

Council leaders planning for the next six months

Council Leader Adam McVey has had a busy summer. As well as picking up where he left off before the holidays on many issues, he met with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and Prime Minister Theresa May this month when the [City Region Deal](#) was signed.

He also dealt with the matter of the hoardings at Princes Street Gardens fairly swiftly, getting them taken down in hours after it was brought to his attention. The organisers of concerts in the gardens then put them up only during the concerts as a matter of public safety.



Councillor Cammy Day and Councillor Adam McVey 21 August 2018
Photo The Edinburgh Reporter

Now there is a back to school feel about the first meeting of

the new council session after the holidays when [the full council meets tomorrow.](#)

There is a slim agenda for the meeting – but it does include 35 questions on matters such as transport issues in Edinburgh West, community parking in Murrayfield, Dalmahoy Junction, festival waste and litter, closure of the footpath beside Princes Street Gardens during the recent concerts there and misuse of firearms by police.

The Lord Provost will present his year one report and he has unusually lodged a motion to strip the Freedom of the City from Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

There is also room for some good news with Councillor Doran the Vice-Convener of Transport and Environment heralding the 32 green flag awards in Edinburgh. Balerno is being congratulated on the renewal of its Fair Trade status.

We spoke to the two leaders ahead of the council meeting and you can listen to our full podcast [here](#)

The Council Leader produces a report each month for council meetings and is questioned on aspects of it by any of the other 62 councillors. Here is what he wrote this month :

August in Edinburgh is a unique atmosphere that can be found nowhere else on earth. For four weeks, we welcome the world to share in our festival spirit and sample some of the thousands of performances taking place in this unique and beautiful city.

But with that popularity, success and acclaim, comes the other side of the same coin: the pressure on our core services and on the people who live and work here.

Of course, we're glad that so many people want to visit our beautiful city and we recognise the importance of tourism to our economy. But we also recognise the impact this has on

residents and that we have a responsibility to manage that impact.

With this in mind, a huge number of column inches have (rightly) been devoted to our ongoing campaign to 'win' the powers to introduce a transient visitor levy (TVL).

Having already demonstrated through our research that a TVL would not harm the hotel industry, and having gained the unanimous support of all Scottish local authorities, we will continue to host a series of round-table discussions with industry stakeholders to discuss the details of what an Edinburgh scheme could reasonably look like, as well as options for implementing it.

We will be in a position to consult publicly on the proposals in the autumn but fundamentally this is a matter of fairness. It is entirely fair to expect tourists to contribute to the city maintenance, to cultural and tourist investments, and to marketing the city so that it remains globally attractive.

Staying on this theme, we are acutely aware that short-term lets are causing serious issues for residents and damaging communities and will continue to do all we can to alleviate this pressure.

We have set up a working group to look into issues like antisocial behaviour, rent rises and the effect on residential housing supply and, last week, councillors unanimously approved their recommendations – a great result of effective collaborative working.

We will now work closely with The Scottish Government, and other local authorities, to consider piloting regulatory solutions. Our preferred route is through a new licensing system which will allow us to properly manage the concentration of short-term lets, the overall numbers and make sure that landlords are acting responsibly.

But this shouldn't be viewed as a limit on our ambitions as a capital city and we will shortly be bringing forward an International Strategy for further discussion. We want to maintain our position as leaders on the international stage, taking full – but sustainable – advantage of investment, tourism, economic growth and cultural exchange.



Prime Minister arriving at The Informatics Building to sign the City Region Deal

Such ambition for our city was there for all to see earlier this month as I joined the Prime Minister and First Minister in signing the transformative City Region Deal.

The culmination of years of hard work by this Council and our partners, this was a hugely significant landmark, confirming £1.3bn of investment in the region and allowing us to push ahead on core projects around infrastructure, skills and technology and in support of our festivals.

The Deal will allow us to transform Edinburgh and the surrounding area, delivering over 21,000 high quality jobs, together with a new skills programme and to address key economic barriers and issues of inequality across the region.

Edinburgh will continue to grow, to thrive – of that there is no doubt. But our focus must be on promoting fair and sustainable growth. We live in a city full of opportunity and, as a coalition, we are working extremely hard to ensure that all residents can share in that success.

I spent some time with councillors [@adamrmcvey](#) and [@cllrcammyday](#) yesterday finding out some of the things they will deal with in the next few months. We looked back to one of the main achievements of the summer too pic.twitter.com/1943lsUX6L

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [August 22, 2018](#)

DEPUTY COUNCIL LEADER CAMMY DAY

Deputy Council Leader Cammy Day has also been looking ahead to what the next few months will bring. He writes :

Over the next six months, and beyond, our focus as a coalition

will continue to be on improving the quality of life for all residents, giving everyone the opportunity to share in the success we undoubtedly enjoy as a city.

The Edinburgh City Poverty Commission, which was given the go-ahead in June, will be a key mechanism for making progress on this ambition.

All too often the poverty which exists in Edinburgh is hidden by the dramatic buildings and excellent quality of life that many of us enjoy. But reports by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimate that the total cost to the public sector in Edinburgh of addressing the impacts of poverty, including poor health, poor education outcomes, lost economic output and criminal justice outcomes is £408m. The need is unequivocal and the clock is ticking.

In the coming weeks, then, we will confirm the Commission Chair and its membership; we will identify a site for action and research in the city to challenge poverty in real time; and we will begin the most important work of all: hearing the views and voices of those in our communities who experience poverty and disadvantage.

Our mandate will be to explore the reasons why poverty persists and divides in this city. We'll be speaking to local individuals, visiting communities and taking recommendations back to the council for what we can do to see real, systematic change.

The work of the Commission will go hand and hand with our new Economy Strategy – which looks at eight key themes, all geared towards our priorities of inclusion, innovation and collaboration – and the work of our Homelessness Taskforce.

The Taskforce has already made a number of bold recommendations to further that work. When implemented, they will improve the quality of life for some of the most vulnerable people in the city.

We are finding better solutions for young people requiring temporary accommodation. This includes applying for funds to offer support packages for homeless people with complex needs and beginning a series of conversations with our partners to consider how best to deliver this support through the 'Housing First' scheme.

And we want to move towards the ending of B&B use as temporary accommodation, particularly for families, but this will take time. So, as of this month, B&Bs will be compelled to allow people to wash their clothes, store food and cook during their stay.

Of course, the most obvious way of ending homelessness is to provide enough homes for families to live in, which is why we will be investing £1.2bn over the next 10 years towards our pledge of delivering 20,000 new affordable homes.

1. [Councillor Cammy Day](#)

With over 2,000 on site currently, completions this year set to increase by over 50% from last year, and a clear plan for delivery coming back to councillors for approval in November, we are absolutely on track to meet our short-term target of 10,000 affordable homes over the next five years.

I'm delighted that so many of these new homes will be delivered in North Edinburgh – development made possible by the Council's recent purchase of the former National Grid site in Granton. This will open the door to much-needed and long overdue regeneration of this part of the city.

Given the population of Edinburgh is predicted to overtake Glasgow's by the middle of the century, we must be creative in how we manage this growth, developing diverse and vibrant communities distinct in character from the city centre. And we must do this sustainably and fairly.

This thinking is very much in tune with our vision for Edinburgh: a thriving and united city with all residents able to share in its success.

We will bring you any news as it happens from the August full council meeting which takes place on 23 August 2018 from 10am. Keep an eye on our Twitter feed and our live reporting page [here](#).