

Edinburgh Council explores £320k tourism spend

Edinburgh Council has been accused of “raiding the pockets of residents” after putting out a £320,000 contract for “glitzy” graphic design services to work with its tourism marketing services.

A council tender for suppliers said it was looking for graphic design firms to “create promotional assets and aid with campaign and brand roll-out and delivery” for Forever Edinburgh, which markets the city to potential visitors and residents.

The cost is an estimate, and the final sum could be lower or higher than £320,000 if the council goes ahead with the project.

Councillors and campaigners have criticised the amount being spent on branding at a time when the city is raising council tax and looking at cuts to essential services.

Green councillor Ben Parker said: “Greens have consistently argued for the need to shift the tourist offer in the city towards a more sustainable model.

“It’s hard to reconcile this idea with hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money being spent on further marketing the city as a tourist destination.

“During discussions about spending from the forthcoming Tourist Tax, we were a sole voice in advocating to not spend funds on advertising, instead suggesting that money raised should be spent on local infrastructure and services, including much needed social housing.

“Rest assured that Green councillors will continue to scrutinise all spending within the Council and ensuring it represents good value for money for residents across the city.”

And Benjamin Elks, grassroots development manager at the TaxPayers’ Alliance, said: “Taxpayers in Edinburgh will be outraged to see the council splurging cash on glitzy marketing campaigns.

“With household budgets already squeezed, local representatives are raiding the pockets of residents while cutting back core services.

“Edinburgh city councillors need to get their priorities straight and ensure they deliver value for money for taxpayers.”

The cost would be spread over four years, with the winning graphic design firm or firms being placed on a two year contract with the possibility of two one year extensions after that.

Applications are limited to firms bringing in or committed to bringing in over £53,000 per year.

Firms applying will also provide examples of prior work, with the tender asking that it should be previous tourism or destination marketing work if possible.

Submissions will close on 8 April, after which the council will consider the applications submitted.

More information on the tender can be found on the Public

Contracts Scotland website [here](#).

Edinburgh Council has been approached for comment.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter