

#Edinburgh2050 Council Leader wants young people to have their say



The conversation about a city vision for Edinburgh as to what it will look like in 2050 is ongoing.

Here Councillor Andrew Burns the Council Leader shares with us the reasons why Edinburgh needs to think about its long term future, through to 2050 and beyond...

“A city like Edinburgh prides itself on being a fantastic place to live in, to work within, and also to visit. And here in 2016, Edinburgh really is one of the UK’s most vibrant and fastest growing cities.

“This success, however, does not come without challenges. There are pockets of severe deprivation and inequality in this city and as the population increases, so does pressure placed on infrastructure, health and housing services, the environment and resources. As a city, we need to look ahead to the future and be prepared to adapt, if we are to ensure Edinburgh remains the great city it is today.

“At the launch of #Edinburgh2050 along with many others, I listened as Andrew Kerr, the Council’s Chief Executive, outlined plans to develop a vision for Edinburgh. Between now and Christmas, the process to develop a ‘2050 Edinburgh City Vision’ will give everyone in the Capital an opportunity to think about the long-term future of their city.

“Crucially, the move will be focused on citywide collaboration rather than a Council vision, asking people and organisations from across the Capital to build a meaningful, tailored

statement of the kind of city Edinburgh could and should be in the decades to come.

“Because the truth is, in 30 years time very few – if any – of the Politicians or Senior Officers currently at the Council will be here. Those within current leading businesses, charities and the emergency services will also potentially have moved on.

“The workers and residents of 2050 will be Edinburgh’s millennials. Those aged 16 today will be 50, so it is crucial young people have a real say in this City Vision. I was particularly interested to hear from pupils of Portobello High School whose vision for Edinburgh is for a city where the gap between rich and poor is greatly reduced.

“And we do want this to be an overall vision that is specific to Edinburgh, brings together everyone with an interest in the city, and unlocks the creative potential of collaboration across all generations and sectors.

“I also listened to Graham Hill as he revealed the findings of an interesting piece of new research from ARCADIS. It shows that Edinburgh is currently ranked as the 13th most sustainable city on the planet, second in the UK only to London.

“But cities like Edinburgh do face a huge challenge of balancing success against inequality; and growth against heritage. In Copenhagen, which shares similar challenges, the city has a vision of being a ‘green, smart, and carbon neutral city’. In New York, the city plan sets out a vision for ‘a strong and just city’, underpinned by a need to respond to the damage caused in the city by Hurricane Sandy; while in Vancouver, where city visions have been an integral part of city planning since the 1940’s, the city is working towards a vision of being the ‘world’s greenest city’.

“City visions bring people from all corners of a city together

to focus on major needs, force cities to look ahead and to generate new ideas. A key lesson from all other cities is that successful vision-projects cannot be seen as the preserve of a single institution. City councils are well placed to coordinate and facilitate the project, but broad participation and engagement is critical if the project is to be a success.

“So, it is important that as many people as possible are part of this conversation. The key challenge will be reaching a cross-section of residents, businesses, partners and stakeholders across the city, to ensure the Edinburgh of the future is meaningful to all of us.

“One of the approaches to this is online engagement through open questions designed to capture challenges, ideas and opinions.

“So, do give your views on what you think makes Edinburgh great, what you feel could be better, and your own personal vision for #Edinburgh2050 on social media or at edinburgh.org/2050.”