

# Motion by the Green Group

## City of Edinburgh Council

22 February 2024

### Item 4.1 – Revenue Budget 2024/25 and Sustainable Capital Budget Strategy 2024-2034

#### Preamble to amended version:

This is an updated version of the Green budget submitted to Edinburgh Council on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Following negotiations and discussion with other parties, additional revenue raising and spending proposals are included from other budgets submitted, with thanks. Lines included are those which demonstrate an obvious environmental or equalities benefit, and where these budget lines align with our vision for climate and social justice.

Most revisions concern additional revenue raising powers in section 6.1 but of particular significance in the spending space, is substantial investment to the Housing Revenue Account from the general fund, pending ministerial approval in section 6.5, With additional revenue raised we are also able to freeze Garden Aid charges and increase spending on Council accessibility measures as described in sections 6.4 and 6.5. We also adopt proposals to reintroduce supported bus services for communities in Dumbiedykes and the Lady Nairne areas, and to spend £400,000 on providing support to unpaid carers.

The other major change in this amended budget is an additional 1% increase in Council Tax to fund. This takes our proposed Council Tax increase to 7.75%, just under the 7.8% increase proposed in the administration budget for year 2. This additional increase is to reflect the severe funding pressures facing health and social care, and will be allocated to the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board. More information on this is described in section 4.

All additions and changes to the budget are **highlighted in yellow**. Due to time constraints, we have been unable to amend our Equalities Impact Statement and Climate Impact Statement though the changes we propose have been based on underlying equalities evidence and commitments, and we assume will have a positive impact on vulnerable people.

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### 1. Introduction

The Green group in Edinburgh are proposing a budget which sees an increase in Council Tax of **7.75%** in order to fund the twin priorities of climate and social justice. This budget sees over £7 million invested in responding to the climate and nature emergencies, additional vital spending on active travel infrastructure, over £5 million in additional support to the most vulnerable in our city, and **£5 million to contribute to the deficit facing the EIJB**. Additional revenue is generated through in-sourcing of services, changes to some fees and charges, reduction in agency spend, as well as savings from the civic budget.

### 2. Context – a ‘no cuts’ budget?

Local Government has been consistently underfunded in Scotland, due to insufficient funding allocated to Scotland by Westminster and decisions to prioritise other spending taken at Holyrood. We are now approaching breaking point with Edinburgh’s financial projections showing growing deficits and recommendations to cut service provision.

Additional revenue streams being devolved to Local Authorities including Non-Domestic Rates, and the ability to increase Council Tax on second homes, is welcome and provides much-needed recurring income. But this does not change the core fact that Local Government needs additional core funding, and a removal of the ring-fencing which directs the majority of our spending.

This year, major cuts have been avoided due in part to a temporary reduction in employer’s pension contributions. This figure has provided a sticking plaster for the 2024-25 budget, but had sufficient basic funding been provided, these additional funds could instead have been used to invest in additional priorities, rather than to simply plug the budget gap which neither national government is stepping up to fill.

The respite given by these additional funding streams has meant that anticipated cuts to services have largely been avoided this year, but there remain a number of areas where spending is being reduced or discontinued. In many instances, these reductions are not being presented as cuts, even though the impact of their non-delivery through non continuation of funding will be felt in the same way. The Green budget opts to use the power to raise Council Tax to invest in services and reverse these “stealth cuts” which, most critically, include:

- Reduction in the Scottish Welfare Fund budget

In order to continue to provide support for 'low' priority Crisis Grant requests, and 'medium' priority Community Care Grants, just under £1.9m of extra funding is required. Without additional funding, the level of support offered to those in need would be significantly reduced.

- Reductions in staff posts

There are a number of instances where jobs within the climate and nature teams were due to be discontinued, with projects or external funding coming to an end. While these are not strictly speaking 'job losses', they all represent a post that would no longer exist within the council. This is not immediately apparent from the figures presented in the officer budget.

- Education cuts

Previously proposed cuts to education budgets were rejected by the Education, Children and Families committee in January. While additional funding has been secured for this year's budget, this is one-off rather than recurring, meaning that the cuts are still planned for the Council's medium-term financial plan. The Green budget includes an additional 0.5% to the council tax increase assumption in year two, alongside other measures, in order to permanently remove the threat of these cuts.

### **3. Council Tax – the elephant in the room**

Council tax is a regressive tax, and Greens are clear that it should be scrapped, and replaced with a system of local tax which redistributes wealth from the richest for the benefit of all.

Greens also oppose the Council Tax freeze, which will provide benefit for those in the middle and upper classes, while failing to give Local Authorities the income they need to provide vital services. Further detail on this is set out in our Equalities Impact statement in Appendix A

Local Authorities have been left with a choice between accepting a Council Tax freeze which is neither fully funded nor based on local need, or increasing a tax which we know to be unfair. For Edinburgh, the amount of money offered by the Scottish Government does not provide the funding required to fulfil the Council's priorities and will mean we cannot offer the services and support that people need.

