

# Green group propose council makes more capital investment

The city council meets tomorrow to approve the budget proposed by the administration.

It is usual for the opposition groups to propose their amendments or indeed an alternative calculation for the way in which the council finances are spent.

Renewing the city fabric and investing for the future are the big themes for the Green budget at the City Council budget meeting tomorrow.

As the Council prepares to set its budget for 2014-15, and beyond, the Greens claim to be the only party to have risen to the challenge of new capital investment, with:

- £6 million extra on school improvements including on energy efficiency to free up future school fuel bills for other priorities;
- A further £6 million on repairing priority footways, roads and cycle lanes;
- £5 million to tackle fuel poverty – this money to be drawn from a £16 million pot in council reserves which is made up of council tax paid by owners of second and empty homes and is earmarked only for housing projects.
- New “spend to save” improvements at the Council’s two outdoor centres in Argyll and Speyside, together with investigating how these centres can get all their power from their own solar or wind devices.



Cllr Melanie Main



Cllr Gavin Corbett



Cllr Maggie Chapman



Cllr Steve Burgess



Cllr Chas Booth



Cllr Nigel Bagshaw

The party also plans to offer new help to the city's schools with a playground development officer, targeting external grants to help revamp school grounds. It wants to use reserves for a one-off empty homes pilot to support property owners into bringing property into use, so reducing pressure on greenfield sites from new-build housing. And the party has set aside money to look into a new wholesale food hub, connecting city consumers to farmers and producers in the city region.

To offer a buffer against welfare reform, the Greens argue for an end to inflation-busting rent rises for council house tenants, rejecting a proposed 6% rise next year with an alternative inflation-only rise of 3.1%.

Finally, the party has protected frontline services in schools and for disabled people, through increased funding for special schools and other young people with additional support needs; and in music, language teaching, maths and English.

To fund their budget, the Greens have prepared a package of savings and income proposals, including: reducing the landfill tax burden through minimising waste and charging more for parking permits for a household's second car and high-polluting vehicles. Headline cuts include to the Lord Provost's budget, corporate communications and Marketing

Edinburgh's £1 million grant.

Green Finance spokesperson, Cllr Gavin Corbett said: "The UK Government's savage budget cuts coupled with the seventh year of the council tax freeze are pushing councils into really difficult decisions. In those circumstances I thought it all the more important to find money for long term investment – to improve the city's basic fabric; protect both services and households from the relentless rise in energy costs; and to ensure that frontline care and school services are a top priority.

"The Green budget proposals build for the future, create jobs and open up new horizons of opportunity and funding. I've benefited from constructive conversations with other councillors in putting the package together and I'm optimistic that at least some Green ideas can be adopted for the final overall budget"