



Council Leader's Report

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• EDINBURGH •
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

November 2020

The hard work is paying off

The news this week that Edinburgh is remaining in Tier 3 will have come as disappointment to many but the latest figures show that we are on track and could soon be moved to a lower tier. We're in regular contact with the Scottish Government and other agencies as we prepare to emerge from restrictions – and to communicate clearly what this means to residents and businesses.

We all appreciate the extremely challenging circumstances faced by businesses across the city, many of which have worked hard to adapt to changing public health guidance. I want to thank the hospitality sector in Edinburgh for their efforts in keeping our communities safe – I know none of this is easy. I will continue to make the case for revising conditions in the tiers, such as opening hours for hospitality. Later closing, for example, would allow restaurants to run a second evening sitting.

Testing and tracing are of course pivotal to our work to limit the virus's spread so it was encouraging to see the latest walk-through [Covid-19 test centre open at Leith Library](#) – the third Council venue that we've made available, following the successful opening of centres in the Usher Hall and Gate 55.

Let's keep sticking together on this, Edinburgh. Only if we all do our bit to follow the rules will we be able to help the Capital move towards a lower tier, as safely and as sustainably as possible.

Help shape spending priorities for the Capital

All our lives have been changed by Covid-19 – and [a new survey has gone live](#) on our Consultation Hub inviting residents to share their views on how the pandemic has impacted on the services we provide.

We want to hear what you think we've done well during the crisis, and what services you've missed. This feedback will be invaluable as we embark once again on the complex decision-making process around prioritising the £1bn we spend on services and investing in our priorities each year.

The results of the survey will supplement the feedback we've gathered through public consultation over recent years, which led to us establishing the key priorities for this Administration: tackling poverty and inequality; boosting sustainability; and promoting wellbeing.

With our existing target of a [net zero carbon Edinburgh by 2030](#), joined by our becoming the [first UK local authority to set an end date for poverty](#) last month – our goal is to eradicate poverty in Edinburgh within ten years – the task before us is challenging but we're determined to keep investing in line with our core commitments. Inevitably, dealing with the pandemic has placed extra financial strain on our budget and we need to find at least another £47.5m worth of savings in 2021-24.

Please take a few minutes to fill in the new survey, which runs for four weeks until 10 December, and help deliver a fairer, more sustainable future for Edinburgh.

Working to improve safety on our roads for everyone

Next week is Road Safety Week and, this year, it seems more pertinent than ever. The tragic death of Heather Stronach, who was killed while cycling in Portobello this month, brings home just how crucial it is that we provide safe, secure spaces on our streets for all road users. Our thoughts are with Heather's loved ones at this desperately sad time.

We're committed to making our roads safer through a range of initiatives but there's clearly so much more to be done. As well as supporting [Road Safety Week](#) we're backing Cycling Scotland's [Give Cycle Space](#) campaign and our own [Be Bright Be Seen](#) initiative encourages all road users to look out for one another. We're progressing a number of projects to provide safer, protected routes, like City Centre West to East Link and the West Edinburgh Link. We aiming to be a City with zero fatalities on our roads – we owe it to our residents. To get there requires bold change, which will affect us all, but the benefits will be shared by everyone.

Right now, we're facing an added challenge as people attempt to travel while remaining physically distanced. Through our [Spaces for People](#) programme, we've delivered a range of measures to create room for people to walk, cycle and wheel and now a raft of further measures has been developed using public feedback gathered through our [Commonplace tool](#). These, alongside tweaks to existing schemes, will be considered by councillors on 19 November.

Trams to Newhaven progressing well

We want to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis stronger and central to that is the city's green recovery – building a better connected, more sustainable Capital. It's entirely sensible and prudent to continue to oversee the Trams to Newhaven business case, but what the numbers show is that this project is still the right thing for our City's transport system and for our economy – and that it continues to meet the financial

tests we set out at the start. We need to build the future Edinburgh we want. And a clean, reliable transport system serving one of the most densely-populated parts of our City is very much part of that vision.

Work on the project continues to progress well and, earlier today, I was able to see for myself when I visited the site at Ocean Terminal to see the first tracks being laid – an important milestone for the project and a real boost for the local community. I'm looking forward to seeing the line grow over the coming year, as [this video from the Trams to Newhaven](#) team shows.

