

Opinion – Cllr Alasdair Rankin wants you to have your say on council finances

by Cllr Alasdair Rankin, Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee



We all know that Edinburgh is a great place to live and work in. As the city's population grows, however, there are greater demands on council services and our annual income is not keeping pace.

The cost of providing services to the increasing numbers of young and older people, in particular, is constantly rising. We are also facing inflationary pressures and so with all of this in mind it's vital that we ensure our resources are spent as wisely and fairly as possible.

In previous budget engagements you told us to protect education, care for older people, culture, and services for vulnerable children and adults. These continue to be our priorities.

A huge amount of work has already gone into making savings in recent years and we have a strong track record of effective financial management. In the last five years, we have saved around £240m by working more efficiently and prioritising our services. This includes saving nearly £7m through making better use of our buildings and other assets, £47m through smarter buying of goods and services and £5m through sharing services within the Council and with other partners.

We have now launched a six-week engagement campaign to ask you through a variety of forums including an [online survey](#) to

consider the impact of the changes outlined in the proposals we have published, on you, your family and your community as well as asking you to highlight opportunities or challenges that you can see. The proposals include charging for garden waste and improving the service, increasing parking charges and looking at changing the opening hours of recycling centres.

We will also be working closely with communities, equality groups and partners over the coming months by running workshops to look at reshaping services as well as working with communities to agree how local budgets should be spent.

In addition, a Question Time event on 27 November will be webcast live, giving you the chance to quiz senior councillors in person.

We want to hear as many views as possible on how we can deliver services more efficiently before the budget is set early next year. They are your services so it's essential that we involve you at the heart of the process.

You can choose to send in comments by email, Facebook, Twitter or through our survey online. Of course, you can still write to us, telephone, or call into any Council office to register your views.

Our plans to deliver Council services more efficiently will enable us to give priority to the services that mean the most to people.

Further information on other ways to give your views –

Phone on 0131 200 2305 (8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am to 3.40pm Friday)

email – playyourpart@edinburgh.gov.uk

Writing to Freepost, RSJC-SLXC-YTJY, Budget, Council Leader, City Chambers, High Street Edinburgh EH1 1YJ

Speaking to your local councillor – [details of all of those here.](#)