Greens are proposing a council tax increase of **7.75%** and we are clear that the choice now rests with the Scottish Government as to whether this is passed on in full to people in Edinburgh as an increase of **7.75%, or 2.75%** (with the 5% shortfall being met by Scottish Government contributions). We believe that the £16.1 million already set aside for Edinburgh in the national budget should not be withdrawn. To reflect this financial uncertainty, and the broader cost of living crisis, this Green budget invests just under £6 million in poverty reduction grants and support, to ensure that people in the city can access support they need.

### **4. Edinburgh Integration Joint Board**

Edinburgh's Integration Joint Board's deficit currently sits at £67 million and is due to increase in the coming years. This will undoubtedly result in reductions to services and worse health and social care outcomes for people in Edinburgh if a solution is not found. The officer budget recommends a contribution of £11.4 million to the EIJB. **The revised Green budget proposes an**

additional 1% rise in Council Tax, as well as a series of other revenue raising ideas, which would fund an additional £5m from the Council to the EIJB. With match funding from the NHS, in line with the integrated funding approach, this would result in an additional £10m in funding, significantly reducing the forecasted deficit.

We acknowledge that both the Council and the NHS – who share responsibility for the EIJB budget – must work together to do more to address this shortfall. The Scottish Government must also acknowledge their role, including in the historic underfunding of Edinburgh's IJB, and consider providing additional resources.

We urge all elected members to note that the officer budget presented to us does not explicitly reference the threat to health and social care services, and the impact on the city's most vulnerable people, and to support cross-party efforts to protect these over the coming year.

## **5. TL:DR - the Green budget in summary**

### **Savings and additional revenue**

In addition to the Council Tax income set out above, this budget includes:

- £1 million from reductions in spend on agency staff and outsourcing, reducing the Council's reliance on the private market, resulting in better conditions for workers and outcomes for residents.
- A reduction of £50k to the Civic budget, including £30k previously spent on catering during Full Council meetings, to instead be used on accessibility measures to further enable access to Council meetings and decision-making processes for members of the public.
- c.£2m found in savings against contract waivers, and increases to some fees and charges, primarily in parking

### **Spending priorities**

This budget prioritises spending along our key priorities of climate and social justice, and includes:

- Over £7 million on Edinburgh Council's response to the climate and nature emergencies
- Major investment in the city mobility plan and active travel measures
- Almost £6 million in additional funding to support the most vulnerable in our city
- Investment to making Edinburgh a welcoming and inclusive place for all through increased provision of public toilets, accessibility measures, and free tram travel for under 22 year olds.

## **6. Budget amendment:**

### 6.1 We will maximise resources by:

6.1.2 Increasing Council Tax by 7.75%, raising £27.5m

6.1.3 Saving £1m through reducing agency spend and in-sourcing services

6.1.4 Reducing the Civic budget by £50k including ending catering for Full Council meetings

6.1.5 Saving £1.4m from reviewing off-contract spend & waivers

6.1.6 Increasing income from Fees and Charges:

- 6.1.6.1 Increase Hawes Pier cruise passenger charges by 20% raising £124k
- 6.1.6.2 Increase charges for parking permits by 15% raising £250k
- 6.1.6.3 Increase EV charging costs by 5% raising £23k
- 6.1.6.4 Increase charges for garage rents by 5% raising £15k
- 6.1.6.5 From 2024-2025, we will raise £100k from additional parking permit levies for SUVs

Additionally, we will introduce a number of measures which will incur spending this year, but which will also raise revenue over this year and next, leaving the budget in a net positive position:

6.1.7 We will invest £300k on additional bus lane cameras which will raise £450k over 2 years

6.1.8 We will invest £60k in additional capacity for Short Term Let application processing which will raise £60k in additional licensing fees.

6.2 We will allocate over £7m additional spending to support climate and nature, including:

6.2.1 £363k for a Nature Emergency Team, with a budget of £2.9m for the Nature Emergency Response

6.2.2 £1.3m to invest in trees across the city, including the creation of a 'Million City Tree' team and investment fund

6.2.3 £950k to support Edinburgh's 'Climate Ready' aspirations including flood prevention and intervention measures

6.2.4 £450k on Community Climate Action, including retaining the Community Climate Forum Co-ordinator, and funding to reintroduce and expand the Community Climate Fund, delivered via participatory budgeting

6.2.5 £500k on projects relating to community growing and sustainable food

6.2.6 £500k on greener energy, buildings, and retrofitting, including serious expansion of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy project management office, to expedite delivery of the actions contained within that plan

6.3 For Edinburgh's transport systems to be affordable, accessible, and sustainable, we need significant investment in active travel initiatives. Our budget commits:

6.3.1 £1.85m to expedite delivery of the City Mobility Plan including implementing the major junctions review to prioritise safety for walking, wheeling, and cycling

6.3.2 £500k to continue provision of free tram travel for under 22-year-olds

6.3.3 £450k for a dropped kerb programme to make our roads and pavements safer for all

