

Edinburgh council culture director retires

The council officer who has led the Culture and Wellbeing department at The City of Edinburgh Council for four years has intimated that she will retire in January 2025.

The Edinburgh Reporter understands that Joan Parr advised the council Chief Executive, Paul Lawrence and the Convener of Culture and Communities, Cllr Val Walker of her decision about a week before the last Culture committee meeting at the beginning of the month. She will stay on until after Hogmanay but will retire at 65 in the first quarter of 2025.

Council leader Cammy Day said: "Joan has been invaluable as director of culture and wellbeing, demonstrating exceptional leadership throughout her tenure. Joan brought a wealth of experience from various sectors with her, and played a crucial role in revitalising our cultural venues and communities in the wake of the pandemic, as well as leading on our year round festivals."

Ms Parr was previously Head of Education at Creative Scotland and also worked at the Scottish Arts Council. When she joined the council in 2021 as the first Service Director for Culture and Wellbeing, she said: "I am delighted to be joining the City of Edinburgh Council and I really look forward to working with colleagues to develop and strengthen the world class cultural assets of the city, particularly for the benefit and wellbeing of Edinburgh's citizens and communities."

The council have not confirmed they will recruit anyone to replace Ms Parr, but have said they will now consider their next steps.