

SNP councillors want communities to control tourist tax allocation

SNP councillors are to call for a percentage of the funds raised through a visitor levy to be given directly to communities to decide how it should be spent.

The council is currently working up its plans for how it might distribute up to £26 million per year that could be raised from the tax once Council's start collecting revenues following The Scottish Government delivering the new tax-raising powers.

The SNP plans include handing out millions each year to expand the Community Grant Fund, which could resource hundreds more local projects across the entire city. Another key ask is to distribute money to Parent Councils to allow them to take action to support young people in all Council schools and invest in young people's local facilities in school and within the community. In the proposals, money would be distributed to every neighbourhood area and every school, with Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) areas 1-4 receiving a higher proportion of funding.

Cllr Adam Nols-McVey, who along with their coalition partners in the council's Labour Group spearheaded the delivery of Visitor Levy powers to Edinburgh during the last administration, said: "There are many things in the city that need to be funded but a central purpose of this tax has always

been making sure that everyone sees benefit from Edinburgh as a global destination.

“For many areas, the school is the heart of the community and by proposing to give millions of pounds to Parent Councils to allow them to invest, we’re not only getting more parents involved, we’re delivering real benefits for our young people inside and outside the classroom. In our proposal, every community in the city would receive extra money, with neighbourhoods with the highest needs receiving even more cash. This would strengthen our communities and make Edinburgh an even better place to grow up.”

Cllr Finlay McFarlane, SNP spokesperson for Culture and Communities said: “We believe residents know best. Allocating a portion of the funds raised each year to empower and resource communities to make their own choices would have a radical impact. By delivering a massive expansion in available funding for Community Grants, we can ensure everyone benefits from the additional funds the tourist tax brings and ensures investments are responsive to needs and community objectives.”