

# **Have your say on the 2021 council budget**

## **Help us plan your services, have your say – by Councillors Rob Munn and Joan Griffiths, Finance and Resources Convener and Vice Convener**

Budget planning time is always a challenging point in the year for local authorities but the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on our services has added another layer of complexity to the decision-making process ahead of us in February when the full Council meets to set our budget.

Nonetheless, we remain firmly committed to the positive and forward-thinking ambitions and priorities we've set for the Capital and will be guided by these, and by the latest public feedback, as we embark on the budget process once again.

Our Council teams have gone to incredible lengths to keep essential services running during this unprecedented crisis, but inevitably there have been some services that have had to be curtailed or paused for a time to help us deal with the pandemic and to keep residents and our colleagues safe.

Dealing with the pandemic has placed a much greater demand on services and brought additional costs with it. Meanwhile a significant reduction in our income, through areas such as leisure and transport, has resulted in an additional £47.5m gap in our budget over the next three years.

So, once again, we're faced with difficult decisions and

prioritising how we spend our budget, rethinking how our services are designed and delivered – and where we can make real and lasting savings.

That's why it's crucial we hear directly from the people we serve on what you want us to prioritise, as well as how your lives have been affected by the way Covid-19 has changed – or, in some cases, temporarily suspended – our services.

There's only about a week left to have your say in our budget survey, which has already gathered views from more than 1,200 respondents keen to help us shape our services over the next three years.

From the feedback we've had already, we can see that citizens welcome the way we've kept refuse and recycling collections going throughout the pandemic, as well as home care provision and the work we did to open schools up quickly for the children of essential workers after lockdown began in March.

People say they missed being able to visit their local library or use Edinburgh Leisure services, with community centres and recycling centres (when closed) also cited.

When asked what the Council's priorities should be for recovery, respondents mention keeping schools open, providing social services including care for the elderly and support for those with additional needs and restoring public transport usage to pre-pandemic levels.

We'll take all the feedback we receive in this survey on board when we set our budget in February. In addition, we remain fully committed to our established core priorities of tackling poverty and inequality, boosting sustainability and promoting wellbeing – all of which were set based on direct feedback from you on what is most important to the people of Edinburgh.

Your voice matters, so if you haven't yet done so, please [have your say](#) by 10 December and help us get this right for

Edinburgh for the years ahead.

