

Standing up for Edinburgh

2022 Edinburgh Council
Election Manifesto

Scottish 
Liberal Democrats

- » A council that **listens** and gives power to the people.
- » A council that **gets the basics right.**
- » A council that gives children a world class **education.**
- » A council with the **environment** at its heart.
- » A council that delivers a **fairer** and **more equal** city.

#demandbetter



Foreword



Edinburgh is one of the world's greatest cities. Its people are diverse, generous, and passionate about the place they call home. There is a huge community spirit across the city, shown by how people have come together during the COVID pandemic.

Yet in too many areas, **Edinburgh is not working as it should**. Too many people don't have a safe place to call home. Getting around the city is not as easy as it should be. The quality of your child's education too often depends on where you live.

Recycling rates are falling, our roads and pavements are crumbling, and our streets are dirtier and more littered than before.

A decade of SNP and Labour control of Edinburgh Council has failed our city. Under the arrogant 'we know best' attitude of SNP and Labour councillors, too many people feel the Council doesn't listen or, worse still, doesn't care.

Council taxpayers have seen their bills go up along with new unpopular charges like the 'garden tax'. Meanwhile, the SNP and Labour coalition has cut local services and allowed the Scottish Government to slash local funding, year after year after year.

Liberal Democrats will always stand up for Edinburgh. We believe the people of this city deserve better - much better, and with the Liberal Democrats, people can vote for it. With more Liberal Democrats on Edinburgh Council, we can get the new approach and the fresh start our city desperately needs.

Every Liberal Democrat councillor will be a local champion for the communities they represent and be a powerful voice for action. We will always work with local communities and empower local people to take decisions that affect their daily lives.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Aldridge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cllr. Robert Aldridge

Leader of the Edinburgh Liberal Democrat Council Group

Liberal Democrats - Standing up for Edinburgh

Our key priorities for Edinburgh



A council that listens and gives power to the people

From day one, we will seek to reconnect the Council with the people it serves; a renewed sense of openness and transparency and ensuring genuine public consultation before key decisions are taken. We will devolve decision making back down to local communities, returning to neighbourhood partnerships and locally accountable locality committees.



A council that gets the basics right

Whether it's fixing our roads and pavements; waste and recycling collections you can depend on; reliable and clean public transport; or litter free streets and parks, we will have a laser sharp focus on improving the basic council services people depend on and provide real value for money to residents each year.



A council that gives children a world class education

We want Edinburgh's youngest citizens to get the best possible start in life. We will prioritise the roll-out of expanded nursery and high-quality early years education. We will protect and grow school budgets so teachers have the books and equipment they need. We will bring focus back to the 'safer routes to schools' programme so pupils and parents can travel to their local schools in safe and sustainable ways.



A council with the environment at its heart

Tackling the climate emergency must be the green thread that runs through the Council. We will create a reliable and affordable public transport network, expand park-and-ride sites and EV charging, whilst protecting funding for walking and cycling to provide real alternatives to car use. We will deliver thousands of new green homes without concreting over thousands of acres of our precious greenbelt and invest more in flood prevention. We will make recycling easier and be more ambitious about improving local air quality.



A council that delivers a fairer and more equal city

Our mission is to eradicate poverty in the city. We want each and every one of our citizens to have access to safe and secure housing. We will work to bring new jobs to Edinburgh and ensure people have the skills needed to access those jobs. To do all this, we will fight every day for the additional government funding which Scotland's capital city needs and deserves.

Our Lib Dem team



- » **Cllr. Robert Aldridge**
Drum Brae / Gyle
- » **Jack Caldwell**
Leith Walk
- » **Sanne Dijkstra-Downie**
Forth
- » **Pauline Flannery**
Southside / Newington
- » **Andy Foxhall**
City Centre
- » **Cllr Kevin Lang**
Almond
- » **Maddie Planche**
Liberton / Gilmerton
- » **Jill Reilly**
Portobello / Craigmillar
- » **Devin Scobie**
Sighthill / Gorgie
- » **Ed Thornley**
Drum Brae / Gyle
- » **Cllr. Louise Young**
Almond
- » **Alan Beal**
Corstorphine / Murrayfield
- » **Michael Chappell**
Pentland Hills
- » **Euan Davidson**
Corstorphine / Murrayfield
- » **Elaine Ford**
Craigentinny / Duddingston
- » **Fraser Graham**
Fountainbridge/ Craiglockhart
- » **Cllr. Hal Osler**
Inverleith
- » **Robin Rea**
Leith
- » **Cllr. Neil Ross**
Morningside
- » **Louise Spence**
Colinton / Fairmilehead
- » **Malcolm Wood**
Inverleith
- » **Lewis Younie**
Almond

A Council that listens

- » **An end to the SNP / Labour 'we know best' attitude**
- » **Working and keeping in touch all year round**
- » **Giving power back to communities**

A decade of SNP and Labour rule at Edinburgh City Chambers has caused immeasurable damage to the relationship between the Council and the people it serves.

An arrogant "we know best" attitude has plagued the ruling SNP / Labour coalition administration, alienating residents and local community groups, and damaged the reputation of the Council. Official consultations have degraded to 'box-ticking exercises', with results ignored and issues dismissed. This election offers a chance for a different approach.

Liberal Democrats reject the view that local democracy only involves citizens casting a vote once every five years. We believe councillors must actively engage and listen to the people of Edinburgh throughout the term of the Council. People must feel they have a voice and that voice will be listened to when decisions affecting their everyday lives are being taken.

At a local ward level, Liberal Democrat councillors have well-earned reputations for **working and keeping in touch all year round**. We issue regular newsletters and email bulletins, and run local resident surveys both online and door to door. We understand the importance and indeed the value of understanding the communities we serve and listening to residents' concerns. Every Liberal Democrat councillor elected this year will continue this proud track record of local service.

City-wide, Liberal Democrats will ensure Council **consultations become meaningful again**. We will always ask residents what they think on the big issues and allow people to have a voice on major changes to their local services.

We will work to strengthen the role of community councils and, in doing so, seek to make them even more attractive for more local people to get involved

in and contribute to. We will ensure other key organisations such as tenants' groups, trade unions, heritage bodies and friends of parks, are respected in decision-making processes relating to their areas.

To put **more power into the hands of local communities**, we will seek to return to locality committees covering different parts of the city - a system scrapped by the SNP and Labour coalition administration without consultation. We will involve community groups in discussions around how these locality committees should be structured and involve them further through enhanced neighbourhood partnerships.

To ensure an **open and inclusive style of decision making** within the Council, we will oppose any move towards a centralised cabinet system of government. We will retain the current system of executive committees which involves all councillors and ensures all the experience, abilities and knowledge of elected councillors are used effectively. In doing so, we will review the remit and responsibilities of committees to ensure each is taking effective decisions.

We will review the process for formal petitions so our residents have a clear and simple route to having their concerns heard at committee, as well as retaining an open system of deputations for organisations to appear, either in-person or virtually. We will also look to **introduce a new 'question-time' element at committees** where members of the public can ask questions of those in key leadership positions.

A city built on sustainable finances

- » **Fighting for improved government funding**
- » **Providing taxpayers with value for money**
- » **Spending every penny wisely**

Under the SNP Scottish Government, and thanks to the votes of Green MSPs, local councils like Edinburgh have faced devastating cuts to their core funding. Increases in council tax have been needed, not to improve local services but simply to mitigate year-on-year reductions in council grant funding.

At a time when our city has needed champions for fair funding of local services, SNP and Labour councillors running Edinburgh Council have failed miserably to make the case for proper investment, putting their party before the needs of the city and its residents.

Liberal Democrats believe passionately in the importance of **quality services delivered locally**. We also recognise the particular and unique challenges facing Edinburgh as Scotland's capital city which do bring added pressures and demands. However, you can't get something for nothing. Costs are rising and we need a solid financial footing for Edinburgh Council to deliver what residents want and expect in the years ahead.

Every Liberal Democrat councillor in Edinburgh will be a **strong and powerful advocate for improved funding** from the SNP/Green Scottish Government, to reverse recent cuts and restore the Council's core grant. We will go further, by campaigning for a **special payment for Edinburgh** to recognise its status as a capital city and ensure our city gets the money it needs and deserves.

