

Investing *in* Edinburgh
Investing *in* our Services
Investing *in* our Communities





Edinburgh Labour Group Annual report - May 2023

Edinburgh Labour Group formed the Administration on 26th May 2022.

This decision was supported by the Edinburgh Labour Local Government Committee, and by the Scottish Executive Committee, and allowed Edinburgh Labour to take lead roles in key areas at COSLA, and in all executive portfolios of The City of Edinburgh Council (Education, Transport, Housing & Fair Work, Finance, Culture, Planning, EIJB Chair and Deputy Lord Provost)

Given the new makeup of the City of Edinburgh Council, decision making can be challenging. Labour Convenors, and members work tirelessly to agree a position that best reflects our manifesto commitments.

The following pages are a summary of the many Group achievements, including areas over and above those in the Edinburgh Labour Manifesto for 2022.

Councillor Cammy Day

Labour Group Leader

Cllr Jane Meagher - Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Convener

- Over 2,000 affordable homes currently under construction on over 30 sites
- 100 council homes planned for Fountainbridge
- Land acquired for building at Liberton hospital site and MOD site
- Pipeline of over 4,000 homes. HRA has capacity to support the development of 2,200 homes but needs more SG funding to enable that to happen.
- 600 homes currently on site and over 1,000 in detailed design and development.
- Spent an additional £10m on housebuilding in 22/23 using slippage from other authorities.
- Successful mixed tenure improvement pilot in Wester Hailes, ready to roll out across the city
- Granton Waterfront development progressing well
- Whole house retrofit programme underway
- Held 2 meetings with former Cabinet Secretary and 1 with the new Housing Minister, with regular meetings now agreed
- Regularly making the case to the Scottish Government for additional funding for Edinburgh, with the message endorsed and repeated by RSLs and voluntary sector partners.
- Tenant Hardship Fund established to mitigate modest rent rise

- Income maximisation officers embedded alongside locality homelessness housing officers
- Voids issues being addressed as a matter of urgency
- Repairs team in house recruitment underway
- In house dampness and mould team established, including specialist surveyors
- Family and Household Support team role to support housing officers
- 44 permanent posts to prevent homelessness and support people to move into settled accommodation more quickly
- 74% of Council and 51% of RSL lets go to homeless households.
- Regular meetings with tenants' representatives, eg to discuss rent rise
- 633 employers now Living Wage Accredited, including 30 new accreditations in the first quarter of 2023

Cllr Joan Griffiths - Children and Young People Convener

Progress on LP Manifesto – Children & Young People. (11/5/23)

Expand early years' provision in council run nurseries, to provide wrap around childcare for 0-5 year olds, and provide resources for additional activities such as parents' groups.

Three new Early Years Centres in Craigentenny Primary School, Granton Primary School, and St. Marks Primary School.

I have instructed Officers to report to me on the up to date position regarding Parents Groups.

Provide space in nurseries and schools for health visitors and other professionals to focus on health prevention and early identification of additional support needs.

We have been working on rolling out actions to address this need. The new Liberton Secondary School and the planned Maybury Primary School are designed to include space for GP practices and Health Visitors along with other professionals.

Increase the number of qualified pupil support assistants to guarantee support for all nursery, primary and first and second year high school classes, and improve their pay and terms and conditions.

At the present time we have Grade 3 pupil support assistants who work within class rooms. We then have Grade 4 pupil support assistants who work with individual pupils.

We have been concerned at the number of vacancies in the Grade 3 group which currently stands at 198. We are therefore carrying out a revue of pupil support assistants with a view to retraining the Grade 3 staff to enable to have better salaries and career progression which we hope will encourage more people to apply for the jobs.

Provide study space and develop personalised and targeted tuition programmes to enable pupils to catch up.

In Gracemount High School a programme was successful in receiving grant funding to hold a Saturday School. It was on a Tuesday evening supporting 70 pupils who were given tuition targeting maths and biology. The aim was to create a supported environment and structured programme. We now have to look at funding and how we can roll this out across the city.

Co-ordinate organisations providing out of school care and activities clubs to ensure all 5 to 12 year olds can access them.

The Council is in partnership with Sports Scotland. We have just signed another four year agreement to continue the partnership. The work is throughout the city with 14 hubs.

There are various activities taking place across the city including Police Scotland working with 9-12 years olds every Friday and Saturday night for activities in the Hibernian Football Stadium.

Leith Community Sports Hub in partnership with the Ripple Project have identified a number of children in poverty who really enjoy basketball so every Friday at Leith Academy the Active Schools Foundation supply equipment and coaching free.

We are also running an inclusion programme to encourage women and girls to partake in physical activity.