On my visit, I was also able to drop by Discovery Garden, which I'm pleased to report is being retained as part of the area's redevelopment. I know how much this lovely little garden means to local people, so I'm delighted that, in response to feedback from the local community, the tram team has been able to review its designs so we can keep this space for the enjoyment of all those who live and visit here.

Ending HIV infections in Edinburgh by 2030

Another major target in our sights for the coming decade is to have no new HIV infections in the Capital by 2030 and we moved a step closer towards this goal last week when a new panel of experts met for the first time, chaired by depute leader, Cammy Day.

Last November we joined hundreds of cities from all over the world as a member of the [Fast Track Cities initiative](#), an international movement committed to ending the global HIV epidemic by 2030.

Our expert panel brings together knowledge and insight from across Edinburgh and they will work towards eliminating HIV-related stigma and discrimination, ending all preventable deaths from HIV-related causes as well as improving the health, quality of life and wellbeing of people living with HIV across Edinburgh. [Find out more](#) about this hugely important work.

Edinburgh remembers

As with other Remembrance events that traditionally take place at War Memorials up and down the country, the global pandemic meant that things were different in Edinburgh this year.

Our Garden of Remembrance remained open but the usual formal services were moved online. Legion Scotland and Poppyscotland encouraged people to take to their doorsteps at 11am to mark the two-minute silence and broadcast a [virtual service of remembrance](#) on their YouTube channel.

On Remembrance Sunday, Lord Provost Frank Ross placed a wreath at the Scottish National War Memorial on behalf of the City and, on Armistice Day itself, the [Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#) lit up the sky above Rosebank Cemetery, paying tribute to the 1.7 million Commonwealth war dead as part of its #ShineOn Remembrance activities.

Happy Clickmas from Edinburgh

The festive season is a very special time in our city, and this year our residents and local businesses will be at the heart of festivities as Edinburgh's Christmas goes digital.

The new [Neighbourhood Market](#) will act as a directory to direct people to a fantastic range of local businesses. It will not only be great for Christmas shopping, it's also a fantastic opportunity for local traders of all kinds to show off their wares. It's never been more important to support our local businesses and the market will showcase hundreds of local artisan producers, makers, retailers, bakers, gift companies, accessories and clothing businesses, hotels and restaurants. It's free to sign up to and I'd encourage all local traders to check out what it has to offer them.

Also, for young budding writers out there, Underbelly are running a writing competition with Santa Claus himself, who will read winning bedtime stories online every night of Advent. Find out more from [Edinburgh's Christmas](#) website.

Diwali goes digital

While Christmas is still a few weeks away, another major celebration in the global cultural calendar is now upon us in the form of Diwali, the annual festival of lights.

While the annual [Edinburgh Diwali festival](#) may not be able to fill the city centre with an abundance of lights, dance and music as it usually does so beautifully, the free-to-view Digital Diwali promises a packed two-hour programme of music and dance from India and Scotland for viewers to enjoy.

Tune in to the [Edinburgh Diwali YouTube channel](#) from 5pm to 7pm on Sunday (15 November) and share in the celebrations from the comfort of your own home.

Who deserves the Edinburgh Award?

Nominations are now open for one of the city's most coveted accolades, the [Edinburgh Award](#), which celebrates an individual who's made an outstanding contribution to the Capital and gained lasting national and international acclaim for the city.

Previous winners include Ian Rankin, Dame Elizabeth Blackadder, Sir Chris Hoy, JK Rowling, Doddie Weir and Tom Gilzean. Votes are now invited for the successor to Heart of Midlothian FC CEO Ann Budge, the most recent Edinburgh Award recipient.

I'm sure we'll see an inspiring range of nominees this year, in particular, given the challenges we've all faced and continue to face in 2020. So many people and organisations have gone above and beyond to help their communities in exceptionally difficult circumstances and their actions have made us all proud.

Once you've chosen your candidate to be the 14th Edinburgh Award-winner, you can nominate them online, by email or by post – details are on the [Edinburgh Award homepage](#). Nominations close on Friday 4 December.

Welcome to Edinburgh's newest councillor

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to offer a warm welcome to Ethan Young who has just been elected as the new ward councillor for Craigentinny/ Duddingston following a [by-election](#).

It is undoubtedly a challenging time to join the Council, as we grapple with the wide-reaching effects of a global pandemic, but I have every confidence that Ethan will make a fantastic contribution to his ward and to the City.

I'm sure I speak for all elected members when I say we look forward to welcoming Cllr Young at his inaugural Full Council meeting on 19 November.

Get involved

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