

Councillor may regain finance position despite expenses questions

Labour councillor Lezley Marion Cameron could regain her position as Vice-Convenor of Finance when The City of Edinburgh Council meets at its first virtual meeting tomorrow.

The move comes as Labour Cllr Joan Griffiths has decided to step down from the role.

At a Labour council group AGM tonight, Cllr Cameron, who stood unopposed, was unanimously elected to be the coalition's nominee for Vice-Convenor to work alongside Finance Convenor, Alasdair Rankin.

Tomorrow at a full council meeting all councillors will vote to either elect Cllr Cameron or a challenger from a rival party, should they step forward, to the role.

Cllr Cameron resigned from her position as Vice-Convenor in October last year, when it emerged that she had include £1,500 in taxi journeys when submitting her expenses to the council between 2017 – 2019.

The bill for 80 separate trips in the space of a year, including more than 50 to or from her home address was claimed.

However, Cllr Cameron says that she has paid back the cost of all personal taxi journeys, which she maintains amounted to two trips totalling £35 in fares.

She said: “The reason I’m suited to this role is because I consistently speak up for Edinburgh, my constituents and my ward. I was the Economic Convener in 1999 so I have a lot of experience. But no matter my role, it’s always about wanting what’s in the best interest of the people I represent.

“I’ve got good relationships with sectors across the city and I will speak up loud and clear for all their needs and wants.”

Labour Group Leader and Depute Leader of the council, Cammy Day praised Cllr Cameron’s work.

Cllr Day said: “While there may have been some judgements made that were unhelpful while not being wrong, Lezley’s work with Alasdair Rankin had been quite progressive in the period of time while she was vice-convenor of finance.

“She comes with a background of a range of skills that will help that job and that she did a good job before. Ultimately it needs the agreement of the council but I think that Lezley accepts that in terms of the taxi fares, while that is not against the council rules for councillors to use taxis, she accepts in the current financial climate we shouldn’t be using taxis unless it is an absolute necessity and she has accepted that that was less than helpful.

“I give my reassurances to the public that I will be monitoring this role and working with Lezley to make sure she gets back on a solid foundation.”

The council meeting is the first virtual council meeting of all 62 councillors under the convenership of the Lord Provost. It begins at 10.00am and the papers are [here](#).