

Conservatives call for council to be more efficient ahead of budget meeting



The council meets tomorrow to discuss the administration proposals on balancing the budget for the city. The council's Finance Convener is quite adamant that the budget proposed is both reasonable and fair but the Tories have a different view. One of the key strands in the administration budget is that the procurement process both initiates and continues to offer huge savings for the council. This is rejected by the Conservatives as simply not enough.

Edinburgh Conservatives have today published a budget that shows how the City can have better services at a lower cost. The proposals to be put forward at the Council budget meeting on Thursday by Conservative Finance Spokesman Cllr Iain Whyte include:

- A 1% Council Tax cut;
- Details of the £61m wasted by Labour and the SNP when they rejected partnership with the private sector to provide better services and details of how this can be re-instated;
- Plans to reduce management layers and unnecessary management posts in contrast to the Council's increase in posts of over 300 in the last year despite austerity budgets;
- An end to the war on motorists and boost for City Centre businesses with a freeze on parking charges;
- A trial of powered compacting bins with a view to reducing street litter;

- Withdrawal from CoSLA the ineffective councils umbrella group making a considerable saving in future years and mirroring the approach of Aberdeen and Dumfries and Galloway;
- Plans for further efficiency savings to reduce the risk of overspends or major cuts to public services in the coming few years.

Cllr Iain Whyte said: "All Councils claim efficiencies when making budget reductions but unless you make real structural change in the way the Council is run progress will be limited. Our plans make that structural change and will free up resource to maintain frontline services and make service improvements. We also have to work with all partners to bring innovation, adopt modern technology and working practices and a more customer based approach. We have to truly embrace partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors as these can give us the holy grail of better quality services at lower cost.

"In contrast the current administration has wasted millions by sticking to a blinkered and old fashioned approach to service delivery. This is failing to deliver the savings they predict and service standards on areas like bin collections and recycling are missing their limited targets."

"Our budget makes a number of service improvements and shows how to fill the Council's financial black hole over the next few years while maintaining service levels. But even more importantly we show that this is possible while returning money to hard-working families through a Council Tax cut. Just like Stirling Council has proved this is perfectly possible. It will help family budgets as the recovery takes hold and boost our local economy. But most importantly it sets the Council's a clear aim to achieve a more efficient and effective Council in future."

The council meets tomorrow at 10am. [All papers for the meeting](#)

are to be found here.