

# Edinburgh councillor blogs – Cllr Scott Arthur on public conveniences

Councillor Scott Arthur tells us that he believes Colinton Public Toilets are at risk from budget cuts.

The City of Edinburgh Council [currently has a consultation](#) underway where the public are asked how our capital should deal with the £106m of cuts it faces over the next 4 years.



Professor Scott Arthur who is a local councillor in Colinton

The Edinburgh Evening News has reported that everything from cutting the number of classroom assistants to charging for music tuition is being considered.

One reported cut which has particular resonance in my ward is a proposal to close almost all of Edinburgh's Public Toilets, including those in Colinton.

The Council Leader, Cllr Adam McVey who represents Leith Ward,

claims that public toilets are generally in need of substantial investment and are the focus of crime.

He has clearly never had to “spend a penny” in Colinton. The village enjoys a relatively new building which is fully accessible and well used (not least by bus drivers). Council Officers have confirmed to me that there are no problems with them, and the Police have told me they can find no record of crime or anti-social behaviour linked to them.

It is an accepted fact that older people, people with disabilities, people with carers, women and children all have their lives limited by the current lack of public toilets in Edinburgh. Given that there is no shortage of these groups in Colinton, it is hard to understand the basis of the closure.

Rather than closing public toilets, we should be improving them across the city. I’d much rather Edinburgh was a place that was known for having clean and fully accessible public toilets where nature’s needs can be met and babies can be changed, rather than a place where men (mostly) were too often seen urinating in public.

These cuts are driven by political decisions made by the Scottish Government. They have chosen to disproportionately target local government, and ensure Edinburgh has Scotland’s lowest per capita funding settlement. That is their prerogative, but when the point is reached where the most vulnerable in society fall victim to their cuts it is surely time for a rethink.

That’s why I am delighted that Colinton Community Council has decided to run a campaign to save the village’s public toilets and I look forward to giving it my full support.

[Read our interview with the Finance Convener here where he tells us about information leaks on the budget process.](#)