

Draft budget laid out by Capital Coalition today



The Capital Coalition's draft budget will be considered at the Finance and Budget Committee next Thursday, 19 September 2013.

The fundamental principle behind the budget for 2014/15 is to ensure that the books are balanced but that no frontline services are cut. Councillor Alasdair Rankin who is the Finance Convenor said that he is keen for people in Edinburgh to have their say on the draft budget in the consultation which will run from the date of the meeting next week till 20 December 2013. Councillor Rankin also pointed out that this is yet another one year budget in a four year framework, and has to be seen in context of all the savings which need to be made, but he also pointed out that the consultation last year did mean that the council made some changes to the way they spent money. In the current year the council has doubled the amount of money spent on roads and has also spent money on schools and a care home. He admitted that this budget is one based on political priorities but said:- "We want to communicate the council's financial position so that people have a better understanding of what we are trying to do. "

Councillor Alasdair Rankin, continued:- "All local authorities are facing considerable pressure on their budgets due to reduced central government funding, changing demographics such as a rising birth rate and people living longer, and the pressures of the UK economy. We also need to consider the emerging impacts of welfare reform.

"Despite these challenges Edinburgh's Capital Coalition has clearly set out where it wants to focus its spending next year

and it will prioritise spend and investment in the core areas set out in the Coalition pledges We are committed to protecting frontline services and maintaining investment in areas which will provide more support for our most vulnerable residents.

“This includes more support for older people as well as improving schools, nurseries and facilities and services for children like foster carers.

“Helping people into employment, particularly the young, through initiatives such as the Edinburgh Guarantee and supporting the third sector are our other key priorities.

“We have delivered our coalition pledge to demonstrate sound financial management and we are working more efficiently and smarter than ever before. Savings have been made in areas such as procurement, property rationalisation and improved partnership working to ensure that we can maintain investment in frontline services.”



Vice-Convener of
Finance – Bill
Cook

Councillor Bill Cook, said:- “Last year we published the Council’s draft budget in November ahead of setting it in February. This was a new approach to ensure we can listen to what is important to the public when it comes to allocating money.

“This year we are leading the way for other local authorities by publishing the draft budget even earlier to give us more time to listen to the views of residents, local and other interest groups in the coming months. Given the financial challenges all local authorities are facing over the next few years, we want to invest in the areas that are essential to

Edinburgh and so it is important that the public continue to tell us what is important to them.

“Several budget decisions which we made in February of this year for the 2013/14 budget – such as doubling funding in roads and increasing our investment in education were influenced by feedback we received from the public.”

You can read all the papers relating to the Finance Committee meeting [here on the council website](#) which is one of the areas where spending will increase to ensure that the public have access to as much automated payment as possible, as well as information on everything the council is doing.