

# **Council elections 2022 – looking at the manifesto buzzwords while parties try to create an administration**

**As we wait for the leaders of the various political parties in Edinburgh to strike a deal and decide how the council in Edinburgh will work for the next five years, we have looked again at the manifestos published before the election.**

**No party will run Edinburgh council alone, partly since no single party fielded more than 20 or so candidates for 63 councillor positions, but also because the Single Transferable Vote system works against a majority administration.**

After the election SNP is the single largest party with 19 councillors, Labour has 13, Liberal Democrats 12, Greens 10 and Conservatives 9.

Certain terms and buzz words cropped up repeatedly in the manifestos no matter which party produced them and we examine just a few key policy commitments extracted from the election promises (which you can [read in full here](#)).

**Fair funding – Claims have been made by various political groups that the amount of money Edinburgh council receives from The Scottish Government is much less per head than in other council areas.**

The Edinburgh **Conservatives** said that the SNP Scottish Government has systematically and destructively underfunded local councils, with Edinburgh often receiving the lowest block grant per head of population of all Scottish councils. Additionally, Conservatives demand that the Scottish

Government builds funding for a Council Tax freeze into future budgets.

Edinburgh **Labour** ask for The Scottish Government to “give our city the powers and resources it needs”, and to give powers back to local council level. They oppose the growing centralisation of services. The group also claims that Edinburgh receives the lowest person funding from The Scottish Government of any council in Scotland and say they will continue to call on The Scottish Government for fair funding.

**Liberal Democrats** say that local authorities have suffered serious and disproportionate cuts to their budgets at the hands of the SNP-Green budget deals, reducing their capacity for innovation and dynamism and damaging their ability to support local communities.

The SNP manifesto is unsurprisingly silent on the issue.

When we asked the First Minister about the apparent underfunding to Edinburgh she was clear that the council leader has in the past five years “argued vociferously for the people of Edinburgh”.

*On the campaign trail with Nicola Sturgeon in Portobello asking about active travel and local government funding*  
[pic.twitter.com/XsYRblQL9x](https://pic.twitter.com/XsYRblQL9x)

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [May 1, 2022](#)

**Active Travel – walking, wheeling and cycling as well as using public transport to get around.**

Edinburgh **Conservatives** said they would deliver what they

described as the delayed active travel programme. They promised properly designed and permanently installed segregated cycle infrastructure on routes that can be shown to be practicable, affordable and where there is clear public demand. This would include delivery of the huge backlog of publicly supported projects that have been delayed by Spaces for People. They pledged that any new projects take more account of pedestrian needs, rather than being just for cyclists, and we will avoid pedestrian/cycling conflict points like floating bus stops. They would also end the ring-fencing of 10% of the transport budget for active travel which they said is “arbitrary” and used for cycling. Instead they would use all of the budget to benefit all road users.

Edinburgh **Greens** would ensure the sustainable transport hierarchy with pedestrians given the highest priority, is respected throughout all council policies, for example by widening pavements, creating longer pedestrian crossing times and reduced waiting times, creating new raised tables across residential side streets and changing the priority from driver to pedestrian at signalised crossings. The Greens would also create a fully connected 500 km segregated cycle network across the city enabling cyclists to travel on direct routes. They also support children walking, wheeling and cycling to school and would fund more “bike buses” (A bike bus is where adults cycle to school with children in one group to ensure safety once a month).

Edinburgh **Labour** will increase funding for active travel to 15% of the council’s transport budget, increase the pedestrian crossing budget by 20% and review timings to cut waiting time and ensure the less mobile have time to cross. Their manifesto calls for an improved and extended network of safe cycle routes filling significant gaps.

Edinburgh **Liberal Democrats** will commit resources to develop a Safe Routes strategy and incorporate modern streetscape design with separate spaces for cyclists, walkers and motorists to

keep them all safe. They would like to plan for each child to do their cycling proficiency test by the end of primary school and support measures to make travel to school more child-friendly, reduce congestion at school gates and aim to reduce car travel to school by more than 10%.

Edinburgh **SNP** want to get Edinburgh moving in a greener and healthier way with new signalised crossings – adding at least two seconds of green man time to every pedestrian crossing in the city. They propose a new Accessibility Commission to examine the whole transport system including all active travel options, and see how it can better serve older and disabled residents. Some areas such as the city centre will become car free with priority for walking and wheeling but with access for those with restricted mobility and access for hopper buses and taxis. The group will invest £118 million in active travel projects in the next five years creating a network of cycle routes, particularly on arterial routes with physical segregation from other traffic. The network of off-road paths will no longer have gaps in it – these will be closed by permanent high quality separated infrastructure. And they will support opening up railway lines such as that from Piershill to Powderhall as a new cycle path. They would review all Covid-related infrastructure and remove temporary schemes after review.

## **Bins and recycling – ensuring that household waste is collected and the city is clean**

The Edinburgh **Conservatives** said they would Spring Clean the city saying the streets are dirtier than they are in Glasgow according to Keep Scotland Beautiful. They also want to cut through complex layers of management and redirect resources to basic frontline cleansing and maintenance with an enforcement team to deal with fly-tipping, dumping round bins and litter

and dog fouling. They want to introduce a graffiti taskforce to clean up public spaces and end the £35 per year brown bin charge for garden waste. They claim the charge increases fly tipping. They will scrap the special uplift charge to reduce fly-tipping and will review the need for the “costly and ineffective” bin hubs which are proposed for communal bin areas. They propose putting communal bins underground and will keep Gull Proof bags in the New Town. They will also pull up the weeds on streets with a clear timetable of action and will improve the schedule to maintain litter bins – enhancing the reporting system with QR codes on bins. They will clean the gullies regularly and also scrap the booking system at Recycling centres.

The **Greens** pledged to take robust action against fly tipping with extra environmental wardens and robust action to tackle litter, graffiti, dog fouling and will support community clean ups – pressing the Scottish Government for further powers if needed. They will improve bin collections and recycling with a programme and increased street cleaning carts in each neighbourhood.

The **Independent** candidate Kevin Illingworth, who stood in the City Centre, called for the council to rethink their proposals to put bin hubs in the New Town saying there is “no chance they will be emptied on time”. He said that recycling rates are low because there is no information on how to recycle what and when. He said there should be a free next day pick up for bulky items pointing out that around 70% of a mattress is recyclable material.

**Edinburgh Labour** would take steps to extend food waste collections to all homes, reduce plastic waste going to landfill by encouraging schemes such as reusable nappies and period products. They will also investigate ways of recycling plastic film. They will put extra resources into waste collection to increase the frequency of emptying street bins and undertaking street cleaning. They will stop charging for

bulky item uplifts and will enforce the toughest penalties for fly tipping and dog fouling.

**Liberal Democrats** will “deliver clean local environments and support the Scottish LibDems campaign for the introduction of a new restitution order. The proceeds of that will help victims with the cost of cleaning up fly-tipping and increase efforts to catch perpetrators. They will support measures to reduce waste and embrace the development of a circular economy.

The **SNP** promise to spend an extra £10 million on street cleaning and waste collections over the next five years, improving action on graffiti partly by creating more spaces for street art and murals. They will increase recycling leaves through education campaigns improve the recycling service provision and enforcement for businesses which dump waste illegally in domestic bins. They will also address litter and fly-tipping and support locals who wish to clear weeds without using pesticides. They will investigate a local levy on wasteful packaging for home delivered items.

**Transport – the buzzwords are 20 minute neighbourhoods, electric vehicle charging, workplace parking levy and a congestion charge**

**Talks continue among the parties with elected councillors to find common ground and a way of forming a workable administration for the**

**next five years.**