

# **Council elections 2022 – Labour launch their election campaign**

**Edinburgh City Council's Labour group leader has pledged to fight cuts to services, invest £700 million in council homes and protect Lothian Buses as the party's 2022 election campaign gets underway.**

Six existing Labour councillors will step down in May – Karen Doran, Gordon Munro, Ricky Henderson, Maureen Child, Ian Perry and Donald Wilson – ushering in a new generation of members – including one City Centre candidate pledging to crack down on short-term lets in the ward and breathe new life into a “dilapidated” 50 year-old playpark near The Scottish Parliament.

After spending the last ten years in coalition with the SNP, Edinburgh Labour will spend much of the next 77 days in the lead up to polling day highlighting what leader Cammy Day described as the national governing party's “continued erosion of local government funding in Edinburgh”.



Councillor Cammy Day. Photo: Martin P. McAdam  
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Cllr Day, the city's deputy council leader since 2017, said: "It's been over a decade of cuts to local government in Edinburgh. Edinburgh is now officially the lowest funded council in Scotland, so it's disappointing that the SNP have not – both in Edinburgh and in Scotland – managed to persuade the party that Edinburgh as a capital city should get fair funding.

"We've got the lowest funding per capita in the whole of Scotland. Every local authority is funded more than us, yet we're the capital city."

He admitted there will be "difficult decisions" for the next administration to make and added: "I hope that Edinburgh Labour are part of that decision making process.

"Our priority will be about protecting people's jobs, protecting frontline services and trying to, where we can, bring these services back in-house so that people get good

pay, terms and conditions and deliver a good service for the people of Edinburgh, rather than it all being handed off to the private sector.

“There’s a substantial amount of work that goes out to the private sector in Edinburgh and we want to change that relationship so that relationship can be more in-house than external and build the council as one of the biggest, if not the biggest employers with the best terms and conditions in the city.”

Cllr Day said this will include a commitment to keep Lothian Buses in public ownership, and also promised “huge investment” in council properties to improve energy efficiency and reduce tenants’ bills.

He said: “We will put our 100 per cent support into the retrofitting and £700 million worth of investment into council homes to make sure our tenants have the lowest bills possible.

“We can’t control the national picture and greedy energy companies but what we can control is the investment in our council properties and we’ll be doing that.”

Paying tribute to the incumbent Labour members stepping down in May, who include three-term councillors Maureen Child, Donald Wilson and Ian Perry, he added: “They will be a huge loss to the Labour group in Edinburgh but also to the Labour movement and to the city.

“However, that does provide opportunities for the next generation of councillors to come in.”



Margaret Graham, Labour. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam  
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One of those new candidates vying for a seat in the chamber is City Centre hopeful Margaret Graham.

Mrs Graham, who has lived in the capital her whole life and has spent the last 25 years working as a childcare manager, is hoping to take the political baton from departing councillor, Karen Doran, who has served the City Centre ward since 2012.

She said that if elected, she plans to seize upon new Scottish Government legislation that will give local authorities powers to introduce licensing schemes for short-term lets.

Edinburgh's Old Town is home to over 800 active AirBnB listings per square kilometre.

"Things are going to be moving in the right direction," she said. "It's going to be more rigorous and it'll hopefully help not just halt not just the hollowing-out of communities but the at time anti-social behaviour in some parts of the city,

which is not fair for residents to be putting up with.”

Mrs Graham added she is passionate about promoting active travel, re-opening the city’s community centres and will push for action on local issues such as improvements to the Dumbiedykes playpark.

“It’s 50 years old this year, it was opened in 1972, and I just feel that it needs a complete revamp,” she said. “So that’s going to be one of the smaller campaigns I’m going to run from March when there’s lighter nights and more people around.

“The playpark is looking very dilapidated and it needs investment, and it’s the playpark closest to the Scottish Parliament and they have said that children’s welfare is important and a nice playpark that they want to go and visit is important to get young children back out.”



Mhairi Munro-Brian, Labour candidate. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam [www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)

Among the city's wards Labour is hopeful of gaining seats in this year is Inverleith, where the party's new candidate Mhari Munro-Brian is already out knocking on doors.

A Craigmount High alumni, she was born and brought up in Edinburgh, achieved a first class honours degree in Forensic Science and now works as a chemist for a whisky distillery, where she is also the GMB Union Health and Safety representative.

Mrs Munro-Brian said: "I'm running for the council because I strongly believe in equality and think we should have more women and young people in politics.

"We need to better reflect the communities we seek to serve through improved representation. We need Councillors who will work hard and exemplify Labour values of equality, solidarity and social justice to make a real and tangible positive impact to our communities."

Whilst campaigning around Inverleith, she is planning to call for upgrades to parks and green spaces, investment in local shopping areas and will address the local effects of climate change.

"Inverleith Park needs permanent, good quality, accessible public toilets and baby changing facilities as well as play park upgrades," she said.

"For too long the shopping area in Drylaw has been neglected by the Council. This needs to change. I would work closely with local businesses to improve the shopping centre and ensure the public areas are well maintained.

"Severe flooding in the ward has caused huge distress and needs to be properly dealt with. Edinburgh Labour has bold plans to help the City achieve the net zero by 2030 target and will create jobs whilst doing so."



Fred Hessler, Labour candidate for Almond Ward. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam [www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)



Richard Parker, Labour candidate. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam [www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)



Nkechi Okoro, Labour candidate. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam [www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)



Jane Meagher, Labour. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam [www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)

## **The Labour Party candidates announced in Edinburgh so far are:**

- **Almond** – Fred Hessler
- **City Centre** – Margaret Graham
- **Colinton/Fairmilehead** – Scott Arthur (incumbent)
- **Corstorphine/Murrayfield** – Richard Parker
- **Drum Brae/Gyle** – Nkechi Okoro
- **Forth** – Cammy Day (incumbent)
- **Inverleith** – Mhairi Munro-Brian
- **Leith Walk** – James Dalgleish
- **Leith** – Katrina Faccenda
- **Morningside** – Mandy Watt (incumbent)
- **Pentland Hills** – Stephen Jenkinson
- **Southside/Newington** – Tim Pogson
- **Sighthill/Gorgie** – Ross McKenzie
- **Fountainbridge / Craiglockhart** – Val Walker
- **Liberton/Gilmerton** – Lezley Marion Cameron (incumbent), Ishrat Measom
- **Portobello/Craigmillar** – Jane Meagher, Heather Pugh

The Edinburgh Reporter invites all candidates to tell us where and when they are canvassing so that we can photograph as many candidates as possible.

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Carmel Smith, Sarah Boyack MSP and candidate Margaret Graham.  
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*by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter*

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