Nationally and locally, Liberal Democrats believe local government financing desperately needs reform. Repeated SNP failures to find a replacement for council tax have seriously damaged local government and local communities. Liberal Democrats will campaign for a fair and just solution that promotes local democracy and accountability.

Liberal Democrats will look carefully at the range of financial powers being given to Edinburgh Council. We will take a productive and pragmatic look at where these powers can be used fairly to increase the money available to spend on key services.

As part of this, Liberal Democrats believe in the principle that Edinburgh should have the power to **levy a modest tourist tax**. This would help meet the costs of managing tourism, and contribute to the core maintenance of the city, such as litter collection and improved parks. We recognise the pandemic and still fragile economic recovery means careful consideration is needed around the timing of any new charge. However, when we are asking our residents to contribute more for the city they live in, it is only right that tourists also make a proper contribution to the city they visit – a principle well established in many other city destinations.

In any decision to raise or lower local taxation, such as the council tax, Liberal Democrats will examine what is required to maintain good-quality services through ambitious but realistic budgets. Our decisions will be practical, will deliver **value for money**, and will **ensure every penny is spent wisely**. Importantly, we will focus the Council's resources on what matters most and the services residents want and expect in return for the taxes they pay.

In doing so, Liberal Democrats believe that not every service has to be delivered by the council itself. Where appropriate, we will explore further options for service delivery with the voluntary, social enterprise and private sectors. Our view is that **Edinburgh citizens deserve the highest-quality services on a 'best value' basis**.

A city that puts our young people first

- » **A world class education for children**
- » **Reversing the SNP and Labour schools cuts**
- » **Expanding nursery education across the city**

Liberal Democrats want every young person in every part of Edinburgh to have the best possible start in life. Essential to this is not just having an excellent standard of education, but the right support services, at the right time, delivered in the right way.

Liberal Democrats believe one of our greatest obligations is to ensure we deliver a **world class education for our children**. We are committed to keeping the next generation at the heart of what we do and ensure those who educate our children, or support them on their journey, are given the funding they need, the trust to make changes when required, and the ability to invest in what they depend upon to make this happen.

Year on year cuts to devolved school budgets by the SNP and Labour coalition administration have resulted in teachers buying supplies for their classes from their own salary. Headteachers, who know what is needed most in their school, must be trusted to manage their budgets. Liberal Democrats will **reverse the SNP and Labour cuts** which stop our schools deciding at a local level what their schools and their young people need.

Liberal Democrats know **our school estate needs meaningful and sustainable investment** to bring facilities up to the standard we all expect – improving toilets, playgrounds, gym halls, and communal spaces, and ensuring reliable and effective digital infrastructure. We are committed to providing every child with the same experience, to the same standard. Equally, with an expanding city, we will fight for the much needed new and expanded school estates to address rising pupil rolls through permanent, connected, warm, energy efficient buildings rather than through temporary units.

Liberal Democrats will also work with charity partners, specialists and the independent schools' sector to maximise opportunities for learning, music,

and sport, much of which has been severely restricted during the pandemic, and **supporting the increased demand for Gaelic-medium education.**

Liberal Democrats are committed to ensuring a rich and varied education for our young people, not just in core subjects but also in lifestyle and the arts. Key to this is the continuation of **free instrumental and vocal lessons for primary and secondary children** which cherishes talent and build confidence in young people.

Following the removal of nursery teachers by the SNP and Labour coalition administration, we will **expand and enhance nursery provision** across the city and in particular work to address the lack of local availability in our rural and suburban communities.

To tackle the issues around digital inclusion, we will **place our schools back as the heart of the community** and a source of learning for everyone with a focus on adult education and lifelong learning, and enhancing provision of community sports and library services, as well as vocational skills and training.

We will work with families and teachers in our special schools to tackle the challenges faced in providing great experiences, both during term time and through the Playscheme holiday provision. We will support the integration of pupils into mainstream schools only where it is in the interest of the young person and the aspiration of the family, supported by the school, and not influenced by financial pressures to reduce services or close special schools.

Looking beyond schooling, we are proud that Liberal Democrats introduced the **Edinburgh Guarantee** in 2011 to address the needs of school leavers who were unable to move into a positive destination such as employment, education or training. We are committed to continuing this important initiative, collaborating with others to help young people and support them into employment, training or further education.

As a council we will also recognise our **special responsibility to those children who are in our care.** We will work with experts within and outwith the Council to ensure they all have an equal opportunity to thrive and that nobody feels lost or forgotten. We will work to deliver the highest standards of through-care and aftercare for our young people.

A healthy city that protects our most vulnerable

- » **Moving the balance towards care at home**
- » **Championing mental health treatment**
- » **Protecting Edinburgh Leisure and sports funding**

COVID-19 brought into sharp focus the problems in health and social care services in Edinburgh. Liberal Democrats want lessons to be learnt from the pandemic to ensure the dignity, well-being and happiness of those who depend on our health services.

Liberal Democrats believe there are great opportunities arising from the integration of health and social care in the city. But there are also considerable challenges as our population ages and **more residents need care and support**. Liberal Democrats support the “3 conversations strategy” adopted by the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board, which we believe will lead to a **positive change in the way services are delivered**.

Liberal Democrats fully back the further development of Self-Directed Support where those who need the service can choose the supplier of that service. We also believe in **moving the balance of care towards care-at-home** where that is possible and appropriate. We recognise this needs a joint approach between the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. It also needs continuing full involvement of a range of partners including pharmacists and community support networks.

As more people with greater needs of all ages are enabled to live, and indeed thrive at home, it is important that **carers' needs are recognised and respected** and that the important role of respite is enhanced. We are particularly concerned to ensure that the well-being of young carers is a high priority.

Residential care will continue to play a crucial part in the wider network of care. Liberal Democrats believe that there should be a **diverse range of providers in the public, private and not for profit sectors**, with the focus instead, being on the quality of that care.

Liberal Democrats recognise that new technology offers opportunities to develop new and improved types of service which suit everyone's diverse lifestyles. It also risks leading to the exclusion of those who are not comfortable with such technology. Liberal Democrats will seek to ensure that people are offered the service in a way that best suits their needs, and that there is **always a choice of face-to-face appointments where people prefer it.**

Liberal Democrats believe in locally determined and locally appropriate services (rather than the one size fits all approach) and believe that we must invest in community-based services to meet local needs.

Liberal Democrats nationally and locally believe there should be **parity between mental health and physical health services**, including services based in the community. Liberal Democrats are ambitious for mental health services in Edinburgh and aim to make them the best in Scotland.

Liberal Democrats are aware of a growing number of people who are isolated and lonely in their homes, and will work with statutory and voluntary groups to develop a specific action plan to **combat loneliness and isolation.**

Liberal Democrats will seek to ensure that all staff in the health and social care services are fairly paid and their work fully appreciated.

The last two years have been particularly turbulent and disruptive for our young people. This is why Liberal Democrats will invest in the mental health and well-being – essential to supporting them not only in their academic studies but also in the general health and happiness of their everyday lives. To do this, we will **train mental health advocates in every single school** in the City of Edinburgh area.

Liberal Democrats also recognise the importance of sport towards good physical and mental health. Team sport can also build social networks and grow confidence. This is why Liberal Democrats have repeatedly worked to try and **protect Edinburgh Leisure and its funding**, and recognise the risks of cuts on its underlying ability to deliver sport and leisure facilities throughout the city. We will continue to champion Edinburgh Leisure and push to make sure its services are available for all our local communities to use.

A city moving forward

- » **Millions more to tackle potholes and broken pavements**
- » **Improve public transport across the city**
- » **Real action to support safer walking and cycling**

Liberal Democrats want to make it easier to travel to, from, and within Edinburgh. Improving transport is critical to our economic recovery, to our quality of life and in tackling the climate emergency.

Under the SNP and Labour coalition administration, the debate around transport has become polarised and divisive. Its 'we know best attitude' has left too many people feeling ignored, frustrated and has fuelled a damaging distrust of the Council.

Liberal Democrats want each and every resident to see improvements to transport in their community by the end of the next Council term. A key priority must be to help those living with disabilities to get around their city and ensure they can easily access local services.

