

*The policies of Edinburgh Green Party for the City of Edinburgh
Council Elections on 3 May 2007*

- *Real action on climate change*
- *Affordable warm homes*
- *Transport for all*
- *Thriving communities*
- *Defending local shops*
- *Protecting green spaces*
- *Slashing waste*



**scottish
green party**

For a better Edinburgh, first vote Green



www.edinburghgreens.org.uk

Introduction

Edinburgh is the green heartland of Scotland.

It was here, in 1978, that the first Green Party branch was established in Scotland. Here in 1999, citizens elected the UK's first Green Parliamentarian.

Here, in the 2003 Scottish Parliament elections, the city recorded the highest Green vote anywhere in Scotland. Voters returned two Green MSPs to represent the city and the wider Lothian area.

The people of Edinburgh have shown a huge appetite for rising to new green challenges. It is an appetite that has often seen public organisations trailing far behind.

But up until now there has been a gap. Edinburgh's passion for green ideas has not yet resulted in Green councillors in the city chambers.

This is about to change. On 3 May there will be a new, fairer voting system. For the first time ever, Green council candidates will be standing throughout the city. Voters will be able to make a Green choice on the ballot paper, safe in the knowledge that Green votes will lead to Green councillors.

This manifesto sets out a Green vision for Edinburgh and explains what the policy priorities of these new Green councillors will be.



Robin Harper



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A Green Vision for Edinburgh

Edinburgh is one of the most beautiful and thriving cities in the world. Yet its unique charm is being eroded. Despite its small size, Edinburgh takes a heavy toll on the planet's resources and is scarred by acute social inequality. Edinburgh *can* be a greener and fairer place.

We believe that Edinburgh must be an international trailblazer in the battle against climate change: the greatest challenge we all face. And we believe that, in doing so, the people of Edinburgh will find Green ways enrich their lives in a manner that the headlong rush into ever-greater consumption can never do. In a Green Edinburgh a sustainable future and *real* quality of life walk hand-in-hand.

In a Green Edinburgh:

- Local shops, services and businesses will be at the centre of how the economy works.
- Green and open space will be treasured in its own right; not simply as a "development opportunity".
- Through recycling, repair and redesign, waste will be slashed; creating thousands of jobs in the process.
- Buildings will keep their heat, and people's fuel bills will plummet; local renewable energy will be the norm.
- Transport will be designed around the needs of all citizens; not just a few.
- Our communities will be shaped by the priorities of those who live there.

Other parties will make green-sounding pledges. Green councillors will ensure that these pledges are turned into action.

The *only* future for Edinburgh is a green one. A green Edinburgh needs Green councillors.



Planning a Sustainable City

Edinburgh is ideally-placed to be a model green city of the future. Green councillors will:

- Develop a programme to ensure that Edinburgh is a zero carbon city by 2050. Many of the commitments in this manifesto are about how we would do this; including:
 - > Setting up an *Edinburgh Climate Change Challenge Fund* to boost energy efficiency; the use of renewable energy; and the development of local Combined Heat and Power plants.
 - > Offering a *Green Homes Health Check* to all households to check energy use, waste, water and materials.
 - > Seeking to source all council electricity from renewables.
 - > Developing a “carbon offset” levy on new development to plough back into the challenge fund.
 - > Making widely-available “eco-footprint” profiles, so that citizens can assess their own ways of reducing their impact on the environment, coupled with advice on how to do so.
- Oppose further out-of-town developments; whether offices, or for leisure and shopping.
- Ensure that major new developments have a mix of facilities that reduce the need to travel. We will ensure that regeneration of disadvantaged areas includes accommodation for small businesses.
- Protect, enhance and add to green space within the city and develop a “blue-belt” policy to both protect and enhance the city’s coastline. We will continue to campaign against the Firth of Forth being used to transfer crude oil into super-tankers.
- Aim to make Edinburgh Scotland’s first “zero-waste” council, as already adopted in other parts of the world and by at least two councils in England. We will work with major producers of waste to look at product design, repair and re-use that would prevent so much waste in the first place!
- Over the next council term, seek to increase recycling rates to at least 50% by 2012. In particular, we will increase plastic recycling. We will ensure that all areas have either door-to-door or street recycling and that take-up of the service is dramatically increased.



Getting Edinburgh Moving

There are few topics that generate more heated discussion in Edinburgh than transport. The city simply cannot cope with predicted increases in traffic. So the challenge is to reduce the *need* for travel and then to ensure that transport needs are met in an environmentally-friendly way. Green councillors will:

- Seek to stabilise current levels of traffic by 2012 and then set 5 yearly targets for traffic reduction after that.
- Allocate more money to improve footpaths, street crossings and pavement maintenance. We will consult on further city-centre pedestrianisation.
- Expand and link up the city's cycle network, introduce more dedicated and mandatory cycle lanes and secure places to lock bikes. We will aim for Edinburgh to top the Scottish league in the share of spending it commits to walking and cycling.
- Campaign for "real-time" timetables and tickets that allow different types of transport to join up more effectively.
- Support the trams project, powered through renewable electricity, and lobby for a third tramline for south Edinburgh.
- Support the use of the South Suburban rail line for passengers.
- Oppose the building of an *additional* crossing of the Firth of the Forth. We support cross-Forth ferries.
- Lobby, through the regional transport partnership, for a full upgrade to Waverley station, at the same time capping further expansion of Edinburgh airport.
- Oppose the unnecessary new train link to Edinburgh airport, saving £600 million for other transport priorities.
- Extend 20mph zones to all residential streets and outside schools.
- Push for family bus tickets; the extension of student concessions to mature students; and improve the accessibility of buses for wheelchairs, for older people and for buggies.
- Investigate higher car-parking charges for Sports Utility Vehicles ("4x4s") and also campaign for powers to set car-parking charges at out-of-town centres.
- Consult on the need for city centre congestion charging and low emission zones for polluting vehicles, so that we can meet new laws on air pollution.



Homes for All

We are often told that Edinburgh is “top of the league” in Scotland for house prices. This purported sign of success is, in fact, a dismal failure. Thousands of ordinary people are locked out of the housing market; many workers are forced into long distance commuting. Money which could be invested in improving homes is instead enslaved to mortgage repayments. Edinburgh desperately needs more good quality, affordable homes and it needs to make better use of the homes we have. Green councillors will give priority to:

- New affordable housing over further office developments.
- Reviewing existing affordable warmth plans to reflect fuel price rises which have pushed many people back into fuel poverty.
- Ensuring that private developers actually deliver on pledges to build additional new affordable homes as part of developments.
- Carrying out an audit of empty homes to assess potential use.
- Setting up a new task group to consider how best to meet the accommodation needs of students and young workers.
- Campaigning for fair funding for services which support homeless people and other vulnerable groups.
- Raising the quality of private renting through efficient registration and accreditation of private landlords.
- Freezing the sell-off of council houses in areas of high demand.
- Supporting community-based housing and co-operatives.
- All new developments and renovations including renewable energy provision. We will push for powers to offer one-off council tax discounts for installing renewables and offer loans for improving energy efficiency.
- Enforcing existing building regulations on energy efficiency and working for new homes to be “zero-carbon”.

At a national level we will continue to press for the city’s housing debt to be written off, so that rents could pay directly for much needed repairs and improvements. We will push for council tax to be replaced by land value tax to tackle the problem of spiralling house prices.



Education for a Sustainable Future

Education is a core Green issue: two of the last three rectors of Edinburgh University have been local Green MSPs, Robin Harper and Mark Ballard. Green councillors will:

