

#Edinburgh2050 Councillor Lesley Hinds on her vision for Edinburgh

In May 2017, when I step down from the City of Edinburgh Council, I will have worked as a councillor for 33 years. During this time I have stood and been elected in eight local council elections, serving under several different administrations and holding a variety of roles, from Leader of the Council to Lord Provost.

Times have changed a great deal since I was first elected to the Telford ward in 1984 – both in Edinburgh and further afield. Back then, the capital's population was in decline, several gap sites were in real need of development and countrywide unemployment was at a record high.

Since then, we have seen a rise in affordable homes, investment in the regeneration of some of Edinburgh's most deprived areas, not to mention top-quality developments and an increasingly talented workforce alongside an integrated transport system and world-class cultural offering.



Convener of
Transport &
Environment –
Lesley Hinds

In Edinburgh, we have launched the world-famous Hogmanay Street Party, witnessed the first sitting of the devolved Scottish Parliament in 272 years and seen a World Heritage Site established. What's more, unemployment is at an all time low and more people than ever are choosing to live here – almost half a million compared to 425,000 33 years ago.

So just think what could change over the next 33 years. As I prepare to retire from service, I look forward to the next generation of change-makers taking over and helping to shape the city's future, with the help of residents.

I've worked on so many worthwhile projects during my time in office, from collaborating with the anti-apartheid movement, erecting the Woman and Child statue in Festival Square and naming the Mandela Room in the City Chambers, to marching the city as part of Make Poverty History. Locally, I have championed regeneration, building community centres, libraries and local art projects in areas like Drylaw and Muirhouse and new and improved housing city-wide.

As Transport and Environment Convener, I have engaged in some of the city's most controversial issues, overseeing an annual increase in the city's cycling spend (now 9% of our transport budget), a continuous rise in recycling and a flourishing publicly-owned bus service in Lothian Buses. And, love it or loathe it, I am proud to have seen the completion and subsequent success of the tram project as transport leader.

For the last 40 years I have called Edinburgh my home. I have raised three children here, made friends for life, and look forward to many more years spent living in the capital.

I know things are bound to change over the coming decades. Right now we're at a fork in the road for local government – one way could take us toward increased devolution, where we can address local issues in our own way. The other leads to the centralisation of power, where Edinburgh's residents will be denied any real influence.

For me, I want the former scenario to play out over the next 33 years. I want people to be able to live, shop and socialise in thriving local communities, with effective and well-thought out transport infrastructure, good public and active travel opportunities and efficient recycling services.

My Edinburgh Vision is a capital that continues to flourish and regenerate, for the gap between rich and poor to narrow and for an inclusive society in 2050.

Have your say on Edinburgh City Vision 2050 [here](#)