To achieve this, we will be **champions for improved public transport across the city**. We will fight for a bigger and better bus network that provides more effective alternatives to private car use and involves more electric and hydrogen fuelled vehicles. We will support more orbital routes, easy local bus access for passengers, and changes which make our bus services quicker and more attractive. In doing so, we will keep Lothian Buses in public ownership but seek to improve the democratic oversight of the company, and ensure senior managers are better held accountable for decisions taken.

We will also ensure bus services are better integrated with other transport modes; including **new and expanded park and ride sites**, and improved combined ticketing with Edinburgh's existing trams.

Liberal Democrats will consider carefully the detail of the new powers given to the Council to introduce a workplace parking levy and recognise the strong and differing arguments around the use of such a levy. Equally, we understand how a balance needs to be struck between reducing the

congestion and emissions from private car use, and controlling the cost of living for those who often have little or no choice but to use their car for getting to and from work. This is why we would consult widely on the principle of any new levy as well as the scope, geographical extent and financial level of any new charge.

We will **drive forward a revolution when it comes to walking in the city** and work with partners like Living Streets to ensure the interests of pedestrians sit at the very heart of the Council's transport choices. A key part of this will be the effective delivery of the '20-minute neighbourhood model' which seeks to provide more services which people can easily walk to.

We will **implement initiatives that make it more attractive to cycle**, and will work to bring back a city-wide and financially sustainable cycle hire scheme. We will learn from the contentious and divisive 'spaces for people' programme pursued by the SNP and Labour coalition administration, by working with communities and active travel groups to deliver higher quality projects that make a meaningful difference and are more sensitive to local community concerns. In doing so, we will also initiate a **review and full consultation on those existing Spaces for People schemes** which have proven most controversial and did not command local public support.

Liberal Democrats recognise the substantial financial exposure which remains around the delivery of the tram extension to Leith and Newhaven. Our councillors took a cautious approach when the new tram line was considered in 2019. Events have shown how we were right to raise serious concerns about the weaknesses in the financial case which underpinned the extension and the over-reliance on funding from Lothian Buses. We will continue to be vigilant in protecting taxpayers' interests from this ongoing and still unresolved financial uncertainty.

More widely, we want people to get around the city safely. At the heart of this is our commitment to **invest millions of pounds extra to tackle the unacceptable backlog of broken footways, paths and roads** which blight our city and cost the Council dearly in compensation claims. We will ensure those repairs are of a higher standard with a 'fixed first time' approach.

We will seek to **address the build-up of critical road safety projects** which have been so neglected by Labour and the SNP, with more safe pedestrian crossings and localised traffic calming measures to address excessive speeding. We will **inject new energy into the 'safer routes to schools'** programme so walking, cycling and wheeling becomes the obvious option for pupils and parents each school day. We will also press the Scottish Government to **implement the ban on pavement parking** as soon as

possible and press for the resources needed for proper enforcement of the new law.

To better tackle the pollution and poor air quality which blights local communities and to address the risk of traffic displacement, we will seek to **expand the planned low emission zone** so it covers buses, coaches and goods vehicles across the whole city, not just within the core city centre.

We will also deliver changes to parking where there is clear community demand and local support. This includes proper resourcing to deal with creating and approving localised traffic orders – which is so often the bottleneck for getting quick wins in response to community parking pressures. We will only pursue new controlled parking zones where there is clear evidence of parking issues and where consultations show clear local support among affected residents.

Liberal Democrats will also use the next five years to deliver a **city-wide revolution in electric vehicle charging** to ensure more sites are available in local communities and at key visitor locations.

A greener and cleaner city

- » **Implement the 2030 Edinburgh Climate Strategy**
- » **Cleaner streets and better recycling**
- » **Protecting our greenbelt from development**

The climate crisis represents the single most pressing and important issue facing humankind. Decisions taken by Edinburgh Council will have a major impact on how our city and its people can contribute towards achieving net-zero.

Liberal Democrats will work to **implement the 2030 Edinburgh Climate Strategy** to deliver a net-zero city and ensure there is a city-wide approach to reducing greenhouse gases in Edinburgh. This includes accelerating energy efficiency in homes and buildings, decarbonising public transport, and supporting businesses transitioning to a truly green economy.

Thanks to SNP and Labour mismanagement, many parts of our city in an embarrassing and dirty mess. Independent surveys show that citywide street cleanliness has declined sharply. Many streets are blighted by weeds and overgrown vegetation. Recycling has fallen despite increased environmental concern.

Liberal Democrats want Edinburgh to look and feel like the fantastic global city it is. We will invest extra in the Council staffing needed to **tackle littering and dog fouling**, and will argue for increased fining powers so we can take more effective action against those who act irresponsibly. We will also **review the quality of street, footway, and cycleway cleaning** so residents see and feel a difference in their community.

Liberal Democrats also want clean air for our city. We were proud to support an ambitious low emission zone to clean up the air we all breath. We rejected the weak scheme agreed by the SNP and Labour coalition administration which failed to address many of the most polluted parts of the city and is even set to worsen air quality in some streets surrounding the planned city-centre boundary. We continue to believe in a **city-wide low emission zone** that

covers heavy goods vehicles, buses and coaches, and a more effective scheme that drives forward improvements in air quality right across Edinburgh.

We will make **reliable, efficient and effective waste collection** a priority again. We will recognise the differing requirements in different parts of the city by immediately **halting and reviewing the decision to remove 'gull-proof bags'** in the historic parts of Edinburgh. We will also review the outdated 'bin siting policy' to ensure there are **more public bins** in key locations for people to dispose of their litter.

We will drive forward a new and **fresh approach to recycling across Edinburgh**, with initiatives that make it easy for residents and visitors to recycle their waste. We will look to deliver new and expanded Council run recycling centres and seek to protect and enhance local recycling sites.

We will **scrap the charges for bulky uplifts** that lead to the fly tipping that stains communities and costs the Council so much to clear. We will also undertake a **full review of the SNP and Labour's unpopular and damaging garden tax**, with options presented for the reduction or removal of the annual charge.

We want our parks and greenspaces to be safe and welcoming places for all to visit and enjoy. We will work to increase the number of parks gaining 'green flag' status; drive forward a new **greenspaces improvement plan**; and **increase the number of waste bins** in known litter hot spots. We will review the lighting of our parks to ensure everyone feels safe and secure. We will also fight to ensure Edinburgh gets a full and fair share of the new Scottish Government **funding for play parks**, and guarantee all our communities benefit from upgraded facilities.

As part of our strategy to enhance our public spaces and make sure they are accessible to all, we will prioritise the investment needed to **open new permanent public toilet sites** across Edinburgh and get existing public toilet facilities the improvements needed.

Over recent years, we have seen more and more serious and alarming flooding events. We want Edinburgh Council to play a leading and proactive role in addressing this challenge, with a laser sharp focus on improving the **maintenance of our roads, gullies and drains so they assist in alleviating flood waters**, not adding to the problem. However, to take proper action, we will need substantial additional government funding so we can deliver the infrastructure changes needed to reduce the impact of our changing climate, and the increased rainfall expected in future years.

Liberal Democrats recognise the key role of good planning policy in delivering a truly green city. We will ensure local planning policies and development plans **protect our greenbelt by focusing new developments on brownfield sites**. We will also use planning policy and guidance to ensure developments include new greenspaces and are carbon-neutral wherever possible, and give current homeowners much needed flexibility to make the changes necessary to make their homes greener and more efficient.

A city that is fairer and more equal

- » **10,000 new affordable homes**
- » **Implement the Poverty Commission recommendations**
- » **More police and targeted CCTV**

Edinburgh is one of the world's great cities but one where the gap between rich and poor remains stark. COVID-19 and the current cost-of-living crisis has further exposed unacceptable levels of inequality across our city. We also want Scotland's capital to be a place that is open and welcoming to people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

Liberal Democrats recognise that Edinburgh Council has an important but still limited set of powers to address underlying issues around poverty, deprivation and inequality. However, where we have the power to act, we must do so. We should also have a stronger partnership with national government (Scottish and UK), pressing for the changes we believe are needed to help the most disadvantaged in our communities.

We are proud of the fact that Edinburgh was accredited with Living Wage City status in 2021. Liberal Democrats will work to deliver on the ambition made to **double the number of Living Wage accredited businesses** within the term of the Council and embed fair work across the city.

