

# Edinburgh Councillor granted leave of absence

**A leave of absence has been granted for an Edinburgh councillor facing a long stretch of ill health.**

Green councillor Jule Bandel, representing Inverleith, has been unable to engage in council business since 24 January 2025.

The Local Government (Scotland) Act says that if a councillor does not attend a meeting for six months, they lose their role, unless the council agrees there is a reason for the absence.

A report seen by the full council on Thursday said that officers had seen a letter written by Cllr Bandel's doctors which said she was unable to work or attend meetings.

As such, officers recommended that councillors approve a leave of absence for her.

Greens co-convener, councillor Chas Booth, said: "Unfortunately Jule is still extremely unwell. She has been effectively bedridden since mid-February and is unable to even join a Teams call.

"We all miss her greatly and wish her a speedy recovery and we hope that this report, together with the Green addendum, will allow some time for that recovery.

"In many ways the requirement to go through this process has highlighted some of the inherent ableism in the way in which holding elected office does not offer the same workplace

protections as other forms of employment.

“As the council continues to work on tackling barriers to elected office, I hope that this is something we will be addressing.”

Lord Provost Robert Aldridge replied, saying: “I don’t think there is any disagreement, so if we could just agree the report?”

Councillors proceeded to verbally agree to the report. If the report had not been agreed to, Cllr Bandel would have ceased to be a councillor on 25 July.

A Green group addendum to the report added the requirement that the October full council meeting will contain an updated report on Cllr Bandel’s condition.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter