of Edinburgh](#)

As a key sponsor, the City of Edinburgh Council will host a welcome reception for international delegates on Friday 29th August.

The full programme for the weekend event is currently being finalised. The event is expected to bring together experts from across the globe to share best practice, network and explore ways to tackle global issues including poverty, inequality and the climate crisis.

The City of Edinburgh Council's has been invited to become a member of Scottish Fair Trade to further promote and demonstrate the commitment to the Fair-Trade movement. Membership includes promotional support, involvement in Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Fair Trade, training opportunities, advice and support. The annual fee for membership is £250.

Contact

[Christine Downey](#)
Strategy Manager,
Climate & Nature,
Chief Executive's
Office

Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal – Towards a Second Generation Deal

Contact

On 7 March, The Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region (ESESCR) Joint Committee will consider a proposition paper for engaging with Scottish and UK Governments on a second-generation city region deal.

[Andy Nichol](#)

Programme Manager,
Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal, Chief Executive's Office

Following the UK Parliamentary Election last year, regional partners wrote to the Secretary of State for Scotland requesting a meeting to build upon the success of the ESESCR Deal, and to discuss the opportunities to combat poverty and inequality through sustainable economic growth and for addressing the climate and nature emergency.

Given the tripartite approach that has underpinned the successful delivery of ESESCR Deal, a joint meeting was sought involving the Secretary of State and the Deputy First Minister.

That meeting took place on 9 January 2025. Regional representatives included:

- Councillor Jane Meagher (Convener, ESESCR Joint Committee)
- Councillor Norman Hampshire (Vice-Convener, East Lothian Council)
- Prof Sir Peter Mathieson (ESES Regional Higher and Further Education Consortium)
- Support from Paul Lawrence, Monica Patterson (East Lothian Council) and Andy Nichol

At this meeting, regional partners were invited to develop a proposition that would give ESES local authorities greater responsibility, resources and influence to address local priorities for sustainable economic growth and climate challenges.

The proposition paper to be considered by the ESESCR Joint Committee on 7 March builds upon the [Regional Prosperity Framework Delivery Plan](#) that was approved by each constituent council (Policy and Sustainability Committee on [17 January 2023](#)).

An annual progress update on the RPF Delivery Plan was provided to the [ESESCR Joint Committee on 7 June 2024](#) and included within the ESESCR Deal Annual Report update provided to the [Policy and Sustainability Committee on 22 October 2024](#)

The priorities within the proposition paper to be considered by the ESESCR Joint Committee align with the RPF Delivery Plan. These are:

1. Accelerated delivery of transformational strategic housing sites;
2. Delivering our Regional Innovation Action Plan;
3. A new approach to labour market strategy and delivery around both economic inactivity and employer led future skills needs; and
4. Delivery of regional transport and net zero infrastructure.

The purpose of the proposition paper is to secure a commitment from Scottish and UK governments to work with ESESCR partners on developing a second-generation City Region Deal. Consent to the terms of any such deal would require the individual and collective agreement of all constituent councils.

ALEO Adoption of City of Edinburgh Advertising and Sponsorship Policy

Contact

The Executive Director of Corporate Services has written to the following ALEOs several times requesting confirmation of their adoption of the new Advertising and sponsorship policy or not, the table below sets out the outcomes of that correspondence.

[Dr Deborah Smart](#)

Executive Director,
Corporate Services

ALEO	Response Received	Acceptance – Yes / No
Lothian Pension Fund	Yes	Not Applicable
EICC	Yes	No
Capital Theatres	No	
Edinburgh Leisure	Yes	Yes
Edinburgh Trams	No	
Edinburgh Buses	Yes	No
Capital City Partnership	Yes	Yes

Public Art Policy

Contact

On 27 February 2025, Culture and Communities Committee approved a new [Public Art Policy](#).

[Karl Chapman](#)

The policy outlines the policy objectives, with associated arrangements to support the delivery of the Policy to support the management of existing, and development of future, public art and monuments (including memorialisation structures).

Head of Heritage,
Culture Venues and
Museums

The policy and associated documents address the lack of equality in existing representation and provides guidelines for people wishing to develop public art projects.

The actions agreed by Culture and Communities Committee will now be progressed.

Forthcoming activities: