

# Deputations to council's budget meeting

Several groups have lodged deputation requests asking to be heard ahead of the council budget meeting on Thursday.

Usually the council meeting in February when the budget is set for the year ahead is perhaps one of the most entertaining. There is a lot of party politics on show, but it does get to the heart of what the council does, and at the same time where the money is concerned it can allow for some cross-party cooperation.

As well as councillors there are usually deputations from all sorts of bodies such as trade unions who have an interest in what the council does, and what it spends its money on.

Tomorrow is no different as there are six groups which have asked to be heard, but the council has still not worked out a way of allowing deputations to speak before the virtual meeting. For that reason there are written deputations and all 63 councillors are expected to read these before voting on the budget on Thursday.

These are the six deputations from

1. **3.1 Another Edinburgh is Possible** who say there is a high level of dissatisfaction with many council services. But they point out that many people living in Edinburgh are happy with accessible cultural facilities like museums and galleries, while not happy at all with the quality of community centres.

2. **3.2 Edinburgh Tenants Federation** asks for a freeze in council rents and council tax for the next year (which is in the administration proposals)
3. **3.3 Edinburgh TUC** set out their demands that the council acts on child poverty by spending on Breakfast Clubs, after school Soup and Sandwich Clubs and school outings for those who might not be able to afford them. They believe the number of children in Edinburgh living in poverty will double from 23,000 to 46,000 by March 2022.
4. **3.4 Edinburgh EIS** concentrate on education and say that the budget situation in Edinburgh's schools is 'extremely concerning' with many schools unable to meet even basic requirements. The union says teachers have continued to put their hands in their own pockets to pay for food, stationery and clothing for some pupils. They also repeat last year's call for more qualified teachers to be retained in nursery schools. And they ask councillors to think again about cutting music tuition. They also question why citizens cannot make live deputations to council meetings.
5. **3.5 Unite the Union CEC Branch** would like the council to empower their staff and work together to improve public services. They question the manner of communication to the council staff – with some who have taken public transport to get to work only to find they were not needed. They also question that deputations can only be submitted in writing, and demand digital participation.
6. **3.6 UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch** says there have been massive cuts to jobs and services in past years with negative impact on staff. "We call on the council and its leadership to call on the Scottish Government and Westminster Governments to increase their funding for local government."



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