

Council elections 2022 – SNP say the door is still open to Labour

An SNP/Green deal looks as though it would be the simplest arrangement in forming a new administration at the City Chambers, but the draft deal which was signed off by group leaders over the weekend must first be ratified by the Green membership on Tuesday night.

If the deal is endorsed then it would allow the two parties to lodge a motion setting out terms of their minority administration of 29 councillors out of 63 which would be voted upon at the full council meeting this Thursday.

The SNP already announced on Monday morning that their choice for Lord Provost is Cllr Robert Aldridge who leads the Liberal Democrat Group – and Cllr McVey said there are some points where those two parties also have common ground.



Adam McVey seeking to do a deal with the Greens
Cllr Adam McVey, leader of the SNP Group which is the largest with 19 councillors, said it was however not too late for Edinburgh Labour to get on board what he regards as a progressive council administration.

For the last ten years the city council has been run by SNP and Labour but the Scottish Labour leader, Anas Sarwar has outlawed formal coalitions in town halls, making it difficult for these two parties to work together. If they did they would have a single councillor majority in Edinburgh.

Cllr McVey said: "We've got a deal that we've agreed with the Green group that will go to their city branch on Tuesday. Hopefully, that is approved by members of the Greens and would form the coalition. We would go into the meeting on Thursday and vote along those lines.

"We would very much say – even now at this point – to Labour that the door is open for progressive parties to work together, and room for further discussions. They don't have to go cap in hand to the right. They can work with progressive parties that can deliver real change for the city.

"There is a lot of commonality in policies between ourselves. We think that there is further discussion that can get to a really solid base. The city deserves better than a hodgepodge of something pulled together that's not giving clear governance and clear decision making. We have a cost of living crisis and a climate catastrophe staring down at us. We need to deal with the systemic problems causing poverty within our communities. None of these will be helped by a precarious administration teetering on the edge of collapse, which it sounds like Labour is potentially trying to push through with."

The obvious answer to that of course is that Edinburgh Labour have said that they cannot support an SNP administration since it is the SNP Scottish Government which is underfunding Edinburgh.

But the former council leader argued that he had been a strong voice calling for fairer funding from the government. He said: "I've campaigned very strongly not just for fairer funding

particularly in areas like housing grants and things like that, that would make a real difference to Edinburgh. and I will continue to do so.

“I’ve also led significant change from the government. I am one of the few council leaders that has an array of national policies and changes to legislation that I can point to as having forced the government to deliver. I would point to short term lets, which was driven by Edinburgh under my leadership, I point to the tourist tax which was driven by Edinburgh under my leadership. There’s workplace parking levy and a whole host of other policies. Edinburgh has led the way in pushing the government because we’ve had a strong SNP voice for this city.”

McVey also confirmed that there are ongoing discussions with the Liberal Democrats where he claims there are a number of similar policy areas – such as the workplace parking levy. And the two groups can work together to ensure that they have the revenue to invest in solutions to climate change.

As for who gets the top jobs McVey is clear that the relationship with the Greens would not be embodied as a senior and junior partnership, but rather a relationship of two parties coming together in the best interests of the city. He said: “That requires joint leadership genuinely coming together in the city’s interest and putting party interests to one side.”

Whereas there is already an SNP Green relationship at Holyrood McVey did not necessarily agree that had made any discussions easier as these are two different organisations.

But even with the go-ahead on Tuesday evening, nobody knows what will emerge on Thursday as other parties are continuing to discuss other possible arrangements. If Edinburgh Labour combine in any form with the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives they could have a commanding majority of 34

councillors but there is no definitive answer at this point.

What is sure however is that this will be a full blown council meeting with all 63 councillors in one room – which has not happened for about two years now.