

Leader's Report

City of Edinburgh Council
26 June 2003

1 Introduction

- 1.1 I am pleased to present my first Leader's Report of the new administration, to Full Council.

2 Delivering for the People of Edinburgh

- 2.1 The new administration has set out the following key pledges in its Manifesto.

The administration will:

- Work to deliver results from the historic high levels of new investment in Edinburgh's public transport, making it fit for the twenty-first century.
- Raise achievement among school pupils by agreeing for each child an individual learning plan as part of our new Edinburgh Education Quality Standard.
- Make more pensioners in the city eligible for Garden Aid.
- Increase work with young offenders and require them to face up to and make amends for their anti-social behaviour through community service.
- Implement a city-wide programme of 20 mph speed limits on roads in residential areas, based on need and local consultation.
- Shape the future of the city through protecting and improving our green spaces, putting most new buildings on 'brown field' land, and by acting on plans to build 1000 new homes each year for low and middle income families and key workers.

2.2 The administration has also produced a Manifesto for business, which has a clear vision for Edinburgh that puts the economy at its heart.

In 2020 Edinburgh will:

- Be the most successful and sustainable city economy in Northern Europe.
- Continue to deliver the highest quality of life of any UK city and one of the highest of any city in the world.
- Be a city with a world class knowledge base, competing on the world scene in financial services, in biomedical science and tourism.
- Ensure all our citizens have access to the opportunities that the city has to offer.

2.3 One of the key pledges of the business manifesto is to commission a major review of the support and assistance provided to small and medium sized enterprises in Edinburgh (SMEs).

2.4 Contact has already been made with Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothians regarding the review and we will work with all our partner organisations to review our policies in order to create mechanisms which will support the success and development of SMEs in Edinburgh.

2.5 The Council's Corporate Plan has been developed to include this administration's key pledges and commitments. It is my intention to report back regularly to Council, on the progress being made regarding these commitments.

3 Scottish Executive Legislative Programme

3.1 Elected Members will be aware that the First Minister, Jack McConnell recently announced the Scottish Executive's legislative programme for 2003/4.

3.2 The programme covers a wide range of issues including a commitment to improve transport throughout Scotland. This will involve the introduction of a new Strategic Transport Authority and improvements to transport infrastructure and systems.

3.3 The programme also expresses a commitment to improve the effectiveness of public services including health, education, criminal justice, police and fire services, over the next four years.

- 3.4 The Executive is also anxious to build and support safer communities through tackling crime, particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour.
- 3.5 There has been much comment and publicity about the Executive's proposals to tackle youth crime and anti-social behaviour. I have to say that the proposals from the Executive are very welcome and I do not accept the view being expressed in some quarters that parents should not be held to account for their role in controlling their children's behaviour. According to some commentators, parents are to be 'locked up' because their children offend. This is simply not true.
- 3.6 What the Executive proposes is to tackle those parents who clearly condone or encourage the anti-social behaviour of their children. Too often in our city and in the country, when Police catch young offenders and return them to their homes, they are met with a barrage of abuse and denial from parents who are clearly making no attempt to control their children's behaviour.
- 3.7 The infamous case of the young child caught vandalising a car in the south of the city by painting it with white emulsion is a case in point. On taking the child back to the parental home the Police were met with complete denial, despite the fact that the child was covered in paint, literally being caught 'white-handed'.
- 3.8 In another instance the children of a family which was evicted from Southhouse/Burdiehouse caused repeated problems by throwing rocks and stones at neighbours property, and were being encouraged to do so by the mother of the family.
- 3.9 At present we (and by that I mean society) are not intervening effectively enough to tackle such problems. There will be those who will argue that the sanctions proposed by the Executive are too hard on children and families. There will be well intentioned, but frankly misguided concerns about the welfare of the children in such families. We will be asked questions such as "What will happen to the children if their mother is jailed". What happens to these children if we leave them as they are, needs to be the over-riding concern.
- 3.10 At present anti-social behaviour is the most serious quality of life issue in the city. There are families, small in number, that are causing a disproportionate level of misery and damage to neighbourhoods across the city. Many of these families are living outwith the law and many of them are living with drug or alcohol dependency. Leaving their behaviour unchallenged will simply create another generation with the same behaviour and lifestyles.
- 3.11 Yes, we must emphasise the positives. The vast majority of people and families are decent law abiding citizens who treat their neighbours and their neighbourhoods with respect. However, at present there are

too few sanctions that tackle the problem of anti-social behaviour effectively.