As a party committed to local communities, Liberal Democrats also want to see **thriving town centres** which offer a healthy mix of retail and services locally, which are pleasant and attractive places to visit, and offer important local employment. We will push for additional town centre funding from the Scottish Government and use this wisely to invest across the city as we build stronger and more resilient communities,

Another key role for the Council also sits in the **delivery of affordable homes, particularly homes for social rent**. Yet the SNP and Labour coalition administration has failed miserably to live up to expectations and its coalition pledge, delivering only half of the affordable homes promised. Worse still, they have overseen a scandalous failure to ensure all council homes are at an

acceptable standard. Too many tenants face cold, damp and mouldy properties and many more facing frustrating delays in getting promised repairs and renovations.

Liberal Democrats support increasing the percentage of affordable homes required in new housing developments as part of **work to deliver 10,000 more affordable homes by 2030**. In doing so, we aim to adopt innovative approaches to prevent homelessness cases arising and help vulnerable individuals and families when they need a new home.

We will redress the balance between delivering new homes and improving the quality of existing stock by focusing more on driving up standards for existing council tenants through a new investment and improvement plan. We will also work to get **empty homes brought back into use** so every home and every flat becomes a home, and support the city-wide controls on short term lets.

Liberal Democrats strongly welcomed the outcomes of the **Edinburgh Poverty Commission** and would prioritise the actions which came from the report recommendations.

In doing so, Liberal Democrats would ensure the Council continues to play a leading role in **helping people into work**, either through directly delivered services or in partnership with advice agencies. We will ensure this work focuses most on helping younger people into education, employment and training.

Equally, we will ensure the Council offers the advice and services needed to those who can't work, or who need extra assistance in accessing the financial help they need and deserve. We will initiate a full review of such services to ensure they are fit for purpose in addressing the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

Liberal Democrats know a fair city is one which is free from crime and anti-social behaviour. We opposed the decision of SNP and Labour councillors to scrap all Council funding for community policing in the city which had a harmful effect on policing in communities outwith the core city centre and weakened the relationship between the Council and Police Scotland. This is why Liberal Democrats will look for a **new partnership with local police, with additional funding for enhanced speed enforcement** and a stronger emphasis on responsive community-based policing.

We will also seek **targeted increases to the use of CCTV** in known trouble 'hot spots' to help prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.

A vibrant city for all to enjoy

- » **Festivals that work for and with the city**
- » **Locally accessible libraries and community centres**
- » **Protect and cherish our world heritage status**

Edinburgh is a city with culture and the arts at its heart. It is a place with a rich and proud history of hosting vibrant events which provoke learning and ideas.

For many years it has led the way on internationally renowned festivals, attracting performers, artists, authors and exhibitions from all over the world. Indeed, for some performers, Edinburgh can be a vital first rung on the ladder.

Liberal Democrats **support and cherish the cultural and creative aspects of Edinburgh** and recognise these as part of what makes our city special. We know this provides much needed jobs and inward investment to those within our city as well as enjoyment to residents and visitors alike.

Yet a lack of proper management by the SNP and Labour coalition administration has generated a growing call for tighter control of Edinburgh's Festivals. Coming out of the challenges presented by COVID, Liberal Democrats believe there is a chance to do things differently.

Liberal Democrats believe a balance is needed and a vibrant city should not come at a cost to residents' amenities and how they can get about their city. Liberal Democrats will push for far **better oversight, including controls around the amplification of sound within our public realm, and more effective reinstatement of green spaces** used for cultural events.

However, culture in our city is much greater than festivals at certain points in the calendar year. It is why Liberal Democrats believe in **supporting world class museums and galleries** and ensuring access is available to everyone.

We also recognise the importance of our **locally accessible libraries and community centres** in delivering education, culture and providing vital

meeting spaces for local clubs and groups. This is why we will champion these facilities, working to ensure they are well maintained and, wherever possible, expanded through new venues and extended opening hours.

Liberal Democrats **cherish Edinburgh's hard won but easily lost position as a UNESCO World Heritage site** and which recognises the quality of the City's architecture and streetscape. Our decisions will be sensitive to Edinburgh's status, powered by positive relationships with bodies and charities which champion the city's heritage.