6.3.4 £1m for an additional phase of bike hangar roll out

6.3.5 £60k to support the roll out of cargo bike services in our parks and other Council service areas

6.3.6 £240,000 for supported bus services for communities in Dumbiedykes and the Lady Nairne areas, serving areas of the city who lost local services, providing better access to employment, health, leisure and shopping for those communities

6.4 Supporting those most at risk is one of the best ways to end poverty and promote equality. We will:

6.4.1 Increase the Scottish Welfare Fund by £1.885m to ensure no reduction in provision

6.4.2 Reintroduce the Tenant Grant Fund with a budget of £1m to offer financial support to tenants across all tenures and acting as a preventative spend against homelessness

6.4.3 Introduce a “Household Support Payment” for everyone in bands A-D currently eligible for the Council Tax Reduction scheme at a cost of £3m

6.4.4. £200k invested in transition support for people leaving prison unexpectedly to enable them to access housing and social security.

6.4.5 Continue to reject the cuts to education through revenue spending in Year 2 of the budget, ensuring rejected cuts to education budgets are sustainably funded for the future.

6.4.6 Spend £32k to freeze Garden Aid charges (a revision from our original proposal of capping charges at 5%) rejecting the c.80% increase proposed by officers which could have seen some households served an increase of more than £300 per year

6.4.7 Allocate £400,000 towards providing support to unpaid carers

6.5 Edinburgh is a wonderful city but needs investment to ensure it is accessible and welcoming to all. We will:

6.5.1 Fund Edinburgh’s Nighttime Coordinator to help everyone enjoy Edinburgh’s night life, protect workers, and keep everyone safe for £50k

6.5.2 Invest £800k to build and maintain “Changing Places” toilets in town centres in Edinburgh that don’t currently have them

6.5.3 Invest an additional £100k towards Edinburgh’s third sector to support our communities

6.5.4 Ensure the business of the Council is available to all residents through BSL interpretation and support for more accessible communications for £30k

6.5.5 Explore measures to maximise Edinburgh's ability to complete Compulsory Purchase Orders, allowing us to buy property and land to help tackle the housing emergency and improve our communities and neighbourhoods with seed funding of £200k

6.5.6 Invest £3.5m of capital spending from the general fund into the HRA to tackle void properties, subject to ministerial approval

## **7. Conclusion and recommendations**

Council notes the following reports from the Executive Director of Corporate Services:

### **Council Budget Reports**

- a) Revenue Budget Strategy and MTFP Progress Update - referral from the Finance and Resources Committee (25 January 2024)
- b) Revenue Budget Framework and Medium -Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2024/29 – Further Update - referral from the Finance and Resources Committee (6 February 2024)
- c) Revenue Budget 2024-25 – Risk and Reserves - referral from the Finance and Resources Committee
- d) Sustainable Capital Budget Strategy 2024-2034 – referral from the Finance and Resources Committee

### **Council therefore approves:**

- The Revenue Budget 2024/25 as detailed in the reports appended to this motion, as amended by the changes/allocations detailed in Appendix 1;
- The uses of reserves as set out in Annex 1;
- A band 'D' Council Tax of £1,559.89 for 2024/25;
- The Council Tax and Rating resolution set out in Annex 2 to this motion;
- The 2024/34 Sustainable Capital Budget Strategy as set out in the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services, as amended by the changes shown in Annex 3;
- A further report to be submitted to seek approval of revised charges for Council services, the financial impact of which is contained in Appendix 1 to this amendment; and
- A further report to be submitted to seek approval of the prudential indicators arising from this motion

### **In addition:**

Council notes that the IJB remains significantly underfunded and is facing year on year deficits. Council resolves that any additional consequentials should be passed on to the IJB in full, with request for match funding from the NHS.

Council recognises challenges with the budget process this year, and requests officers conduct debrief sessions with elected members, staff, and trade union representatives in order to improve processes for next year.

Council regrets that no equality impact assessments were carried out for officer budget proposals, and requests officers produce a retrospective equality impact assessment of the final budget passed by Council, so mitigation measures for unintended consequences from budget decisions can be put into place where required.

Council requests a review of the Common Good Fund and its interaction with the Civic Budget and assets currently held by the City of Edinburgh Council.

Council agrees to write to the Scottish Government seeking ministerial approval to supplement the HRA from the general fund, and explore the range of options this could be used for.

**Moved by: Cllr Alys Mumford**  
**Seconded by: Cllr Ben Parker**

**THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL  
GREEN GROUP BUDGET MOTION  
REVENUE BUDGET 2024/26**

	2024/25		2025/26	
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Expenditure to be Funded</b>				
- Resource Allocation Totals	1,344,834			
- Add: Expenditure funded through Specific Grants	<u>16,211</u>			
		1,361,045		
- General Revenue Funding and Non Domestic Rates	<u>(972,982)</u>			
- Ring Fenced Funding	<u>(16,211)</u>			
		(989,193)		
<b>To be Funded by Council Tax</b>		<u>371,852</u>		<u>426,000</u>
<b>Council Tax at Band D</b>	£	1,559.89		£ 1,614.49
<b>Increase on Previous Year</b>	£	112.20		£ 54.60
- Percentage Increase		7.75%		3.50%
<b>Funding Requirement</b>		371,852		426,000
<b>Council Tax Income</b>		<b>383,323</b>		<b>399,729</b>
		<u>383,323</u>		<u>399,729</u>
<b>Funding (Excess) / Shortfall at Council Tax increase above as reported to Council, February 2024 (note 1)</b>		(11,471)		26,271
<b>Service Investment (see Appendix 1)</b>	17,453		18,173	
<b>Add / Less: Amendments to Draft Revenue Budget Framework (see Appendix 1)</b>	(880)		(1,630)	
<b>Less: Additional Savings (see Appendix 1)</b>	<u>(3,402)</u>		<u>(5,140)</u>	
		13,171		11,403
<b>Contributions to / (from) reserves (itemise)</b>				
Severe Weather reserve	(800)			
Welfare Reform reserve	<u>(900)</u>			
		(1,700)		-
<b>Balance of Available Resources</b>		<u>0</u>		<u>37,674</u>

**Note 1** - incremental 2025/26 gap takes account of position set out in update report to the Finance and Resources Committee on 6 February 2024 i.e. that deferral of the schools-related savings results in the loss of the full-year effect of savings originally proposed from August 2024.

**THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL**  
**GREEN GROUP BUDGET MOTION**  
**REVENUE BUDGET 2024/26**

	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
<b>SERVICE INVESTMENT</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Reject Education cuts in 2025/26		5,200
Additional public toilet provision in four town centres - annual running costs	140	
Transition support for people exiting prison	200	
Under 22s tram travel - Council support	500	
Supported bus services	240	
Additional recurring contribution for EIJB	5,000	
Scottish Welfare Fund - additional funding to maintain current eligibility thresholds	1,885	
Household Support Payments	3,000	(3,000)
Tenant Grant Fund	1,000	
Additional support for unpaid carers	400	
Community empowerment and capacity building	100	
Night-time Co-Ordinator (initial one-year pilot)	50	(50)
Compulsory Purchase Order feasibility	200	(200)
Nature Emergency team	363	
Nature Emergency response	850	(126)
Million Tree City team	500	
Million Tree City maintenance and investment	300	(200)
Adapting the city / being "Climate Ready" (including flood prevention and intervention)	200	(200)
Delivering the City Mobility Plan	600	
Community Climate Action	450	
Greener energy, buildings and retrofitting	500	(200)
Sustainable food work	200	
"Right to Grow" feasibility study	100	(100)
Additional carbon reduction measures	60	
Accessibility measures at Full Council meetings, including BSL translation (funded from redirected civic budget funding)	30	
Extra procurement resource to review off-contract spend and waivers	500	(500)
Short Term Let application processing (contained within licensing)	60	
Additional borrowing for derelict housing brought back into use	25	97
	<b><u>17,453</u></b>	<b><u>721</u></b>
<b>PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2024/28</b>		
Garden aid - freeze current charges	32	
Parking charges - revise increase to c. 25% in 2024/25 and add a further 5% to proposal for 2025/26	(500)	(500)
Parking permits - revise increase to c.15% in 2024/25 and add a further 5% to proposal for 2025/26	(250)	(250)
Hawes Pier cruise passenger charges - increase by 20%	(124)	
EV charging - additional 5%	(23)	
Garage rent charges - extra 5%	(15)	
<b>TOTAL AMENDMENTS TO DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET</b>	<b><u>(880)</u></b>	<b><u>(750)</u></b>
<b>ADDITIONAL SAVINGS</b>		
Review of civic budgets, including councillor catering	(50)	
Agency, establishment and staffing control savings	(1,000)	
Energy efficiency measures	(500)	
SUV - additional parking permit levies		(100)
Savings from review of off-contract spend and waivers	(1,400)	
Additional bus lane revenue	(112)	(338)
Temporary accommodation savings from voids being filled	(280)	(1,300)
Licences - additional income	(60)	
<b>TOTAL ADDITIONAL SAVINGS</b>	<b><u>(3,402)</u></b>	<b><u>(1,738)</u></b>

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

To recommend that in respect of the year to 31st March, 2025:

**1. GENERAL FUND**

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

Council Tax - estimated expenditure from Council Tax of £383.323m be met and in terms of Sections 70(1) and 74(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the 1992 Act) Council Tax be levied in respect of properties in the bands defined in Section 74(2) of the 1992 Act, as amended by The Council Tax (Substitution of Proportion) (Scotland) Order 2016, as follows:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Council Tax</b>	<b>Band</b>	<b>Council Tax</b>
	£		£
A	1,039.93	E	2,049.52
B	1,213.25	F	2,534.82
C	1,386.57	G	3,054.78
D	1,559.89	H	3,821.73

**2. RATING APPEALS TIMETABLE**

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

**Main Assessment Roll**

Lodging of Appeals with the Executive Director of Corporate Services by	12 July 2024
Hearing of Appeals by the Rating Authority	13 September 2024

**Amendments to Main Assessment Roll made subsequent to its issue**

Lodging of Appeals with the Executive Director of Corporate Services	Within six weeks of issue of Rate Demand or in terms of Section 11 of the Rating and Valuation (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 1984
Hearing of Appeals by the Rating Authority	Periodically

**3. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE**

Expenditure on Capital projects in progress be met.

**4. BORROWING**

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

**THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL  
GREEN GROUP BUDGET MOTION  
CAPITAL BUDGET 2024 - 2029  
ADDITIONS TO REVISED PROGRAMME**

	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	Total £000
<b>Available Resources for Distribution (if applicable)</b>						
Release from capital contingency	7,000					7,000
Reprioritisation of reserves	2,870					2,870
Additional borrowing	930					930
	<b>10,800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,800</b>
<b>Changes to recommended Capital Investment Programme</b>						
Derelict council houses back into use	3,500					3,500
Nature Emergency response	2,050					2,050
Million Tree City	500					500
Adapting the city/being "Climate Ready"	750					750
Provision of additional toilet facilities in four town centres	800					800
Additional provision for dropped kerbs within roads infrastructure plan	450					450
City Mobility Plan - Major Junctions Review	1,250					1,250
Additional bus lane cameras	300					300
Bike hangars - Phase 3	1,000					1,000
Sustainable food-growing	200					200
	<b>10,800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,800</b>

# Appendix A: Equalities impact statement of the Green Group Budget

## Introduction

The budget proposed by Council officers contains no equality impact statements, despite the Council's statutory duties relating to equality, and commitments that these would be produced and made public. While a justification for this is given by the fact that there are no specific 'savings proposals' included in this budget, it remains the case that Edinburgh's budget contains approximately £1.3bn worth of spending and where this money is spent – or is *not* – has equalities impacts. Budget decisions made by local authorities do not have the same impact on all people. Pre-existing inequalities can be exacerbated by failure to account for this in how spending is directed, and cuts made.

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

This equalities impact statement should not be seen as a full impact assessment, nor has our budget proposal undergone a full gender budget analysis. Rather this is an attempt to set out the equalities considerations that have informed the spending and saving decisions reflected in the Green budget proposals:

- Rejecting the Council Tax freeze
- Increasing Council Tax
- Health and Social Care (EIJB)
- Climate adaptation measures
- Climate change mitigation
- Welfare support
- Transition support for people leaving institutionalised care
- Public toilets
- Reversing education cuts
- Fees and charges
- Civic budget and Council accessibility

## Equality impact statement

### Rejecting the Council Tax freeze

Council tax is a regressive tax, where poor people pay disproportionately more than wealthy people. This means that the Council Tax freeze will be more beneficial for those in the middle and upper classes, rather than people who are most vulnerable to experiencing poverty.

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland [explain this clearly](#):

*“Crucially, the regressive nature of council tax is already recognised by reductions and exemptions available to low income households, highlighting the core flaw with the freeze. Groups including*

*disabled people, unpaid carers, women (especially women with caring responsibilities) and people belonging to ethnic minorities are more likely to have lower incomes and therefore already pay less council tax. Although they are much more likely to be struggling with the cost of living, they will get little to no help from freezing council tax.*

*Even for households paying full council tax, including some eligible for council tax reduction but not claiming it, relative to a 5% increase freezing Band H in Glasgow would save a household around £184 whilst only saving Band A £50. These factors mean the benefits of the freeze will go disproportionately to wealthier households."*

Furthermore, the freeze will put pressure on the ability of the Council to deliver its services, thus having a further negative impact on equality. From roads maintenance to nursery provision, failure to fully provide services that people rely on will have a disproportionate impact on women, disabled people, black and minority ethnic communities, queer people, and other people with protected characteristics. This impact is compounded for people who face multiple discriminations, for example women of colour, or care experienced people experiencing mental health problems.

### **Council Tax increase**

Increasing Council Tax rather than accepting the Scottish Government freeze will mean that people living in lower bands will pay proportionately more than those in higher bands. This is due to the regressive nature of Council Tax and is a key motivating factor for its broader reform which we support. We therefore understand that increasing the Council Tax will have negative impacts on equality. However, as covered above, a council tax freeze is also regressive, resulting in greater 'savings' for wealthier people and negligible impacts for the poorest people.

Because more Council services can be delivered by increasing Council Tax – to the benefit of those experiencing poverty – and because measures have been put in place support those experiencing hardship through various anti-poverty funds and schemes of assistance (covered below), we believe that a Council Tax increase is the most appropriate mechanism to support people in Edinburgh to access the services they need.

### **Health and Social Care (EIJB)**

The Edinburgh Integration Joint Board (EIJB) is facing a £67million deficit this year, which is only set to increase in future years. This will have far reaching consequences, with cuts to services (which are disproportionately relied upon by women, disabled people, and older people) inevitable, unless a solution is found.

The officer budget includes £11.4 million for the EIJB, which includes reductions in employer pension contributions, and which is reflected in the Green budget. This does not go far enough to meet the shortfall this is reflected in our commitment that any additional consequential passed to the Council from the UK / Scottish Governments should be passed onto the IJB. Going forward, work must be done to bring the budget timetables of the IJB and Edinburgh Council into alignment, in order to avoid the situation where Edinburgh Council is setting its budget without full sight of the consequences for the IJB. This does not take away from the fact that the failure to properly fund the IJB this year will have equality impacts, and disproportionately impact on the most vulnerable in society.

Due to the broad budget constraints facing the Council and therefore the negligible impact that any additional single line in the Council budget could make to the IJB deficit, no further money is proposed for the IJB beyond the officer proposal of £11.4 m. A new approach is needed, including an increase in Scottish Government funding, and cooperation with the NHS, to ensure health and social care is sufficiently funded in Edinburgh. We remain gravely concerned about this provision,

and the impact the underfunding of Health and Social Care will have on vulnerable people across the city.

### **Climate adaptation measures**

The impacts of climate change will hit the poorest in Edinburgh hardest. The ability to respond to the impacts of extreme heat, flooding and economic shocks caused by climate events will all be dependent on socio-economic status, job security, physical health, disability, caring responsibilities, and other equality issues. Because of this, as well as spending on measures to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change as detailed in our Climate Impact statement (Appendix B), our spending proposals look at climate adaptation. This includes specific funding to align climate adaptation plans with existing anti-poverty work in the Council, as well as health and wellbeing strategies.

The Green budget has a particular focus on nature this year, reflecting both the importance of protecting our natural environment, and the benefits that access to nature has on people's wellbeing. By investing in nature-based solutions to prevent flooding and to mitigate against other, negative environmental impacts such as poor air quality, we will improve people's living environment. Additionally, as climate change impacts on weather conditions, further, additional investment in climate adaptative measures such as increased planting of street trees will have a disproportionately positive impact on older and disabled people, providing shade and respite in hot weather.

Additional spending on community growing and locally based food projects will benefit people experiencing food poverty, building resilience into our food system, which is severely threatened by global temperature rise.

### **Climate change mitigation**

Additional spending made available to expedite delivery of the City Mobility Plan will reduce carbon emissions and also have a positive benefit for equality. Existing IIAs completed to supplement these plans explain that "actions are anticipated to present significant opportunities and benefits to improve accessibility, modal choice, affordability and provide more equitable street-space allocations, reducing inequalities". Additionally, it is stated that "the City Mobility Plan's vision, objectives, policy measures and associated Implementation Plan strongly support and reinforce the Council's commitments to meeting climate change and adaptation goals, improving air quality, health and wellbeing, tackling poverty, and delivering good placemaking (including enhancing biodiversity)."

Representing further investment in public transport, continuing tram concessions for under 22s will also help realise equality. Women are far less likely to be car owners than men, the increasing costs of fuel create a financial barrier for poorer people, and lack of accessible infrastructure prevents many disabled people from traveling as they wish. The provision of free tram travel for under 22s is beneficial for young people – creating parity with over 60s – as well as marginalised groups within this age bracket, but also for families. Over 90% of lone parents in Scotland are women, therefore reducing a vital area of household spending for their children will have a positive impact on women's income.

Energy efficient homes are an issue of equality as disabled and older people are more likely to need to maintain a certain level of warmth in their homes, therefore making them more susceptible to energy price fluctuations. They are also more likely to spend more time in their homes, compounding this issue. The inclusion of dedicated staff resource on energy efficiency, heat networks, and project support for the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy will expedite the actions within this plan to provide lower cost energy and efficiency adaptations for homes.

### **Welfare support**

Giving money directly to people is an effective way of alleviating poverty – which has a disproportionately positive impact on women who are more likely to be primary care givers, more likely to be in receipt of social security, and more likely to be in debt for household spending.

The four additional anti-poverty support funds proposed in this budget are:

- **Reversing service-reduction in the Scottish Welfare Fund**  
Edinburgh is facing a £1.9m shortfall in its Scottish Welfare Fund. This will mean that the fund will reduce the service currently offered and only be able to support fewer people. The eligibility criteria for the Fund necessarily mean that it is targeted towards women and disabled people (who are more likely to be in receipt of social security payments) and failure to keep the Fund at its current levels will have a disproportionate impact on these groups.
- **Household Support Scheme**  
The Green budget includes £3m for a one-off payment of £100 for all households eligible for the Council Tax Reduction scheme and who are in Council Tax Bands A-D. While we don't have access to demographic breakdown of people in each council tax band, it is assumed that those in lower-valued properties are more likely to be poorer people (the majority of whom are women), and younger people. Targeted funding towards these groups will therefore have a positive impact on equality, although it should be noted that there are equalities issues with household – rather than individual – payments which may disbenefit women, especially those experiencing violence or coercive control.
- **Tenant Hardship Fund and reintroduction of the Tenant Grant Scheme**  
The continued delivery of the Tenant Hardship Fund reflected in the officer HRA budget provides support to council tenants facing financial difficulty, and this targeted support will have a positive impact on equality as those living in social housing are more likely to be experiencing poverty. However, Edinburgh has a disproportionately small social rented sector and a large private rental sector where rents are very high. As a result, many people experiencing poverty are living outwith Council housing and ineligible for support through the Tenant Hardship Fund. Reintroducing the Tenant Grant Fund to offer support to tenants experiencing financial difficulty across all tenures will have a positive impact for inequality helping tenants at risk of falling into homelessness. In turn, this preventative spend reduces pressures on homelessness services more broadly thus having a positive impact on other homeless households in the city.