This is only a small example of what is happening across the city.

Prioritise play provision for the under 8s in both formal and informal education, such as Play Rangers.

This is an ongoing project that is still requiring more work.

Work with the voluntary sector to ensure the availability of good quality informal youth work provision that meets the needs and aspirations of young people in their communities.

We are awarding grants and contracts to organisations to deliver youth work to best meet the needs of young people.

Continue the comprehensive programme of enhancing school buildings, including modifying buildings to meet the climate emergency.

The first two retrofit pilot projects are being progressed at Brunstane Primary School and Liberton Early Years Centre. These will see the building fabric and heating systems improved to reduce carbon emissions.

All new school buildings will be constructed to standards that support Edinburgh's aim of achieving net zero emission by 2030

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All new schools will now be constructed to PassivHaus standards. A new PassivHaus extension building at Sciennes will be completed for the 2023-24 session and construction has commenced on the replacement Currie High School and new Maybury Primary School.

Cllr Scott Arthur - Transport and Environment Committee

Objectives

Edinburgh is an unequal city. If you are healthy and wealthy you can move around the city with relative ease. However, those on lower incomes, with disabilities and living in rural Edinburgh are often left feeling isolated. Addressing this has been key.

I inherited a situation whereby the street cleansing team was overloaded, and people living in areas of deprivation were feeling the impact of this most. One year on, this service is now recruiting staff and performance is improving.

Within transport we also have the combined challenge contributing to the Net Zero by 2030 target, cutting congestion and reducing car-miles in the city by 30% by 2030.

Culture

I've worked hard to change the transport debate in Edinburgh. For too long it has been bogged down in an intractable argument about cars versus bikes, I have tried to broaden this considerably by also focussing on walking and public transport more than ever. I've tried to depolarise the political culture too by working collaboratively with all parties.

In my role I also try to publicly recognise good performance where possible, and consistently highlight that Council staff are overloaded due to SNP/Green/Tory cuts. I was proud to stand on the picket line with Unite members, and used my position as Transport and Environment Convener to call on national media for the SNP/Green Gov to meet their demand for fair pay.

Key Relationships

I have tried to link with community organisations and campaign groups in Edinburgh where possible. For example, I have tried to rebuild trust with Community Councils and disability charities. I have a good working relationship with Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams, and never turn down a meeting with any business. I link well with Trade Unions in Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams, but let Cammy Day take the Lead with CEC TUs.

Successes

By working cross-party, the Labour administration has achieved the following on the Transport and Environment Committee:

1. Increased parking fines and toughened enforcement.
2. Started preparation for a pavement parking ban.
3. Introducing free uplift of bulk items for low income households.
4. Doubled road and footpath maintenance, and boosted street cleansing spend.
5. Ended the sale of subsidised electricity to EV owners.
6. Public & Active Travel Plans are out for consultation.
7. Two LTNs are being deployed, and three 20 minute neighbourhoods are out for consultation.
8. The "Trams to Newhaven" project is running on time and on budget.
9. Tram expansion (possible Granton to Dalkeith) is in STPR2.
10. A plan to cut bus journey times by 25% has now been published.

