

Green councillors report to 2018 AGM of the Edinburgh Green Branch

This is our first full year with 8 Green councillors, and we have been making progress with the manifesto commitments on which we were elected.

Shortly after the election of May 2017, the Edinburgh branch held a special meeting at which Green councillors were given a [mandate](#) to engage constructively with the emerging council administration but to maintain the Green position of pushing for more radical change. It is a mandate we continue to be [steered by](#).

The landmark event of the council calendar, as every year, is the setting of the council budget and this year we were able to [secure far more gains](#) than ever before: including more money for homelessness services; energy efficient lighting funds, boosting play for disabled children, replacing lost street trees, equipment for cultural venues and action on high private rents.

Below are some of the other highlights in the year past.

Communities matter

An increase in the budget for new tree planting to £75,000 in 2018-19.

Helped promote [‘Playing Out’](#) streets, and saw the Council commit to the scheme as Council policy, where previously it was only running as a pilot.

Supported community clean ups personally and through council action, ensuring resources would be available: from Marine Drive in Leith to the canal at Wester Hailes and many places in between.

Gained unanimous support for investigating a [plastic bottle return scheme](#), and for the council to report on making the council a [disposable-free packaging council](#).

Took up the position of [City Canal Champion](#) to oversee the action plan for the Union Canal

Planning a green city

All party agreement was gained for a motion to enhance and protect our ‘blue belt’, from Joppa to South Queensferry, and to investigate the best method for delivering a continuous active travel route along the coastline.

Continued to push for third party right of appeal for planning decisions.

Worked to help set up new ‘Friends of parks’ groups and to support community gardens and allotments: for example in Harrison Park, Leith Links.

Championed [district heating](#) and renewable energy at every opportunity.

People-centred transport

Pushed to ensure cycle and pedestrian safety is paramount in plans to expand the [tram line](#) to Newhaven.

Continued to push for joined up thinking on cycle infrastructure, including dedicated and joined up routes, cycle-storage, public bike hire and high-quality design for cyclists in new developments.

Gave detailed input into plans for Edinburgh's '[low emission zone](#)'.

Exposed the anomaly of [councillors in other groups getting free city centre parking](#)

Acted as the sole voice for active travel to be a priority for a revamped [Picardy Place](#)

Pushed for [electrical vehicle transformation](#).

Housing Edinburgh

Put the case for an [Edinburgh Rent Pressure zone](#) and published a full report by Edinburgh Young Green Ben Parker.

Continued to push for Edinburgh Council to have a dedicated [empty homes officer](#).

Pressed for the working group on holiday lets to be convened with urgency, were successful in getting agreement for a range of stakeholders to be consulted, and pushed for a two-pronged approach to use all existing powers available, and investigate what powers would need to be gained from the Scottish Government.

A jobs and enterprise boost

Put forward a [detailed amendment](#) to the coalition's Economic Strategy which would have transformed the strategy into a green vision for a carbon neutral economy and increased focus on closing the gap between rich and poor within the local economy, and gained agreement that some of these proposals would be adopted in a redrafted economy strategy.

Broadened the base of the City Region Deal steering group to include third sector and social enterprise.

Education for life

Made sure a [pupil representative](#) on the Education Committee was an option put to young people as the Committee reviews how it works with children and young people.

Gained unanimous support to put forward a recommendation to the Councils budget process that clothing grants meet the Child Poverty Action Group estimate of the true cost of [school uniform](#).

Ensured that work would continue improving school lunches, including [reducing packaging](#).

[Backed existing school communities](#) in the south west Edinburgh schools review

Supported parents and school communities in tackling issues of poor building quality at [Oxgangs Primary School](#) and PPP schools generally

Fought to keep the [City of Edinburgh music school open](#).

Led the agenda for new "Wave 4" schools through a £200m package of investment at [budget time](#).

Sport and culture for all

Pushed to ensure commercial hire of parks is well managed and does not cause long term damage to our green spaces.

Led on proposals for an [“Agent of change”](#) principle in planning and licensing venues

Put forward amendments in council that ensure extra funding for Festivals won't mean a lack of funding for grassroots creative works and to investigate how the festivals can best work for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

Kept pressure on the Council administration to introduce a tourist levy, resulting in a report that made clear how much Edinburgh would benefit from the scheme

Backed grassroots sports clubs through a review of sports hall charges.

Secured backing for changes for [film screening with babies](#).

Led the campaign to keep the [Museum on the Mound open](#)

Edinburgh belongs to you

Continued to push for more participatory budgeting, and supported local participatory budgeting processes.

Worked on proposals to improve how council land and buildings are disposed of, to ensure community wishes are considered.

Promoted and supported community buy outs and [community asset transfers](#):

Expanded council webcasting, with the Integrated Joint Board to be webcast, and proposals being put to Licensing Board and Pensions Committee for their webcasting.

A Healthy and Caring Capital

Ensured relatives and carers of those with dementia have enhanced visiting rights and are included in medical and care decisions across all Council and NHS Lothian services - through the adoption of [John's Campaign](#).

Oversaw a review of the provision of externally provided community Alcohol and Drug services for the Council.

Ensured that the community voice is heard fairly on alcohol provision issues in Edinburgh, through a review of the Edinburgh Licensing Forum.

Supported staff and GPs in creating the [Edinburgh Primary Care Improvement Plan](#) to re-organise GPs services across the city responding to the critical shortage of GPs and need for community based services.

A fairer Edinburgh

Secured council agreement for Edinburgh to join Glasgow, Fife and North Ayrshire in developing a [citizen's income pilot](#), and have been attending meetings to input into the proposals.

Helped push for a council policy that will remove A-Boards from pavements, and will continue to do further work to reduce pavement clutter.

Gained an increase in budget spend for playparks, and pushed for more playgrounds to include accessible play equipment.

Continued to work on Lothian Pension Fund divesting from fossil fuels.

Backed action on Period Poverty

Won support for introducing no-protest "[buffer zones](#)" around sexual health clinics.

Organised a Civic Reception hosted by Lord Provost to honour 25th Anniversary of Zero Tolerance and the work of all women's organisations in city that work to fight gender based violence in all its forms.