- View schools as centres for the development of children and young people, far beyond the boundaries of formal education.
- Push for individual learning agreements for pupils; and learning through play, artistic activities and sport, not just formal lessons.
- Aim for primary schools to be within walking distance of home.
- Expand Safe Routes to School and cycle education.
- Campaign to keep open primary schools, unless it was clear that the community supported closure. We would seek smaller class sizes rather than closed schools.
- Where school rolls are falling and spare capacity results, seek to ensure that the building is opened up or retained for other community uses, rather than selling the building.
- Aim for all schools to achieve a permanent Green Flag in the international “Eco Schools” initiative. Schools should be pioneers of energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy.
- Support free school meals and the provision of fruit in schools. Food should be sourced locally and organically where possible and cooked on the premises.
- Oppose PFI/PPP schemes as a means of funding education and other public services.
- Not allow advertising for big corporations on premises.
- Seek to ensure that excessive regulation and avoidance of all risk does not exclude volunteers from helping with children’s activities or depriving children and young people from activities that have been enjoyed for decades.
- Give a high priority to outdoor education.
- Provide support for those parents who want to educate their children at home.
- Seek to expand school playground space and quality, both in existing properties and in new buildings.
- Introduce animal welfare education programmes.



Boosting the Local Economy

Edinburgh is the most prosperous city in Scotland. But too much of the economy is dependent on unsustainable international markets, at the expense of small and local businesses. Edinburgh's leaders seem obsessed with trying to outpace Glasgow. Too many of our shopping areas are clones of shopping centres throughout the UK. Too many citizens are excluded from the city's prosperity. Green councillors will:

- Focus on economic activity that is good for people and the environment; not growth for its own sake.
- Push for the city council to have greater scope to influence local economic development.
- Introduce a green "procurement guide" for all council staff, to maximise the use of local and environmentally responsible businesses.
- Give top priority to encourage small to medium enterprises, based locally and including social or ethical businesses. We will support this by:
 - > Provision of affordable accommodation for start-ups.
 - > Giving tax credits to businesses committed to working in regeneration areas.
 - > Investigation of differential business rates for smaller and in-town businesses.
 - > Consultation on consolidating regulations or scrapping them where they are of no clear benefit.
- Look at the benefits of community land trusts, to keep land within reach of small and local businesses.
- Withhold planning consent for new supermarkets unless an assessment shows no impact on existing shops.
- Seek to expand supported employment, training and volunteering schemes, helped by our national Citizens' Income.

At national level, Greens propose a Sustainable Communities Bill. This will require councils to draw up plans to boost local services and local economic activity. It would allow the Council, as a major purchaser of goods and services, to use its buying power to benefit local businesses and those which were committed to a sustainable future for Edinburgh.



Thriving Communities

Edinburgh is made up of many communities. By investing in these communities we can reduce the need for travel as well as helping to repair some of the social division which scars the city. We will:

- Boost spending on parks, play areas and open spaces to at least the Scottish average; prioritising maintenance rather than high-profile make-over projects. Through a “Green Space Fund” we will invite greater community involvement and even ownership of these areas, opening up the possibility of funding from new sources.
- Establish and maintain a full inventory of “common good” land historically gifted to the people of Edinburgh.
- Open up affordable access to sports facilities and halt the sell-off of playing fields, swimming baths and sports venues. We support community-owned sports facilities. New sports development should be as close as possible to the people it serves.
- Expand victim support and community mediation services.
- View young people as assets to our communities, rather than demonising them. For the minority who engage in crime and damaging behaviour, we will focus on greater support for parents; greater support for young people who have been looked after by the council; and greater emphasis on neighbourhood-based youth work and community services for young people.
- Press for more community policing.
- Double the number of environmental wardens, with rapid-response to vandalism and litter and dog-fouling hotspots.
- Support firm action against traders who dump illegal waste on streets.
- Campaign for the retention of vital local services such as chemists, post offices, corner shops, and community centres.
- Introduce new street, stair and park lighting, run from solar power and other renewable sources.



Open Government, Participation and Democracy

A green Edinburgh is not just about *what* happens; it is also about *how* it happens. Politics, at all levels, has a bad reputation. If we are to build consensus about what a future Edinburgh might look like, we all need to rebuild trust in local government.

The new, fairer voting system for council elections will, in itself, help to make the council more representative of different opinions in Edinburgh. The Greens have gone beyond that by ensuring that we have equal numbers of women and men candidates.

But it will take more than just reform of the voting system to restore faith in local councils.

