

Edinburgh councillor blogs – Councillor Lesley Hinds Transport Convener



Councillor Lesley Hinds is the Transport and Environment Convener charged with looking after two highly contentious areas of what the council does. Not a day goes by without someone mentioning their rubbish collection or potholes on our streets.

It seems like a never-ending task to keep all of this on track, and at the beginning of her term she had to ensure completion of the Edinburgh Tram project first ahead of everything else. Here she tells us what she would like this Thursday's budget meeting of the council to agree to.

"We are committed to serving the public's needs, and over the years we have increasingly asked residents which services they feel are most important. Time and again we are told by people how much the condition of the city's roads and pavements matter to them, so it's something we take very seriously.

"This year we have managed to secure an extra £2.5m to invest in our streets on top of a planned £18.5m – meaning we've got £21m to spend on maintaining and enhancing the public realm for everyone.

"Spending on transport infrastructure should benefit all users – whether they are drivers, public transport passengers, cyclists or pedestrians. As ever, we are committed to maintaining our roads and pavements to an acceptable standard. I know how frustrating surfaces riddled with potholes or cracks can be, and we will continue to address that under this

year's budget, focusing on a new, preventative approach which will see more work carried out and the slower deterioration of surfaces.

"We'll also be able to tackle some of the major ongoing projects like the £400,000 resurfacing of Brighton Place in Portobello, the replacement of setts on Frederick Street, for which we've budgeted £1m, and the transformation of Home Street, improving the area for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

"This year the proportion of the Transport budget spend on cycling will rise to 10%, reflecting our aspiration to make Edinburgh a cycle friendly city and enabling the Council to continue spending on projects like the City Centre West to East Link, which we hope will open up travel by bike to many more people.

"In Edinburgh we are making real strides to promote active and sustainable travel and the impacts of this are clear, with car ownership falling, a continued increase in the number of people travelling by foot and an estimated 7.3% of journeys to work made by bike – up 50% from 2011.

"What's more, our award-winning public transport system is carrying more passengers than ever – Lothian Buses transported more than 121 million people in 2015, while nearly 5.4 million passengers used Edinburgh Trams in its second year of operation.

"We really are looking to the future of transport in Edinburgh, which is clear from our investment to redesign streets in favour of walking, cycling and public transport. That said, we recognise the needs of all road users, and are always exploring efficient, sustainable ways of making the journey smoother for everyone."

The Council meets on Thursday 9 February to discuss the budget for the coming year, which will be set within the four year

framework they set last year. The council papers are [here](#) and you can view the meeting online [here](#).