

# Residents' views sought on City Council's long term plans for change



Plans have been outlined by The City of Edinburgh Council to engage with residents on developing a four-year strategy to meet the changing demands of the city and its services.

Subject to approval at the next [Finance and Resources Committee](#) (27 September) the longer-term approach towards budget and service planning in the Capital will seek residents' views on our priorities and approach to close the budget gap of £106 million between now and 2022/23 as well as immediate proposals to save £28m in 2019/20.

The draft strategy, entitled "[Planning for Change and Delivering Services](#)", sets out the Council's priorities and approach as it works to build on the city's continued economic success and cultural vibrancy despite a challenging financial climate. It will broaden engagement with the public and partner organisations and encourage views on areas for future change, investment and performance improvement.

The document outlines some initial opportunities for service reforms and potential financial savings or new income in order to seek feedback from the public ahead of the budget being set in February. The public are being asked to consider approaches in five priority areas:

- Prevention – intervening before problems escalate for individuals and communities.

- Improving how we operate – the core job to run services in an efficient and effective way and deliver value for money.
- Changing how we work with our partners – delivering better outcomes, requiring the Council to work more effectively with partners, including the NHS and voluntary organisations.
- Making the most of our cultural and leisure assets – maximising the benefits generated by Edinburgh’s cultural and leisure assets and ensuring their sustainability for future generations.
- Increasing our income – to ensure that, where appropriate, the Council takes advantage of opportunities to increase income and diversify funding streams.

Finance and Resources Convener, Cllr Alasdair Rankin, said: “Like all local authorities, Edinburgh must prepare for the significant financial challenges that lie ahead. Meeting these challenges will require tough choices, which is why we need to embrace a forward- thinking and ambitious change strategy.

“Rather than making small annual reductions that over time become unsustainable, the Council needs to develop a longer term broad-minded plan that will see us through from now until 2022/23.

“This is a strategic response to the opportunities and challenges facing the Capital now and in the future and will form the main basis for a plan for a more progressive city with increased opportunities and reduced inequality.

“Edinburgh is a successful city that has much to be proud of but, as a coalition, we are committed to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to share in that success.”

Finance and Resources Vice Convener, Cllr Marion Donaldson, added: “We are working hard to bring together proposals which will balance our budget whilst maximising investment in

priority services and protecting vulnerable people. I want to be clear that no decisions have yet been made and we want to hear people's views on our outline proposals.

"The public's response to our engagements in recent years has been fantastic, with thousands of people sharing their views – all of which has allowed us to make more informed decisions when developing service plans and balancing our budgets.

"I would encourage everyone to play their part in the process once again and put forward their views whether that is by using our online planner, phone, letter, email, social media, or speaking with their local councillor. All feedback will be considered as part of the process and will inform our next steps."

If approved next week, the engagement will last for 10 weeks. People can give their feedback online or by post until midnight on Friday 7 December.

This year's engagement will also see the return of the Council's Budget Simulator where residents can use the online tool to try their hand at dealing with the budget gap and to better understand the consequences of making savings decisions.