

Greens worried by delays to community council elections

✘ Edinburgh Greens have expressed their dismay at a year-long delay in elections to the city's community councils, arguing that there is urgent need to respect their role and engage more people in community decision-making.

Community councils were told by The City of Edinburgh Council that elections due to be held this autumn must be delayed to October 2013. This is particularly bad news for those areas needing a fresh start, such as the Southside, where the community council was disbanded last year.

The Greens pledged in their election manifesto to engage more of the public in local democracy by devolving more Council spending to community bodies, following a review of the workings of Community Councils and Neighbourhood Partnerships.

They have also pledged to follow up the success of the Faith Decides programme to ensure around £10 million, or 1% of the council budget is spent via participatory budgeting.

Councillor Steve Burgess, Green councillor for Southside / Newington Ward said:-

“Our community councils should have a vital role in making local decisions and holding the Council to account. I'm dismayed that because of a technicality, elections have been delayed for a whole year and I'm worried that the process of reinvigorating community councils will stall. The Council needs to revise speedily the scheme for Community Councils.

“A lot of very dedicated people put their time and energy into making them work. We need to build on that as an asset and broaden it. I want the Council to set out a clear plan and timescale so that when elections are held in 2013, there is a proper campaign to get people involved and we don't waste

further time.”