- 3.12 If there are any doubts about the need to take action, then the recent outcome of the case at Hailesland Primary Schools must surely settle these doubts. A school was trashed. Classroom environments, which were the result of much hard work by pupils and teachers, were smashed up in a spree of vandalism. The outcome was that the perpetrators, primary and secondary school children, were not effectively punished for causing £200,000 of damage. The secondary school children were ordered to spend two days picking up litter and the primary schools children were given two days of cleaning out paint pots.
- 3.13 Frankly, the response in respect to the level of damage caused is laughable. This case is symbolic of so many and is undermining public confidence, such as it is, in the justice system. As Council Leader I have to say that the punishment administered in this case was not just a bad decision, but a dreadful decision. The children involved in carrying out the damage have in effect escaped without any punishment for their behaviour and we must ensure that lessons are learned from this case.
- 3.14 It is my intention to organise a seminar on anti-social behaviour with key agencies in the city. We need a new partnership between all of the public agencies involved. We must act now before new legislation goes through the Scottish Parliament and we must be ready to act swiftly as soon as new legislation is agreed.
- 3.15 I sincerely hope that the First Minister and the Executive will get the full support from Members of the Scottish Parliament for legislation that is long overdue. For too long a persistent minority have 'thumbed their nose' at the Police and society. Tougher action is in place in Edinburgh. We are tackling more action as a Council to tackle anti-social behaviour in all areas of the city, however more, much more, needs to be done.
- 3.16 Overall the Scottish Executive's legislative programme encourages inclusiveness and the development of safer communities. The growth of the economy is also supported by the proposed improvements to transport. However, CoSLA has expressed concern regarding certain areas of the legislative programme. While there may be certain issues that require to be worked on, the administration is supportive of the programme.

4 ETHICON

- 4.1 Elected Members will be aware of ETHICON's plans to close its operation at Sighthill. The closure, subject to the outcome of the

statutory consultation process, will be phased over two to three years, resulting in the loss of approximately 850 jobs. This is a tremendous loss to those employed by the company, many of whom live locally in the Sighthill area. It is also a loss to the city.

- 4.2 The Chief Executive and I met with representatives from ETHICON shortly after the announcement. This was a very positive meeting at which the company indicated that it would do everything within reason to lessen the impact of the closure on staff and their families. Career counselling, retraining and practical help in finding other jobs will be offered to employees in addition to enhanced severance terms.
- 4.3 ETHICON has indicated that due to the age profile of the company, a significant number of the affected staff may consider early retirement while others will hopefully be in a position to obtain continuing jobs.
- 4.4 The Council will provide assistance through the Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE), involving the four Lothian Councils, Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothian, Jobcentre Plus, the Inland Revenue and Careers Scotland.
- 4.5 PACE will hold discussions with ETHICON and will provide a team that will deal with the practical aspects of the closure at a local level, providing access to information and advice. PACE also provides resources to help market and match the workforce to appropriate opportunities.
- 4.6 The Council will continue to provide whatever help it can and is very hopeful that the staff involved in the ETHICON closure will find alternative employment quickly.

5 Cities Review – Edinburgh City Vision

- 5.1 The Council will today consider a bid to the Scottish Executive in respect of the allocation to the Council of £24.2m from a national Cities Growth Fund, made available as a result of the recent Review of Scotland's Cities - "Building Better Cities". A key proposal of the review was that each city would produce a city vision.
- 5.2 Edinburgh's City Vision has been prepared in consultation with neighbouring local authorities, community planning partners, the business sector and other stakeholders. Two successful consultation meetings were held in March 2003 with follow up events in May 2003 to present the City Vision in the light of feedback received. This has ensured that the City Vision reflects as far as possible the views and priorities of these interests. The Scottish Executive has commended the wide consultation process undertaken by the Council.

- 5.3 The allocation of £24.2 million cannot address the major infrastructure problems which the city faces. However, this is the start of a process of engagement with government with a view to further funding being made available to the city.

Some of the key areas identified in the bid are:

- **Improvement to the city centre** - This is essential to maintain environmental quality, whilst continuing to attract investment. We have proposed a spending programme of £17 million, jointly funded with Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian, on the city centre's public realm (public open spaces in and around buildings).
- **Transport improvements** - Partners and consultees recognised the need for improvements to the transport infrastructure. The draft bid therefore includes service enhancements, the installation of real time information at bus stops and enhancements to the Hermiston Park and Ride site totalling almost £5 million.
- **Culture and Leisure** - There is an expectation for Edinburgh to excel in this field and this was reflected in the Cities Review. The draft bid recommends a range of actions, including support for the Usher Hall refurbishment, joint marketing of the city's theatres and backing for the forthcoming MTV awards to the tune of around £5 million.
- **Affordable Housing** - While the city's economy is strong and supports the growth of the entire south of Scotland, that growth is, unfortunately, causing problems for people on lower incomes who find it very difficult to buy a house in the city. The Council has an affordable housing policy which is being enforced through the planning legislation. In order to look at further innovative ways to tackle the issue of affordable housing, a sum of £3 million is included in the bid.

