



Council Leader's Report

Cammy Day

• EDINBURGH •
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

September 2019

Wishing Adam well

As you may know, Council Leader Adam McVey is on adoption leave until early October and we all wish him and his family a very happy and 'peaceful' time as they settle into their new life together.

As depute leader, I've taken on Adam's responsibilities alongside Councillor Ellie Bird – and I'm delighted to bring you the latest edition of the Leader's Report.

Pulling together in adversity

The fatal fire at Fountainbridge on Tuesday evening sent shockwaves through the local community and right across the city. Our thoughts and heartfelt sympathies are with the family of the person who tragically lost their life. Sadly, some families have also lost their homes and we're doing all we can to support them through this difficult time.

Visiting the site the day after, it hit home just how devastating the explosion and fire were and the scale of the response required. Emergency services, from the firefighters tackling the blaze to the police managing the incident, worked tirelessly with countless council colleagues to make the area safe, carrying out checks on vulnerable people and finding alternative accommodation for residents who desperately needed it.

Special mention must go to the Salvation Army who pulled out all the stops to set up the rest centre and I'm sure Tollcross Primary School parents are relieved to see the school re-open so quickly.

Of course, none of us ever wants incidents like this to happen, but when they do, it's heartening to see how well our city responds and pulls together.

Pressing our plans for a tourist tax

With yet another successful festival season under our belts, one which saw the Fringe report one of its busiest years on record, we've been continuing our discussions with the Scottish Government around gaining the powers we need to introduce a visitor levy.

We're well aware of the strain the summer festivals put on our core services and on our residents – and just as aware of our responsibility to manage this. The additional resources provided by a levy would help us to do just that.

It's welcome news, then, that a [national consultation](#) is now underway. Launched earlier this week following the latest Programme for Government, this is a massive milestone for us. We've long been at the forefront of calling for this change, driving forward our proposals for a fair, simple overnight charge for visitors, and I'd encourage you to take part in the consultation before it closes in December.

Tackling climate change together

Fresh from its magnificent £8m revamp, our very own Saughton Park played host to an important climate change announcement by the Environment Minister, Roseanna Cunningham MSP, earlier this week.

Set against the backdrop of Saughton's micro-hydro scheme, which will soon ensure the entire park is fully eco-powered, the event was held to launch a new consultation on plans to put public sector bodies at the forefront of the fight against climate change in Scotland.

Here in Edinburgh, we've set ourselves a hugely [ambitious target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030](#), so these proposals are extremely welcome. As Saughton Park demonstrates, it's only by working collectively that we can properly address the global climate emergency and we and all public bodies owe it to future generations to do whatever we can to protect the planet.

New high school for Currie

I'm sure the Currie community were delighted to hear the news that they'll be getting a brand new high school thanks to a national £1bn investment package announced this week. It forms part of our ambitious programme to construct six new high schools and our plans are now starting to become a reality.

Planning permission has been approved for a new Castlebrae High School, with work starting on site later this year, and funding is in place for Phase 1 of a new Trinity Academy – something we've long campaigned for. Replacement schools for Liberton, WHEC and Balerno are all part of our plans as we aim to replace poor condition high school buildings with fit-for-purpose learning and community hubs.

And tying in with our bold 2030 commitment, we'll make sure all new schools are sustainably and innovatively designed. They'll be inspirational places for learning for the next generation and I have no doubt that Currie will become a model for low carbon schools of the future.

Are you a community councillor-in-waiting?

Community Councils are a fantastic opportunity for residents to influence what happens in their part of the city, with members playing an active role in anything from commenting on planning and licensing applications to taking part in community campaigns and working with others to improve the local area.

We're looking for people of all ages and from all walks of life to get involved. Ideas, energy and enthusiasm are welcomed and we'll provide you with all the support you need to get the best from being a member.

The nomination period runs until 30 September and voting, if required, will take place on 31 October. You can apply as an individual or as a local interest group, such as a Parent Council, Friends of Parks group or sports club. [Further information on each community council](#) and how to apply is available on our website.

Saddle up this Sunday for the Riding of the Marches

Picture the scene: hundreds of costumed riders on horseback processing down the historic Royal Mile, returning with news of the defeat at the Battle of Flodden and inspecting the city's boundaries. It sounds like something out of a history book and it is, yet this Sunday is your chance to see a spectacular re-enactment.

Thousands of people are expected to get caught up in the excitement of the majestic [Edinburgh Riding of the Marches](#) on Sunday afternoon. It's an old tradition that dates back to 1579 and has become a popular family event since it returned in 2008. Look out for the Lord Provost leading the way, his City Officers, the Chair of the Riding Association, Cllr Iain Whyte – and for the special purple poppies, being sold by volunteers to raise money for animal welfare charities.

Celebrating 100 years of Lothian buses

Staying in the archives, this month we're celebrating 100 years of public ownership for Edinburgh's much-loved bus service, as Lothian marks its centenary in style. I'm looking forward to taking part in the fantastic centenary cavalcade on 29 September, when we'll see buses from throughout the decades processing through Edinburgh's streets.

The cavalcade, along with Lothian's Doors Open Day event on Saturday 28 September, demonstrates how the company has grown and evolved over the years, transporting the people of Edinburgh from every corner of the Capital and I hope to see lots of people out to enjoy the spectacle.

As we look to the future, and the city's evolution to encourage travel on foot, by bike and on public transport, we hope to see many more residents and visitors choosing to take the bus as a reliable, sustainable mode of transport for many more years to come.

Get involved

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