

Greens say council budget should be more ambitious

The Greens want the council to be more ambitious with its budget plans.



Edinburgh's Green councillors have urged the council to carry the fight on budgets to the Scottish Government.

Publishing their own budget proposals, the Greens have unveiled a raft of ideas, the highlight of which is almost £200m of investment in new secondary schools over the next five years, which, they show, can be funded by 12 pence more a week on average council tax bills, rising to an increase of 53 pence a week after four years.

Over the next year the party wants the council to get on the front foot with the Scottish Government and secure agreement to raise council tax by 0.5% above current plans between

2019-20 and 2022-23.

This will they say support borrowing of £84m specifically earmarked at new secondary level education and community hubs in Craigmillar, Trinity, Liberton, Currie, Balerno and Wester Hailes and a new site in west Edinburgh.

The agreement would also focus on The Scottish Government match-funding the council commitment through its long-awaited new schools programme.

On a very different scale, the Greens also propose breaking the deadlock on a potential tourist levy for the capital, which could raise up to £15m a year, by commissioning a detailed design for how such a levy could work in practice.



Cllr Gavin Corbett

Green Finance spokesperson Cllr Gavin Corbett said: “Some of our rivals will say that our plans are too ambitious. Guilty as charged. In light of pressing needs to invest in schools and other public services, it is not enough to wait and see what the Scottish Government might come up with or sit on the side-lines complaining about the funding of councils. People elect us to carry the funding fight to the Scottish Government.

“That is what our budget does. For 12 pence a week on the average council tax bill we could take the next big step in providing young people with the schools they need.

“That is one of many ideas that we are putting forward for the budget debate this Thursday: on homelessness, vulnerable young people, libraries, housing, waste, energy and greening the city.

“We have called our budget proposals “Ambitious for Edinburgh”. It is up to other parties now to match our ambitions. “

Other Green proposals include

- £2 million to transform homelessness service, reducing the need for temporary accommodation, especially bed and breakfast hostels
- £1.5million to protect library staff and library hours
- Free bus travel for 16-21 year old care-leavers
- Fully funding school uniform grants for lower income families
- A new programme to replace street trees
- Tackling empty homes and high private rents
- A package of measures on litter, waste and reducing energy costs

The council budget will be set at a meeting of all councillors [this Thursday \(22 February\)](#).

The Green motion is as follows :



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