



## Edinburgh Green Councillors' Report, January 2017

The main focus of the Council just now is the final budget of the current council session, to be debated and approved on 9 February. In December, Green Convenor Steve Burgess was part of an all-party COSLA delegation that twice met with the Scottish Government Finance Secretary. Despite hard lobbying resulting in some concessions, funding for council-delivered public services has been slashed yet again. In Edinburgh this means a further £37million cut to council spending in 2017/18. Green Finance spokesperson Gavin Corbett is working on Green proposals for mitigating these cuts.



### Improving Public Participation - Opening up Edinburgh



Gavin Corbett successfully [led calls at Finance Committee](#) to re-tender interpretation services for deaf people after local charity Deaf Action was threatened with being replaced by service providers with no connection to Edinburgh.

Gavin also welcomed the results of the latest "participatory budgeting" exercise, South West Health Matters, in which 10 local organisations shared a pot of £40,000 directly decided by public vote. [South Centraf Decides](#), the participatory budgeting initiative by Melanie Main, this year includes a £20K fund available for intergenerational projects to be voted on, at Southside Community centre on 4 February.

### Sustainable Transport

Green councillor Melanie Main [added her voice](#) to many seeking reduced congestion and parking conflict from the sheer numbers of children being driven to private schools.

Gavin Corbett and Dan Heap [highlighted the case](#) for active travel to be taken seriously as part of the City Region Deal. Steve Burgess also asked during [Leader's Question Time](#) at full Council whether the City Deal will make Edinburgh's economy more sustainable.

At [full Council meeting in December](#) and Transport and Environment Committee, Chas Booth pressed for more radical action on [air pollution](#) the main cause of which is private transport.

## Supporting Communities & Neighbourhoods



[At full Council meeting](#) in December, Melanie Main raised concerns about the lack of national strategy for the settlement of unaccompanied child refugees.

Steve Burgess hit the front page of the [Evening News](#) after highlighting the waste of 5,000 private sector empty homes. [At full Council](#) Steve won agreement from the council's housing Convenor to meet about the possibility of re-instating an Empty Homes Officer. And also on housing, Steve was in the [Evening News](#) suggesting that in a city with a housing crisis, wasteful second-homes should pay more council tax.

## Cleaner, Greener Energy

In response to campaigner emails, Green councillors continue to highlight their track record in seeking a commitment from Lothian Pension Fund to divest from fossil fuels.

## Greener Jobs

Nigel Bagshaw wrote in the [Evening News](#) about a Green vision for Edinburgh, including the jobs potential of a truly Green City Region Deal. Steve Burgess was also in the Evening News with a letter saying the time for a tourist tax to support the City's cultural sector has come.

## Highlights from Green Councillors' Wards

In **Fountainbridge-Craiglockhart** Gavin Corbett worked with local volunteers to set up a very popular Friends of Harrison Park facebook page, a very successful clean-up of the Caledonian railway path; and also helped to organise a hugely-attended send-off for two popular local shopkeepers on Ashley Terrace.

In **Southside-Newington**, Steve Burgess spoke at a Polish-Scottish Friendship ceilidh at the King's Hall emphasising the importance of strong links between peoples in the face of Brexit. Steve's motion to full Council in support of the [Bike Station and their crowdfunder](#), following a devastating fire, won unanimous backing.