- We will seek to make the Council a leader in many of the areas we have highlighted above: in staff travel, in the performance of council buildings, in the way we use our purchasing power; and in the investments the Council makes.
- As councillors within multi-member wards, we pledge to work co-operatively and across party lines with other councillors in that same ward for the good of the area that we all represent. As an early initiative, Green councillors will press for an agreement from all political parties to seek to work together within wards.
- Green councillors will publish an annual report available to all those we represent.
- We will push for greater open-ness about funding decisions.
- We seek to boost the role of community councils; for example, in helping to set budget priorities and influencing the shape of local services. We will introduce Community Service Agreements where local people can have more say over services in their areas.
- We will require major development proposals to sign up to national standards for community engagement with local people. We will continue to push for communities to have the same rights to appeal a planning decision as developers.
- We are committed to listening to people often excluded from decisions such as carers and users of care services.



Making it happen: the new voting system for local councils

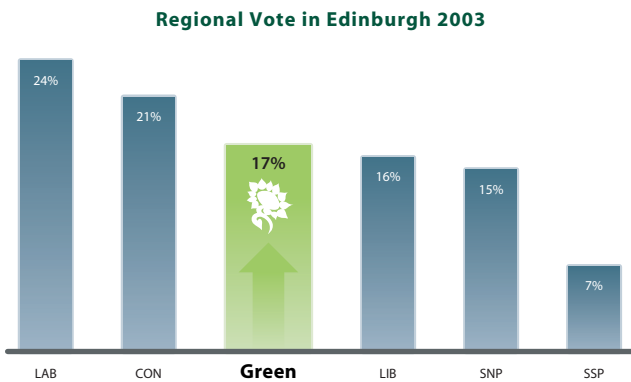
Historically, local government elections have used a first-past-the-post system to elect councillors, based on the election of one councillor to each council ward. From May 2007, this changes to a system known as Single Transferable Vote (STV).

The size of a council ward will be increased and either three or four councillors will be elected to each ward. In Edinburgh there will be 17 wards instead of 58. The overall number of councillors will remain the same.

When people vote they rank the candidates in order of preference (1, 2, 3 etc) rather than by making a single choice with a cross (X).

The way that these preferences translate into the number of councillors elected can be quite complicated. But the main thing to know is that there is no such thing as a wasted vote! People can leave “tactical voting” behind now and vote for whichever party or person they really believe in.

The chart shows the result of the Scottish Parliament “regional” vote and share among the main parties in Edinburgh in 2003. When fair voting is used the Greens are in third place in the city!



In Edinburgh we have calculated that around 12–18% of voters giving Greens their first vote – that is, marking the Green candidate number 1 in their list of priorities – should result in Green councillors being elected. But even if voters don’t mark Greens as number 1, priorities 2 and 3 will still count.



Contact Details

Title: Name:

Address:

Postcode: Date of birth (if under 18):

Phone: Email:

Join the Scottish Green Party | I wish to join at the following annual rate:

	(rates based on gross annual income):	£36	£20,001 – £30,000
£5	Under 18 and full-time students	£48	£30,001 – £40,000
£12	Under £10,000 income	£60	£40,001 – £50,000
£24	£10,001 – £20,000	£72	Over £50,000

I enclose cash/cheque (delete as appropriate) for the relevant amount.

I have completed the standing order form below.

Declaration: I accept and will further the aims of the Scottish Green Party, and am not a member of any other party except a Green Party abroad.

Signed:

Donate to the Scottish Green Party

I wish to pay by cheque and enclose a cheque for:

£10 £25 £50 £100 £250 £500 Other £

I wish to pay a monthly donation by standing order of £

Please keep me updated with news of campaigns and events.

All donations above £200 a year must be from registered UK voters, so we need the contact details of all donors and will return any donations that do not meet our legal obligations.

Standing Order

To (bank name): Sort Code:

Address:

Set up a standing order to: Postcode:

The Scottish Green Party, Lloyds TSB, a/c 06228160, sort code 87/70/01.

Starting on 01 / / 20 , please pay every month/year (delete as appropriate): £

My account number is

Signed:

Please complete and return to: The Scottish Green Party, FREEPOST RLRJ-USZY-EAZX, 3 Lyne Street, Edinburgh EH7 5DN.