

SNP councillor resigns over 'anti-disability' culture

Cllr Derek Howie has resigned this morning from the SNP group over what he claims to be the continuing anti-disability culture.

We are told that Cllr Howie spoke with Council Leader Adam McVey earlier this week to advise that he will now sit on the opposition benches to continue his quest to alter the council's approach to disability. Which particular party if any he will join is for the moment not settled.

He believes that in the three years since he was elected, despite his best efforts, he has not yet convinced his colleagues of the need for change. We are told that Cllr Howie is staking to other political groups and is 'considering his options'.

In Cllr Howie's view the council needs to adopt a policy of recognising the needs of those with a disability, and has reminded them that around 20% of the population are identified as having a disability of some sort.

He has expressed the hope that his move will allow him to create such changes and allow those with a disability to play their part in civic life. Cllr Howie has retinitis pigmentosa and has used a guide dog for many years now, most recently Gucci who is photographed with him below.

Council Leader Adam McVey said: "The 2052 voters in Liberton and Gilmerton who elected Derek will understandably feel let down by his decision. Derek was a valued member of the team but clearly he feels that he's failed to represent his

constituents effectively.

“His voice was always welcome in discussions but any effective Councillor has to work constructively and respectfully with colleagues to drive forward change. The Council is making sustained improvements for people with disabilities and mobility issues, making sure voices of groups like the Edinburgh Access Panel and Living Streets are heard loudly. We still have so much more to do and will continue to work with partners to transform our city and prioritise actions to improve accessibility for all our residents.”



The political make up of the council is changed as per our table below. It is unlikely that the SNP/Labour coalition running the council will not continue as before. However it makes the upcoming Craigentenny/Duddingston by-election, brought about by the resignation of former SNP Cllr Ian Campbell due to ill health.

Political parties	Numbers
SNP	15
Labour	11
Conservatives	17
Greens	8
LibDem	6
EPIC	3
Independent	1
Cllr Howie	1
One council ward is due to have a by-election	1