

Council elections 2022 – Joanna Mowat – City Centre Ward

Name – Joanna Mowat

Political Party – Scottish Conservative & Unionist

Ward – City Centre

When I was 10 I first visited Edinburgh and remember leaving Waverley Station onto Waverley Bridge and thinking this was the most beautiful city in the world and said that one day I would live there. I achieved that at 19 when I came to University and have stayed ever since.

I've always been interested in politics and worked in the private sector, a quango and at Holyrood before being elected in 2007 to represent the City Centre in 2007. No one ever quite prepares you for everything a local councillor does and all the ways they touch people's lives. In my first term the outgoing Labour Councillor, Chris Wigglesworth, asked me if I would take over chairing as group he'd set up in the Grassmarket to work with the Council during the construction. It's probably the most generous gift I've ever been given as it taught me a huge amount about being a councillor and working with the community and ideally would be how the Council worked with communities when they are making changes into an area.

My committee areas of interest have settled into the quasi judicial areas of Planning and Licensing both civic and liquor which are all very important issues to the residents in the City Centre and during the last administration I chaired the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee of the council which functions as the audit and scrutiny committee so gets in

amongst the nuts and bolts of how the Council functions and exposes problems in these areas.



Councillor Joanna Mowat

I'll be campaigning to clean up the city – both physically as it's really dirty and to get the Council running as well as possible so it can deliver the services that the public needs. As Convener of GRBV I saw too many audits in which reveal that there are fundamental weaknesses in how the Council runs its business. This doesn't offer value for money or keep staff safe and able to make best use of their time delivering services. We need to focus on creating a Council that makes best use of IT to free up staff time to deliver for the people of the City. We've also seen a series of disturbing and concerning reports about how the Council has responded to whistleblowers which make very grim reading. There needs to be a concerted effort to address these matters and change the culture of the Council. Rather than massive uncosted strategic plans the focus needs to shift to delivery. That's my campaign in a nutshell – both now and, hopefully, after 2022.

In 2017 there was no clear winner of the election –

Conservatives achieved the most first preference votes and 18 seats, the SNP got slightly fewer votes and one more seat. The message from the voters wasn't clear, what became clear was that to hold a rag tag minority coalition together the Leader had one trick, and one trick only which was to attack the Conservatives.

Having carefully considered what message the voters were sending – which wasn't clear, I moved, on behalf of the Conservative Group, a Coalition of All the Talents (COAT) to try and find a new way of delivering politics that would have focussed on delivering those items we had in common and would have meant creating the conditions of a Council that would have worked together rather than isolated and divided and othered.

That motion was rejected and we have seen five years of acrimony as the Council has been dragged to a place which it didn't have a mandate to go to and to implement its schemes has ignored and indeed abolished locality working with local people.

My biggest achievement is to continue to work with and represent the voices of my constituents within the Council.