

# **Additional council funding allocated to key areas**

**Councillors in Edinburgh agreed today on options for investing around £21m in one-off additional funding, and among them is a proposal to save the All-Ability Bike scheme.**

The scheme [which has helped many](#) who would not have had the opportunity to try cycling to do so on specially adapted bikes and trikes. It has been in danger of closing due to lack of funding with three part-time positions becoming redundant.

Conservative finance spokesperson, Cllr Graham Hutchison, accused the administration of a short-sighted approach, saying they were simply spending all of the extra funding allocated to the council by central government in times of constrained financial circumstances. He warned that the Finance and Resources Committee have become used to hearing how much the council will miss its targets by at the end of the year.

He said: "This year is somewhat different and the fact that we are here today with all groups able to bring forward proposals for additional spending is very welcome indeed. There is however no room for complacency, and councillors of all parties and none across this chamber should be alarmed at the projected deficit for years three and four totalling around £107 million. We must all have this at the forefront of our minds when making our decision today."

[In February, the Council set a balanced budget for 2021/22,](#) which the council administration said would address the key priorities of the Council Business Plan – tackling poverty, promoting sustainability and enhancing residents’ wellbeing.

The Scottish Government meantime confirmed additional funding for local authorities and, after making provision for the anticipated ongoing financial impacts of the pandemic over the next two years, Council officers identified up to £21million which could be made available to address budget pressures, anticipated shortfalls where otherwise there might have to be cuts, and other priorities set out by the administration for the next two financial years

At [Thursday’s meeting of the Full Council,](#) political groups proposed and debated motions outlining what they wanted done with the funds. The motion by the coalition was carried, meaning the £21m will be invested as set out below.

Councillor Rob Munn, Finance and Resources Convener, said: “When our Council budget was agreed in February, the final local government settlement was not known in full. At the time we set a prudent Budget in the knowledge that we would have other decisions to make following clarification of the final settlement. That final settlement was more than we had anticipated and I’m very pleased that we’ve been able to agree these investments in Council today, helping us to meet our commitments and to ensure that we address poverty, well-being and the climate challenge.”



Depute Lord Provost Joan Griffiths MBE PHOTO ©2021 The Edinburgh Reporter

Councillor Joan Griffiths, Finance and Resources Vice Convener, said: “The Covid-19 pandemic has had a very significant impact on local government budgets so it’s very welcome to be able to invest more money now towards our core priorities for Edinburgh. The proposals now approved will give

a real boost to our work to achieve our core ambitions for the Capital – tackling poverty and inequality, boosting sustainability and enhancing wellbeing for everyone who calls the city home. I particularly welcome our decision to invest £250,000 in a fund to support carers after the extremely challenging time they've faced during the pandemic, as well as our £600,000 investment in prevention services and community engagement to support residents at risk of poverty."

The Vice-Convenor ended her comments on the budget by saying that Edinburgh Labour will continue to fight for full and fair funding for Edinburgh from The Scottish Government.

## **The extra funding will be spent as follows:**

**Roads and Pavements Infrastructure** – recognising the impact of prolonged winter weather the Council will invest an additional £2m extra in repairs to the roads and pavements network including local residential areas and an extra £4m to improve surface condition for all users – those walking, wheeling, cycling, using public transport and motorists.

**Street Cleaning and gritting** – we will invest £300k to improve both street cleansing operations and winter gritting making our streets cleaner and safer.

**Communal Bins** – £1.1 million in this programme to improve organisation and capacity in communal bins across the city, bringing forward investment to improve the service and address the funding shortfall in delivering the programme in full.

**Public Conveniences** – the £450,000 Council has already approved to invest will ensure a temporary network of public conveniences at key locations, meeting accessibility needs in premier parks and other locations where people need

facilities.

**Estate Energy Reduction** – a further £500,000 to improve Council estate carbon performance to meet the climate challenge by identifying shovel-ready projects.

**Carbon net zero engagement** – £700,000 to take forward citizen communication and engagement to bring about behaviour change assisting the city in reaching carbon net zero target.

