

Council agree 2013 budget

"BUDGET KEEPS TO CONTRACT WITH THE CAPITAL"

Increasing investment in frontline services in Edinburgh for vulnerable residents of all ages was a priority at the Council budget meeting today.

Doubling investment in roads and pavements, supporting young people into employment, a planned fund to help attract new developers and businesses to Edinburgh, and protecting grants for the voluntary sector were other key investment areas.

The sixth successive freeze in Council Tax maintains Edinburgh's band D rate as the lowest of Scotland's four major cities.



Councillor

Alasdair Rankin

Finance Convenor

Councillor Alasdair Rankin, Convener of the Finance and Budget Committee, said: "For the first time we asked the public and partner organisations to comment on the Council's draft budget. This allowed us to listen to people about how money should be spent and saved to allow us to deliver our Contract with the Capital in a very well managed and open way.

"It also meant we were able to include some ideas and suggestions from other political parties. This means the widest possible views are reflected in how we best use money to support individuals, communities and businesses.

"We will start looking at next year's budget in the coming weeks and we will be looking for views on how we spend money

on an ongoing basis from now on.”



Vice-Convener of
Finance – Bill
Cook

Councillor Bill Cook, Vice-Convener of the Finance and Budget Committee, said: “We used the feedback received during the consultation process to help us make many key decisions, including doubling our budget for roads and pavements by £12m, adding £10.5m to improve schools, nurseries and facilities for children and £0.5m extra has been invested in foster care.

“We agreed that looking after the most vulnerable people in the city needs increased investment and £2.9m extra has been given to meet the needs of people with physical and learning disabilities and an additional £2.25m to provide care for older people in their own homes.”

Council tax band levels

The council tax band levels for Edinburgh in 2013/14 will be:

A: £779.33

B: £909.22

C: £1,039.11

D: £1,169.00

E: £1,428.78

F: £1,688.56

G: £1,948.33

H: £2,338.00

Total budget

The total revenue budget is £939m for 2013/14. Council Tax makes up £231m of this with £708m coming from Government grants and business rates – the reason for the reduction from last year is the transfer of responsibility (and associated funding) for Police and Fire authorities to new bodies. The total capital budget (including the HRA, but excluding trams) is £238.117m

Key budget provisions

Ensuring Edinburgh, and its residents, are well cared-for

- an additional £2.25m to provide care for older people in their own homes
- an additional £2.9m to meet the needs of people with physical and learning disabilities
- £500,000 to support carers
- providing £1.2m of grant funding to voluntary and community organisations, reversing a previously approved cut
- culture pass – following a lack of public support, agreement not to go ahead with this. Instead £60,000 will be invested in assessing the future of Meadowbank Sports Centre and providing £20,000 to pilot alternative opening hours for city centre museums and galleries during peak period.

Providing for Edinburgh's economic growth and prosperity

- £1m to continue supporting the Edinburgh Guarantee, helping improve job opportunities for young people
- the reinstatement of £800,000 in grant funding to employability services in the city
- development of a Strategic Investment Fund of £7.5m and instructs the Chief Executive to report to Council on 22 August 2013 on how this will be established

Ensuring every child in Edinburgh has the best start in life

- an additional £10.5m over the next 2 years to improve schools, nurseries and facilities for children
- an extra £725,000 to support children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
- £500,000 to recruit and retain more Council foster carers, replacing more expensive foster carers from other providers. This will save £20,000 per foster placement each year.

Strengthening and supporting our communities and keeping them safe

- giving £120,000 to neighbourhoods for targeted clean-ups, for example graffiti removal
- employing an additional 12 Environmental Wardens to help improve our neighbourhoods by keeping our streets cleaner and safer

Investing in roads and pavements

- from our Edinburgh Peoples' Survey, roads and pavements were rated the top priority for improvement in local neighbourhoods – during 2013/14 an additional £12m will be invested
- employment of additional inspectors to ensure utility companies repair roads to an appropriate standard
- commit 6% of the transport revenue and capital budgets for creation and maintenance of cycle infrastructure

Becoming more efficient

- improving the way we buy goods and services, saving £9m in 2013/14
- implementing internal improvement plans for Corporate and Transactional Services, Environmental Services and Integrated Facilities Management, leading to savings of £10 million in 2013/14

