

# **Councillor Ellie Bird to be caretaker replacement while council leader on leave**

**From the end of this week Cllr Adam McVey goes on adoption leave for six weeks. His temporary replacement has just been announced. SNP councillors will appoint their group chairperson, Cllr Ellie Bird, who represents the Forth Ward. Cllr Bird will take over Council Leader Cllr Adam McVey's duties when he takes six weeks of adoption leave.**

Cllr McVey begins his leave from Friday 23 August 2019 and Cllr Bird is set to be appointed as his temporary "caretaker" replacement on Thursday. Labour leader and the council's Depute Leader, Cllr Cammy Day, is expected to formally deputise including taking leader's questions at full council.

No-one is technically acting as council leader in Cllr McVey's absence – as laws prevent the council from appointing a replacement leader.

It is thought the SNP decision to back 31-year-old Cllr Bird, who is currently the council's young person's champion and her party's group chairperson, will allow her to give the caretaker role "the true attention it deserves".



Cllr Ellie Bird

She said: “The most important thing for me is that Adam gets the adoption leave that he’s entitled to – that’s a really important message we have to send. I’m taking up this new position as caretaker for six weeks, representing the views of my group but also representing the views of the administration, for the best of the city.

“This is a role I take up with huge enthusiasm and positivity and I’m really looking forward to working cross-party.”

Labour backbencher Cllr Scott Arthur called for whoever takes on the position to have “leadership experience” and a full “job description” to be available.

Cllr Arthur said: “It’s right that Cllr McVey is able to take paternity leave, and that depute leader Cllr Day should then take on the leadership of the council – it is what depute leaders do.

“To ensure Cllr McVey does not return to work with a huge workload, it’s important that Cllr Day is supported by one of the other 61 Councillors. There are councillors in all parties that have the leadership experience to step up to this role.”

But Cllr Bird, who has a degree in social policy, and has worked for both MSP Ben Macpherson and MP Tommy Sheppard, has insisted she is more than capable of taking on the six-week role – with a warning “not to conflate youth with inexperience”.



Cllr Iain Whyte Conservative Group leader

Conservative group leader, Cllr Iain Whyte, said the decision would “raise some eyebrows”. He added: “There is some consternation around City Chambers that the SNP seem to be choosing one of the least experienced people possible for a very senior role.

“These decisions are all being made behind closed doors – they have the whiff of something that’s been cobbled together by a rather disparate SNP and Labour groups rather than anything to do with leadership for the city.”

But Cllr McVey has given his colleague his full backing and support. He said: “It’s important that we don’t miss a beat in driving forward the council’s agenda so I’m delighted that Cllr Ellie Bird will ensure we continue to make progress in key areas while I’m on adoption leave.

“Ellie has done a tremendous amount of work in the last two years at the council and brings a wealth of experience and energy that hopefully all councillors, regardless of party affiliation will value.”

The position comes with a £39,310 pro rata allowance attached to it for the six week period.

Cllr Melanie Main, co-convener of the Edinburgh Green group, said: ‘I’m very much looking forward to working with Cllr Ellie Bird, while Adam is on adoption leave.

“It’s great to have a woman in a leadership role in the

council, and Ellie's much respected by us all – she has considerable experience and lots of energy and I'm sure she'll bring a fresh perspective."