**EV Infrastructure** – £250,000 to expand EV charging infrastructure for the Council's own fleet, ensuring that the Council leads by example by making our vehicle fleet carbon zero.

**Up Recycling** – £200,000 to improve the Council's recycling performance.

**20-minute neighbourhoods** – £500,000 to drive forward the delivery of 20-minute neighbourhoods, making it easier for people to get to and access the services they need in their community.

**Food Growing** – £130,000 to be invested, recognising the increase in demand for local food growing opportunities. This is investment to expand provision.

**Looked after Children** – recognising the pressures of out of authority placement, the Council will invest £1.5m to improve the service and help ensure vulnerable children are accommodated in authority wherever possible.

**Children & Families Development officers** – £124,000 to provide service for disabled children in terms of holiday provision and positive destinations.

**Carers' Recovery Fund** – recognising the extra challenge for carers during the pandemic, the Council will invest £250k in a fund providing additional support to carers

**Edinburgh Summer Festivals** – £300,000 to support resumption of festivals this summer including support for local community festivals

**Books for libraries** – £50,000 increase in this year's allocation for new books in our libraries, improving choice and service to Edinburgh residents

**Embedding Prevention and Community Engagement** – £600,000 investment to improve delivery of prevention services through empowering frontline staff to co-produce service redesign across departments, reform current practice, and create a preventative service and community engagement model and develop a plan for wider roll out.

**Diversity and inclusion** – £100,000 to accelerate and embed the Council's diversity and inclusion strategy, including training and development training

**Taxi and Licence enforcement** – £160,000 to meet demand and ensure robust enforcement.

**Edinburgh Integration Joint Board** – £2.5m funding to EIJB to address base budget pressures for social care.

**Independent inquiries** – £400,000 funding for these inquiries to bring them to their conclusion.

**Place fees and charges reduced income** – £559,000 to address issues with reduced income due to the Covid-19 pandemic changing behaviours and the impact on fees and charges.

**Home to School Travel Demand** – £600,000 to meet demand in this service while working to reshape and achieve savings.

**Development and Business Services Loss of Income** – invest £187,000 to cover loss of Planning, Building Services and Regulatory Services income.

**Early Years Deferral** – The Council will allocate up to £270,000 over the full academic year (two financial years) to offer the 40 nursery children who applied for deferral and were not among the 66 approved through application of appeal a funded place for another year due to lost time through Covid-related nursery closures.

**All Ability Bike** – Work is ongoing to find a solution to ensure the service is still available and the Council is investing £71,000 to help facilitate this and ensure transport is inclusive.

In addition to these investments, further funding has been set aside to address the following:

**Edinburgh Bike Hire Scheme** – the approved Coalition motion states: “We recognise the popularity of the current scheme and seek to continue with a cost-effective and robust scheme fit for the future.” The sum of £800,000 has been set against this item.

**Trams Concessionary travel** – the approved Coalition motion states: “Trams contribute to Edinburgh’s clean air and net zero strategy and will continue to press the Scottish Government to recognise this in its concessionary travel funding. We will continue dialogue with the Scottish Government on delivering free tram journeys for young people on the same terms as bus travel as we feel an integrated public transport system is key to Edinburgh’s future. If this is unfunded at a national level, we will look into the possibility of expanding free provision to young people in Edinburgh subject to affordability.” (£500,000)

**Homelessness** – the approved Coalition motion states: “We recognise the pressure on the service in the past year due to Covid and that pressures are expected to exceed the additional £10m allocated in February’s budget. We also recognise that should legislative protections change as restrictions ease,

there may be a requirement for even further resources to improve outcomes for temporary homeless accommodation. We will continue to make the case for additional resources equivalent to those allocated to other local authorities for homelessness support from IJB budgets. Following that process and depending on in-year position due to service demand, we will agree that left over monies can be used to meet the required supply to get the outcomes right for people finding themselves at risk of homelessness.” (£2million)

**Employability for disabled people** – the approved Coalition motion states: “to plug the gap left by the loss of the European Social Fund due to Brexit and the lack of a direct replacement fund from the UK Government” The proposal is to spend £400,000 on this in year two.