### **Transition support for people leaving institutional care**

Imprisonment is a cause and a consequence of inequality. There is a broad correlation between imprisonment and social deprivation in Scotland, people in prison have a far higher rate of mental health problems than the general population, and the incarceration rate for people who identify as African, Caribbean, Black, or from Other ethnic groups was significantly higher than for people who identify as White.

While there are many prison reforms that are needed, the Green budget proposes one relatively simple measure to create a transition team to support those leaving prison unexpectedly after remand, helping people to access housing and social security support. 70% of women held on remand are subsequently released without charge (compared to 57% for the general population), and the percentage of young people aged 16-20 in prison who were on remand was consistently between 47% - 59% throughout 2023. These populations are therefore disproportionately impacted by unexpected release, as well as this transition support helping adult men who make up the vast majority of Scotland's prison population.

### **Public toilets**

Public toilets are an equalities issue. They are more likely to be needed by women, people providing care for children and adults (mostly women), and disabled people. The Green budget proposes additional, accessible ("Changing Places"), public toilets in all town centres currently without them,

providing a vital public service to people.

### **Reversing education cuts**

While the officer budget includes reversal of previously mooted proposals to cut Devolved School Management budgets, transition teachers and communities of practice for sustainability, this is a one-year reprieve only with these cuts still anticipated to appear in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plans.

While Integrated Impact Assessments have not been completed for these proposals yet, deputations from the Education Institute Scotland and individual schools and parents have made it clear that these cuts will have a disproportionate impact on women, and young people who are disabled, care leavers, or struggling with addiction and mental health problems. Teachers who will bear the brunt of reduced support are likely to be those in part time roles – overwhelmingly women – and the removal of support in school will push the need on to unpaid guardians who, again, are overwhelmingly women.

### **Fees and Charges**

Green budget proposals reverse the proposed increased fees to Garden Aid, which is available to disabled people and older people who need support to maintain their gardens. The proposal of up to an 80% increase which appears in the officer budget will have a disproportionately negative impact on older and disabled people.

### **Civic Budget and Council Accessibility**

The Green budget proposes cuts to the civic budget – in particular meals for Councillors during Full Council – with funding allocated to enable the democratic proceedings of the council to be made more accessible, for example by providing BSL interpretation. This will benefit Deaf and disabled people in Edinburgh, as well as other groups who have been historically excluded from Council decision making processes.

# Appendix B: Climate impact statement

## Introduction

Following a Green amendment at Policy & Sustainability committee on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023, it was recommended that “all budget motions include an accompanying statement which sets out how spending plans align with the Council’s climate strategies, including this as an appendix”. This appendix addresses that recommendation and makes use of the template and officer guidance circulated amongst all political groups on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023, and recirculated on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024. We have also produced an equalities impact statement (Appendix A).

This impact statement is not a substitute for a full climate impact assessment or carbon budget. The focus has been to produce a counterfactual analysis of the climate impact of the proposed budget by noting specific budget line insertions, edits, and deletions, compared to the officer budget presented at Finance & Resources committee on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024. This statement does not cover all budget lines or “missed opportunities” from unfunded projects which would otherwise have a positive impact on climate targets. In future years we hope it will be possible for groups to conduct a fuller impact assessment of budget proposals. We welcome thoughts from officers and political groups about how this might be realised.

## Climate impact statement

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

### i) Carbon impacts

The carbon impact of budget proposals can be assessed in terms of: a) buildings and energy use, b) infrastructure and energy use; c) transport and d) resource use and waste. Compared to the officer budget presented at Finance & Resources committee on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 it is considered that the budget proposals will result in a greater decrease of carbon emissions in the short and long term.