6 The Edinburgh Partnership

- 6.1 The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 strengthened the civic leadership role of the Council by establishing a duty of community planning in conjunction with other partner agencies.
- 6.2 Members will recall that the Executive on 11 March 2003 considered a report by the Chief Executive on a review of the existing arrangements for community planning in Edinburgh with a view to the development of a new structure to ensure wider engagement with elected members, stakeholders and communities of interest.
- 6.3 With that in mind, a meeting is to be held on 23 June 2003 to present the proposals to the various communities of interest in the city including

(i) partner agencies represented on the Edinburgh Partnership Group, (ii) strategic partnerships, (iii) business sector, (iv) voluntary and community interests, (v) equalities bodies and (vi) other stakeholders. Representatives of the political groups have also been invited to attend.

- 6.4 It is important to move forward with the practical implementation of community planning at both a strategic and local level in the city and to ensure that tangible benefits can be provided to the community. Key targets and timescales will be identified and monitored.

7 Protecting Vulnerable Adults: Ensuring Rights and Preventing Abuse

- 7.1 Important new guidelines were launched on 29 May 2003. "Protecting Vulnerable Adults: Ensuring Rights and Preventing Abuse" has been developed by an inter-agency working group comprising of representatives from, the City of Edinburgh Council Social Work Department, Mid, East and West Lothian Councils, Scottish Borders Council, Lothian and Borders Police, the NHS Trusts from Edinburgh and West Lothian and Lothian Health Board. There has also been wide consultation within the statutory, voluntary and private sector. The guidelines, which reflect the current legal position, have now been endorsed and adopted by all the partner organisations.
- 7.2 These guidelines have been produced as a response to the growing awareness and documentation of the range, level and frequency of abuse towards vulnerable adults. There have been in place for some time locally agreed inter-agency procedures to deal with Child Protection. There are also guidelines concerning the abuse of older people.
- 7.3 This new multi-agency approach to adult protection will provide a framework for all workers in the field of social care to recognise when vulnerable people may be at risk of abuse. They focus on how to get assistance, identify the legal position, explore the dilemmas and the appropriate channels for both assessment of need and investigation. Once implemented, these guidelines will make a significant contribution to the protection of vulnerable adults.

8 Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW) Presidency

- 8.1 In my report to the Council on 30 May 2002, I was pleased to congratulate Duncan MacAulay, Head of Operations in the Social Work Department, on his appointment as Vice-President of the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW). On 21 May this year, Duncan took over the Presidency of ADSW at the Association's Annual Conference. Duncan will be leading ADSW over the coming year as

they embark on an ambitious programme of work, at the forefront of which will be a project funded by the Scottish Executive on "Supporting Front Line Staff". ADSW has appointed an officer to undertake this task under Duncan's leadership and work is well underway on a project plan. As we continue to face difficulties in recruiting and retaining Social Work staff, I look forward to hearing of the initiatives which I am sure will flow from this work.

- 8.2 Duncan's appointment adds to the already impressive number of officials of the Council who are senior office-holders in their professional organisations. These include Tom Aitchison, Chairman of the Scottish branch of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), Lynn Brown, Head of Corporate Finance, Senior Chair of CIPFA (Scotland) and Eddie Bain, Council Solicitor, President of the Scottish Branch of the Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators (SOLAR). John Cardwell, the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer for the Lothian area, is an executive member and immediate past President of the Scottish Assessors' Association. They bring with them to these offices a wealth of talent and experience.
- 8.3 These appointments reflect the status of the City of Edinburgh Council and provide an opportunity to both influence policy development at national level and gain a wider perspective of the issues facing local government in general.

9 'EH – Your Key to Choice'

- 9.1 I am pleased to announce the arrival of 'EH – Your Key to Choice' which went live in mid-May and has revolutionised how Council homes are let in Edinburgh. This reflects the Council's desire to put the customer at the centre of everything it does.
- 9.2 Customer feedback indicates that the new system has been widely welcomed throughout the city. 'Choice' is giving people more information on what is available and more control over housing options.
- 9.3 This is a good example of the Council's drive to deliver modern customer focused services. I am sure that the success of this project will be measured in high levels of customer and staff satisfaction.

10 Stone Falls

- 10.1 The Department has taken action in 57 cases relating to falling masonry so far this year. Three of these have involved incidents reminiscent of the Ryan's Bar tragedy with two directly connected with pavement cafes.

