

Council promise to examine accessibility in streets and buildings

The council is set to look at how it can improve the accessibility of Edinburgh's streets and buildings for disabled people – after one councillor called on the local authority to “start taking this subject seriously”.

A motion calling on members to assess how policies impact the accessibility of buildings, parks, land, public facilities and amenities under council ownership was passed by members at the meeting of the full council last month.

The motion, raised by Cllr Lezley Marion Cameron, reads: “Equality Impact Assessments of such proposals, temporary and permanent, should consider and clearly set out in reports, how proposals will impact on improving the accessibility and inclusion of our city to Edinburgh citizens and visitors.

“Council calls for a report to the Policy and Sustainability Committee within three cycles setting out progress on improving the accessibility and inclusion of Edinburgh; how this is being achieved; and what further steps Council can take to work with its partners to improve the accessibility of major attractions, public services and amenities which are not in the Council ownership.”

Seconding the motion, the council's equalities champion Cllr George Gordon told members: "I think it's really important that we start taking this subject seriously."

He added: "We do an awful lot within the council to try and assist, we've done various other things like trying to clear up the streets and get out the barriers for people trying to get around our areas – we now need to take that next step into our buildings and our services to make sure that disabled people are treated with respect and dignity and that we're not having to constantly reiterate our disabilities."

"I think we have to set this example. We, as a local authority, carry a lot of weight because we're actually the ones that set out the city, the streetscapes, the way that things are actually done so if we're not setting an example nobody else will."

"There's a real opportunity to start drawing a line in the sand and saying 'we're taking this seriously, we're going to call for reports that actually look at how we adapt our buildings for the benefit of disabled people with both hidden and visible disabilities'."

"It's about time we stepped up and took that step towards achieving that. It's the start of the process, it will be expensive I'm sure because we do have a lot of old buildings, a lot of old stock within our council estates."

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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