

TVL Consultation launched by Council

The City of Edinburgh Council today (Wednesday) opened a citywide consultation on proposals for a Transient Visitor Levy (TVL) or 'Tourist Tax'.

Having conducted detailed research, informal engagement with industry stakeholders and an in-depth survey of residents and visitors, the Council last month set out key aspects of how a scheme could look.

Now, views are being sought from all city stakeholders but, in particular, the hospitality and tourism sector, plus city businesses and investors, culture partners, visitors and residents, concerning the best possible arrangements for introducing a TVL in Edinburgh.

The draft proposal suggested a charge of either 2% or £2 per room per night, chargeable all year round on all forms of accommodation, including short-term lets, but capped at seven nights. Respondents are being asked for their views on the details of the scheme but also importantly what any income raised should be spent on.

The Council has been clear that it sees the purpose of this fund as being to invest in and manage the consequences of the future success of tourism within the city and respondents will also be asked to identify things they feel could benefit from the estimated to be at least £11m per annum that would be raised.

Alongside the online consultation, which will last for eight weeks, the Council is planning further targeted engagement with stakeholders. This will include three open workshops with industry representatives, a workshop with investors and four resident focus groups.

Officers, meanwhile, continue to make offers to attend board meetings, membership meetings and 1:1s with industry and other partners.

Earlier this month, Scotland's First Minister announced plans for a 'national conversation' on the issue and Council Leader Adam McVey wrote to the Scottish Government welcoming this and seeking assurances that the timescales would be compatible – which has now been confirmed.

He said: "The First Minister's announcement was welcome in that their work will provide a national context for our proposals, adding to the detailed engagement we have already carried out as well as the citywide public consultation we are embarking upon today.

"We have always acknowledged the need for legislation in taking this forward but we as a Council have also maintained the need to develop our own plans to make sure it's not just any TVL but the right TVL for Edinburgh, taking account of our local circumstances.

"Our plans have been developed through engagement with the industry and we see this consultation, alongside the Scottish Government's, as a way of further co-producing a scheme that works best for the city and our stakeholders. We are very much listening to everyone involved around what they believe is a fair, simple and workable policy."