

Edinburgh Labour launch manifesto



The existing councillors and Labour candidates convened at Pollock Halls this morning to launch the final version of their manifesto.

Scottish Labour Leader, Johann Lamont, was in Edinburgh to help Edinburgh Labour leader Andrew Burns, and Labour Transport spokesperson, Lesley Hinds, explain what plans the group have to run The City of Edinburgh Council if they gain a majority. The basic premise behind the manifesto is cooperative government, and some of that cooperation will be with local residents themselves.

In education they plan to give parent councils the right to nominate a member of the Council's Education Committee.

In transport they will ensure that there is a public enquiry into the tram project. They will also set up a city wide Transport Forum for experts and residents to discuss what is needed in the city.

In health and social care there will be a cooperative of care providers and care users set up to decide on policy.

In the field of employment they will encourage apprenticeships and the support of local business. Within the council they will introduce a 1:12 ratio between the lowest and highest paid council workers. i.e. the highest paid worker will only be able to earn 12 times as much as the lowest paid.

For the homeless they will find ways to bring empty homes into use and also find build on derelict land.

And in terms of the environment the group intend ensuring that council buildings are used to generate electricity and they will protect green spaces and they hope to establish an energy co-op.

✘ Johann Lamont said:-“I commend the energy of the Labour group in Edinburgh. This process began a long time ago. The candidates have been in place for six months, all hungry for the opportunity to serve the people of Edinburgh. We are in tough times, but we are ready now for the fight in local elections. What I think is wonderful about this document is that it is a living document about what you do with the reality of tough times. Cooperation has a long and proud history. I celebrate the fact that Edinburgh is introducing this document today.”

Andrew Burns said:-“I have been told that I have an obsession with numbers but when we first launched this document for consultation there were 181 days to go before the election. Within the next 51 days the people who will run this city’s council for the next five years will be chosen. A lot of political water will flow under the bridge before 2017 when the next council will be elected.

“We had over 1200 responses to our draft manifesto. We received an overwhelming thumbs-up to the idea of cooperative government. Politics as usual is not an option any longer. Cooperative council will encourage residents to take a bigger role in running and shaping council policies.

“There is a lot of detail in the manifesto. I am confident that we can expand the cooperative ideals if we get the mandate on 3 May. It is truly depressing to encourage local views in politics at the moment. We intend to change that. We are taking a very bold step here today, and we want to radically change the way this council does its business. There will be a cross-party budget group and a petitions committee.

We will introduce a living wage for all employees and those contracted by the council. Our priority is serving the city, not party politics. We will stop the tick box party politics culture. We will seek to reestablish the trust between the residents and the local authority, a relationship which has been so badly damaged over recent years. We will provide clear leadership for the capital city. “

It is now 51 days until the local government elections and Edinburgh Labour say they are ready. They have all their 23 candidates lined up, and have had since the beginning of November 2011. They say they will continue to work relentlessly during the next 7 weeks to ensure the success of as many candidates as possible.

They published the draft version of their manifesto in November too, and today, on the day that the formal Notice of Election was published for the May election, they felt it was the ideal time to launch the final document. They have consulted with many local residents during the last four months and have incorporated at least some of the ideas arising from the consultation in the document called [moving Edinburgh forward together.](#)