Manifesto Delivery

Pledge	Progress
Put additional resources into increasing the frequency of street bin emptying and street cleaning services.	Underway, performance improving.
Stop charging for bulk uplifts.	Low income only.
Enforce the toughest penalties for fly tipping and dog fouling.	No progress.
Take steps to extend food waste collections to all homes.	Progressing via communal bin review.
Reduce plastic waste going to landfill by encouraging such schemes as use of re-usable nappies and period products.	Recycling is improving, but these policies have yet to be considered.
Investigate ways to recycle plastic film.	Not viable at this time.
Make neighbourhoods safer with good street and footpath lighting.	Issues in parks (outside my remit) are being addressed. Routes to bus stops are now being considered. 23% budget increases (exc parks).
Provide resources for community warden services to take robust action on anti social behaviour	Graffiti budget increased.
Prioritise women's safety on public transport and in public spaces.	Lighting on routes to bus stops are now being considered.
Increase funding for road maintenance year on year.	Done.
Increase the pavement maintenance budget by 20%.	It increased by 24% this year.
Work with Transport Scotland to secure additional funding for road improvements.	Funding issues are raised regularly, and a meeting with the new transport minister has been requested.
Establish a fast track repair service for dangerous pot holes.	Progress soon.
Press for, and use, powers to make utilities, contractors and developers responsible for the quality of their road repairs.	New staff appointed to team.
Unless there is an emergency, coordinate utility works and Council road maintenance to minimise disruption.	New staff appointed to team.
Improve and extend a network of safe and protected cycle routes, filling current significant gaps.	£1B Active Travel Action Plan tabled.
Restore a cycle hire scheme, if sponsorship can be found.	Considered.
Fully involve local communities in planning traffic calming and management schemes.	Done.
Increase spending on Active Travel to 15% of the council's transport budget.	£1B Active Travel Action Plan tabled.
Review winter gritting plans to ensure key walking routes to bus stops, schools, GP surgeries etc are prioritised.	No progress.
Increase the pedestrian crossing budget by 20%, and review timings to cut waiting time and ensure the less mobile have time to cross.	Some progress, SNP/Green Gov cuts to the Road Safety Investment Fund have been a barrier.
Keep Lothian Buses in public ownership.	Done, and I have established a good working relationship with Lothian Buses, Edinburgh Trams and their Trade Union.
Protect and improve Edinburgh's bus network. We will review all routes, oppose plans to remove bus stops and invest in bus shelters.	Public Transport Action Plan and Bus Priority Plan published. I am working with Lothian Buses on bus stops.
Speed up the transition to electric buses.	This is a matter for Lothian Buses, but they now have a plan to completely decarbonise their fleet.
Ensure all new buses provide space for both wheelchairs and buggies.	This is a matter for Lothian Buses, but they understand what Edinburgh expects.
Work with partners, including Scottish Government, neighbour councils and ScotRail to implement through ticketing on buses, trams, trains and any bike hire scheme.	Underway. Integration of trams and buses will be completed this summer.
Create an Edinburgh Transport company, to develop and deliver an integrated transport network for Edinburgh and the Lothians.	Complete Q1 of 2024
Investigate the feasibility of creating a comprehensive and integrated transport system using the bus network, planned tram infrastructure and underused or disused rail lines, such as the South Suburban loop.	Public Transport Action Plan and Bus Priority Plan published. This includes bus, tram, South Suburban loop & a ferry to Fife.
A commitment to work in partnership with business and our neighbouring local authorities to find a solution to commuter parking, including improved public transport, park and ride schemes, restrictions on commuter street parking in residential areas, restricting parking spaces in new office developments and other measures to help meet our net zero carbon target.	A Workplace Parking Levy plan is being progressed by the SNP/Greens/Lib Dems. Labour does not support this due to Trade Union concerns.
Increasing provision for electric vehicle charging, through planning requirements in new build homes, and by creating hubs in all neighbourhoods.	Underway.
Replacing Council cars and small vans with electric vehicles.	Underway, the Council will soon take delivery of 6 EV bin lorries.
Monitoring the introduction of low emission zones to ensure neighbouring areas are not affected by increased traffic and pollution	Underway. The LEZ goes live June 2024.
Developing low traffic neighbourhoods but ensuring there is proper local community involvement in the plans.	Underway.

Cllr Val Walker - Culture and Communities Convener

One Year On

Develop smaller scale events throughout the city in partnership with community groups and local artists

Culture Grants

The budget for 23/24 was cut by £250,000. The total cultural grants budget is £4,589, 279. We have tried to protect the organisations that depend on us for crucial funding, and this cut has mainly impacted events.

Filmhouse

Last year CMI (Centre for Moving Image) delivering both Filmhouse and Edinburgh International Film Festival for the city went into administration. They received an annual grant of £100,000 with the Scottish Government via Screen Scotland being the major funder. We work closely with Screen Scotland, Creative Scotland to support cultural cinema at 88 Lothian Road, and have met representatives from Save the Filmhouse. The Edinburgh International Film Festival has been retained.

Cultural and Communities Film

A model for sustainable cultural and community film is being developed with arts based community hubs using the £30,000 remaining from CMI funding.

Creative Community Hubs Network led by WHALE Arts.

An exciting model developing a network of exchange and communication between participating Hubs as well as reaching thousands of residents in our communities.

Diversity and Inclusion

Supports over 40 freelance led projects including a Guide to Arts and Culture Sector for Artists and Creatives in seven different languages, Access Focus ensuring greater access to work opportunities and engagement for disabled practitioners and audiences, and the Diversity and Inclusion Fund for locally diverse artists and creatives.

King's Theatre

We worked with other political groups to agree additional funding for the major redevelopment of the theatre. This is a Council owned building and the redevelopment includes improved accessibility and community space.

Warm and Welcoming Initiative

Supporting Councillor Jenkinson's motion free public events are being held in our Libraries across the city in addition to providing informal drop in spaces. A successful event was held in April involving the Third Sector to review progress. One recommendation is to change the title to A Warm Welcome reflecting the development of year round activity.

