


Edinburgh Conservatives set out their budget plans



Edinburgh Council's Conservative Group today [set out proposals in an alternative budget](#) that would maintain and improve key Council services whilst making a general Council Tax increase unnecessary.

The SNP/Labour administration have included a 3% increase in council tax in their draft budget which will be discussed tomorrow at some length.

 Setting out the plan which he will propose at tomorrow's Council Budget meeting Cllr Iain Whyte, Conservative Finance Spokesman said:

“It is perfectly possible to prevent the damaging cuts proposed by the Council Administration and to maintain general Council Tax levels if the Council makes appropriate efficiencies and reforms. Preventing a general Council Tax increase is even more important when the SNP Government's is forcing through an increase in Bands E to H at a national level that will see a huge number of Edinburgh households hit with an increase of between 7 and 20%.

“Many retired people who still live in a family home will be hit hard by these inflation busting Council Tax increases as will those in relatively modest flats in more modern developments that are often in Bands E or F. It is incumbent on us to challenge the other Parties whose automatic stance is to increase any tax by as much as they can.

“To achieve this, we would invest in technological solutions to improve our social care services and give carers more time with their clients and make contacting the Council online

easier with accelerated investment. We would also bring in private partners to help us make better use of the Council's buildings and to improve our waste collection service making it more efficient. By rejecting these types of partnership for ideological reasons, even when they were proven to be Best Value, the current Council has wasted £15m every year since the last election in 2012 and the service has failed to improve. That money would have provided a lot of care for older people, pavement repairs or improvements in our schools.

"Other specific measures we would take forward are:

- Preventing the proposal for damaging library cuts where we would retain spending and seek to improve the service by working with volunteers in our communities;
- £3m increased funding to repair our crumbling roads and pavements;
- £1m for a new waste and cleansing taskforce to sort out overflowing communal bins;
- Funding to tackle congestion hotspots and improve traffic management in Edinburgh;
- The trial of compacting bins and a gull de-nesting service;
- A freeze for City Centre parking charges and a limit to the increase for other zones;
- Funding for festive lights;
- £2.5m extra funding to repair the Council's crumbling properties including schools.

"Together these proposals show that a more efficient and effective Council could provide much better services on the issues that matter to Edinburgh people without hitting them further in the pocket."