- 10.2 Following these cases, proprietors who have applied for licences to occupy the pavement with tables and chairs have been targeted. Approximately 200 letters have been sent to proprietors advising of the possible dangers and reminding them of the necessity to inspect the buildings where they are conducting their business.
- 10.3 In future, the forms for pavement licence application will contain a requirement to indicate that a café owner has had the building inspected.
- 10.4 A television article on this problem was taken up by BBC Scotland and an interview was given which highlighted the potential dangers and outlined the seriousness with which the Council views the matter.
- 10.5 Presentations on the way that Edinburgh is tackling the deterioration of buildings have been made to other Authorities, East Lothian, Glasgow and also to the RICS Building Control Forum.

11 Restalrig Urban Village

- 11.1 The Local Government News - Street Design Awards was established in 1986 and aims to reward innovation and good practice shown in projects undertaken by, on behalf of, or in partnership with, local authorities.
- 11.2 Restalrig Urban Village Neighbourhood Regeneration scheme has won the highways category of this national award. This category aims to acknowledge and reward good practice shown in schemes which incorporates traffic calming and environmental improvements into their design. Well done to all those involved.

12 Ethnic recognition for Edinburgh

- 12.1 Edinburgh was recently named as the first holder of the title of 'Ethnicity 2003' at the annual Best in Britain Awards held last Friday in London.
- 12.2 Edinburgh competed with other UK cities, including London, Cardiff and Birmingham for the Ethnicity 2003 Awards, which highlight the positive aspect of multiculturalism in UK's main cities. The Awards focus on what major cities do for ethnic minority groups, the relationships they build with them and the welcome given to visitors with a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.

13 Edinburgh's Floral Clock

- 13.1 Edinburgh's world famous Floral Clock celebrated its centenary on Tuesday 10 June 2003.

- 13.2 The first of its kind in the world, the Floral Clock was inspired by a carpet bedding display in West Princes Street Garden in 1902, to commemorate the coronation of Edward VII. The following year, John McHattie, the City's park superintendent, and Edinburgh clockmakers James Ritchie and Son created the Floral Clock by installing a clock mechanism in the base of the Allan Ramsay Monument.
- 13.3 One hundred years on, the Floral Clock was awarded a much coveted gold medal at the 2003 Royal Horticultural Society's prestigious Chelsea Flower Show which further reinforces the national and international appeal of the clock.
- 13.4 Culture & Leisure staff are proud to have worked on the clock and to have played their part in creating a bit of history. A reception has been organised to thank those involved.
- 13.5 In addition, I was pleased to reach agreement with the Director of Culture and Leisure that proposals will be brought forward to create a new floral planting area on the Mound. This would be a major opportunity to improve the attractiveness of the city centre environment and could be a major contribution in our bid to win 'Scotland in Bloom'. Progress is being made to develop 'Edinburgh in Bloom' and I was pleased that at a recent meeting of Community Councillors, further recruits to the cause came forward.
- 13.6 I will report further on 'Edinburgh in Bloom' in due course.

14 PR Awards

- 14.1 The Council submitted six entries to the Scottish PR awards and was nominated for four. The winners were announced at an awards ceremony on 13 June and I am delighted to advise that we won the following four awards:
- A Gold Award for the 'Best Community Campaign', organised by the Social Work Department. The campaign is called 'We wait and we wait' and has assisted in increasing the number of foster carers by 35%.
 - A Silver Award for the 'Best Community Campaign', led by the Education Department and supported across the Council - 'GO4IT'.
 - Two Bronze Awards for 'Best Crisis Management Campaign' – the Old Town Fire and the 'Best Public Sector Team'.
- 14.2 The Council, which was the only public or private sector organisation to receive such a high number of nominations, was up against strong

competition. To win these four awards is a tremendous tribute to the work of the PR teams across the Council.

- 14.3 I would ask Council to join me in congratulating everyone involved for their hard work, commitment and their professional approach to delivering the PR service on behalf of the Council. Well done.

Councillor Donald Anderson
Leader – City of Edinburgh Council

Leader's Report – Supplementary 1

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1 Edinburgh – World Class Conference Destination

- 1.1 The International Convention and Congress Association has recently announced that Edinburgh is now the 9th most popular conference destination in the world. Edinburgh was placed in 15th position last year.
- 1.2 This confirms that Edinburgh is viewed as a world class conference destination which has the ability to compete effectively with the top ten destinations such as Barcelona and Vienna. Edinburgh provides an excellent variety of conference venues to meet demand and outstanding quality of service.
- 1.3 I have asked for a report to be prepared for the Council Executive, to consider holding a civic reception in recognition of those who have contributed to this achievement. In the meantime I would extend the Council's appreciation and congratulations to all those involved.

Councillor Donald Anderson
Leader – City of Edinburgh Council