Fair Fringe and Fair Hospitality

The Living Wage is included as a standard requirement in funding applications

There will be a survey of all stakeholders during this year's festival to assess the impact of the guidance and identify where we may need improvements.

Community Wealth Building in North Edinburgh

A pilot approach to support local Community Wealth Building is being developed with Fresh Start in North Edinburgh, to support local communities to recover from the pandemic. This will be used as a model to improve community co-ordination in other parts of the city.

To look at new ways to spread the Festivals across the city/ help local traders, artists and community groups to take advantage of the business opportunities

Christmas and Hogmanay Festivals /Summer Festivals

We are working with Unique Assembly to spread the Christmas festival to more sites both in the city centre and across the city. Our aim is to improve the quality of the markets and to involve more Edinburgh based traders. Tree protection in the gardens has been identified as a key issue. Improved sustainability and moving to Net Zero are key aims. Recognising that these developments may take the five years to achieve but establishing identifiable progress for each year.

The free public events on New Year's Day will continue for 2023.

Increasing accessibility through more free events, reduced tickets, productions for disabled people, more events in SIMD communities.

Prioritise Women's Safety in Public Spaces

Safer Lighting in Parks

Parks can be unwelcoming spaces when it is dark, heightening fears for personal safety and reducing the time children can play. Initially, lighting in ten parks will be improved after engagement with local community groups. With match funding we intend to increase the number of parks.

Increase the Number of Public Toilets including in Parks

Permanent public toilets will be installed in the Meadows, Inverleith Park and Leith Links. These could be developed in conjunction with cafes, including in house catering.

Upgrade Public Parks and Play Facilities

We are investing in paths, improving accessibility.

Cllr James Dalgleish - Planning Convener

Manifesto Commitments achieved:

- “Construct all new school buildings to standards that support Edinburgh’s aim of achieving net zero emissions by 2030.”
- “Use the new planning and licensing powers to control the numbers of short term lets in the city, and put in place effective enforcement.” – Our current planning and licensing powers when judging STL application is fair but robust, we have also invested in a STL team which will also deal with enforcement issues.
- Implement planning policies to ensure new developments are carbon neutral. – The vast majority of new developments are carbon neutral, with the requirement for all buildings being demolished to have as much of its materials recycled into new developments as possible.
- Commit to no more green belt land being allocated to development.
- Increasing provision for electric vehicle charging, through planning requirements in new build homes, and by creating hubs in all neighbourhoods.
- “Restricting parking spaces in new office developments and other measures to help meet our net zero carbon target.”
- “Press the Scottish Parliament to reform the planning system to give communities rights of appeal.” – Cllr Day has met with the Minister response to press the Scottish Government to give Council the necessary powers.

Manifesto Commitment that have been partially achieved:

- “Make Edinburgh a short-term letting control zone to limit the numbers of short term lets, and pressure the Scottish Government to strengthen the licensing scheme to allow councils to limit the number of licences.” - Edinburgh has now become a short-term letting control zone, we are now seeing the vast majority of STL applications now being refused as a result of our policies. It will be difficult to limit the numbers of licences as this policy is not covered within the powers that have been given to us by the Scottish Government.
- “Support effective planning restrictions on the number of purpose-built student accommodation blocks within a community council area.” - Planning changes will bring more balance to the issue of student accommodation and its intensity; however this will not be achieved via a community council area.
- “Require 35% of housing on development sites to be for council or housing association homes, with a target of 70% of these being for social rent.” - Partly agreed in City Plan 2030 which should come into effect later this year.
- “Ensure that all Council planning and licensing policies give substantial weight to the needs of residents while still encouraging business and tourism.”

Manifesto commitments that have not been completed:

- “Strengthen policy on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to improve communities for tenants and their neighbours, including limiting the number of licences in some types of building or area.” -This is an issue best dealt with via the Council’s Licensing powers.
- “Work with partners to secure other public land to use in a similar way.” – To be worked on in the next Local Development Plan (City Plan 2).

- Achieved Council agreement that any Green Freeport arrangement must have fair work agenda, trade union access and create good quality jobs for local people
- Working with green energy company to harness heat from sewer network to heat thousands of homes and local schools, work ongoing
- Agreed that in-housing is now part of Council business plan. And seen areas start to in-house external contracts and agency workers to main stream council jobs.
- Regular lobbying, writing and meeting Scottish Government ministers to push Edinburgh case for better, fairer funding and working with Trade union colleagues on this
- Work with Lothian buses, Edinburgh Trams and Transport for Edinburgh on ALEO reform
- Continued work to achieve Net Zero by 2030 and to eradicate poverty in the city by 2030.