

SNP and Greens to vie for joint leadership of the council in new coalition

Edinburgh's SNP and Green council groups are combining forces in a bid to take over the leadership of Edinburgh's council administration.

They are making a move on Thursday to take control of the council which they say will bring "ambition, vision and stability" to the capital.

They say that Edinburgh's current ruling Labour group has been rocked by sexual harassment and fraud allegations against its outgoing leader, Cammy Day, following two and a half years of "weak, rudderless and incompetent" administration. [Cllr Day resigned on 9 December.](#)

The two parties have made an agreement which would enable the SNP's Simita Kumar become Council Leader, with the Greens' Susan Rae and Chas Booth becoming joint Depute leaders.

The various committee convenorships would be divided between the two groups and the papers will be published around 5pm today to explain who would fill those posts..

A spokesperson for the SNP and Greens said that they are "acknowledging the fractured nature of Edinburgh's council representation and seek cross-party agreement on key issues affecting the city by means of a beefed-up leadership forum involving the other groups.

“For the past two and a half years, the council has been led by a Labour group which has shrunk to only 10 members out of 63, propped up by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. They have left the door open to working in administration with “progressive” councillors from other groups, should they come on board later.”

The coalition agreement promises “innovative” action to tackle Edinburgh’s housing emergency, which the two parties say has worsened during Labour’s tenure, with council housing allocations and repairs being suspended until at least January.

The Greens and SNP are also seeking to prioritise action on the climate crisis. They are proposing to help residents insulate their homes and bring down energy bills. They have also promised to invest in ‘transformative’ public transport and active travel projects, such as pursuing tram network expansion.



Cllr Simita Kumar. © 2024 Martin McAdam

SNP group leader Cllr Simita Kumar said: "I am proud to put forward this progressive and bold programme for administration, which will restore ambition, vision and stability to our city. I look forward to turning our shared values with the Greens into actions that will improve the lives of Edinburgh's residents.

"The positive agreement we are putting forward with the Greens stands in stark contrast to Labour who have been rocked by serious allegations of misconduct and fraud in recent weeks. This follows on from their two and a half years of weak, rudderless and incompetent tenure, where they have been dancing to the tune of the Tories and Lib Dems.

"We will protect our workforce and the vital services they deliver, and we will stand up for all of our communities and residents. We will take the bold and decisive action needed to solve Edinburgh's housing emergency. And we will use the new Visitor Levy to benefit our city's communities.

"Public trust in the council is at an all-time low. We will work tirelessly to repair that damage.

"Business as usual simply won't cut it – the people of this city will not accept that. We know that the SNP and Greens together don't have a majority in the chamber, so we're keen to work openly and constructively with all progressive councillors for the good of Edinburgh and its residents."



Green councillors Susan Rae and Chas Booth will become joint Depute Council Leaders under the plans PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

Green co-leader Susan Rae said: “Over the past weeks it has become increasingly clear that Labour have lost the democratic and moral mandate to lead Scotland’s capital city. Not only have the shocking allegations against the former council leader raised significant questions about who knew what, but Labour’s new leader has been facing unprecedented criticism from a leading housing charity due to her support for the rolling back of homelessness rights. Despite this, they continue to deny any responsibility and seem to believe their blighted administration has the moral authority to carry the responsibility of running the City they have let down so badly.

“Edinburgh deserves a fresh start to take us in to 2025.

“This means an administration that has the vision and capacity to steer the city through the challenges facing us, from tackling the social care crisis to preparing for future

extreme weather events caused by climate change, and nobody else is in a position to step up and offer that leadership.

“No political party relishes the opportunity to take over from a failing administration in the middle of a Council term, but we are pleased to have continued our constructive working relationship with the SNP and last night received overwhelming endorsement from Edinburgh Green branch members to pursue this course of action. We’re confident that – should other Councillors support our proposal at Full Council – we can provide the stability and vision that the Council is crying out for.”

The council meeting on Thursday is the final meeting of the year. [It will begin at 10am and details of all papers and the webcast are here.](#)