a) Buildings and energy use	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<p>1. The budget proposal includes significant additional investment in the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy office which will expedite delivery of energy efficiency projects, resulting in a greater decrease of energy usage and a greater decrease of carbon emissions in the short and long term.</p> <p>2. The budget proposal includes funding for a pilot project focusing on decarbonising “hard to treat” domestic properties in the city, reducing energy use and carbon emissions in a number of buildings in the city in the short term, and providing learning for future investment in the medium and long term.</p>	<p>1. The budget proposal includes spending on construction of new public toilets which will lead to an increase of carbon emissions in the short term. Mitigations should be put in place to ensure construction is as low carbon as possible.</p>

b) Infrastructure and energy use	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The budget proposal includes additional funding for a solar energy appraisal of the city, mapping out where increased investment in solar energy would be possible. This would result in an increase in clean energy projects in the city, decreasing carbon emissions in the medium and long term.</li> </ol>	
c) Transport	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The budget proposal includes significant additional investment to expedite delivery of the City Mobility Plan which will encourage modal shift and significantly reduce carbon emissions from transport in the short, medium, and long term.</li> <li>2. The budget proposal includes funding to retain the colleague travel engagement officer whose role focuses on encouraging modal shift within the Council workforce which will reduce carbon emissions in the short, medium, and long term.</li> <li>3. The budget proposal includes funding to deliver free tram travel for U22s, encouraging modal shift and reducing carbon emissions in the short, medium and long term.</li> <li>4. The budget proposals include an increase in parking charges compared to the officer budget. This encourages modal shift and will lead to a reduction in transport emissions in the long term.</li> </ol>	
d) Resource use and waste	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The budget proposal includes investment in a new "Food Waste officer" whose role would be to reduce food waste / improve food recycling.</li> </ol>	

## ii) Climate resilience impacts

The climate resilience impacts of the budget proposals can be assessed in terms of their impact on: a) communities, b) infrastructure and service delivery and c) biodiversity and land use. Compared to

the officer budget presented at Finance & Resources committee on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 it is considered that the budget proposals will reduce the vulnerability of residents to climate change, reduce the effects of climate change on the city and improve biodiversity.

a) Communities	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The budget proposal includes funding to retain the “Community Climate Forum coordinator” post whose role is to support community climate action and engagement on climate mitigation and adaptation measures. This will reduce the vulnerability of residents to climate change.</li> <li>2. The budget proposal retains and increases investment in the Community Climate Fund (delivered via participatory budgeting) which will engage and encourage communities to develop localised climate mitigation and adaptation projects. This will reduce the vulnerability of residents to climate change.</li> <li>3. The budget proposal includes investment in community engagement activities with residents across the city, including with schools and Council tenants to improve climate and nature literacy across the city.</li> <li>4. The budget proposal includes additional investment to look at a mapping of climate risk across the city, including aligning health, wellbeing, poverty, and climate objectives in order to focus actions and interventions across climate activity in areas of socio-economic deprivation, reducing the vulnerability of residents to climate change.</li> </ol>	
b) Infrastructure and service delivery	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The budget includes additional capital investment in nature-based solutions to water management and flood protection, decreasing the vulnerability of the Council’s building and infrastructure to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events.</li> <li>2. The budget proposal includes additional funding to undertake an assessment of</li> </ol>	

<p>the risks posed to Edinburgh's buildings and infrastructure from climate change, including vulnerability and ability to cope with increasing heat, flooding, and extreme weather events.</p>	
<p>c) Biodiversity and land use</p>	
<p>Positive impacts</p>	<p>Negative impacts</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The budget proposal includes significant additional investment into staffing to support actions to address the nature emergency, including permanent officers to expedite delivery of the Edinburgh Nature Network and Living Landscape projects, wild areas of school grounds, develop plans for the Pentland Hills and increase resource in the planning service to improve biodiversity literacy within planning applications. All of this work will significantly improve outcomes for biodiversity.</li> <li>2. The budget proposal includes significant additional investment into projects to tackle the nature emergency including seed funding to deliver projects as part of the Living Landscape and Edinburgh Nature Network. All of this work will significantly improve outcomes for biodiversity.</li> <li>3. The budget proposal includes significant additional investment into staffing to resource an additional arborist team in the Council to manage ash dieback and other health and safety work relating to trees and tree management. This will improve biodiversity and help the city to adapt to the effects of climate change too.</li> <li>4. The budget proposal includes additional investment in resources for tree surveying, maintenance, and planting. This will improve biodiversity and help the city to adapt to the effects of climate change too.</li> <li>5. The budget proposal retains and increases investment in sustainable food projects and community growing which will be a positive use of land in the city, improving biodiversity.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The budget proposals include an increase in housebuilding which can lead to habitat destruction and soil sealing, as well as increased energy consumption. Mitigations should be put in place to ensure that development is "nature positive" and happens on appropriate sites.</li> </ol>

### iii) Sustainable development impacts

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

a) Social justice	
It is assumed that delivery of all of the projects listed above will take heed of a climate justice approach ensuring social justice is embedded in their delivery. The broader impact of budget proposals on social justice will be considered as part of the (separate) equalities impact statement (Appendix A).	
b) Economic development	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The budget proposal includes additional investment in community engagement which will include targeted engagement with businesses to improve climate and nature literacy across the city, including green skills development.</li> <li>2. The budget proposal retains and increases investment in sustainable food projects and community growing which will increase resident's access to high quality food in the city.</li> </ol>	
c) Environmental good stewardship	
Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The budget proposal includes significant investment in nature and trees which will improve air, water, and soil quality.</li> <li>2. The budget proposals include several proposals to incentivise sustainable transport options which will encourage modal shift and improve air quality.</li> </ol>	