



Sharing in our success

August in Edinburgh is a unique atmosphere that can be found nowhere else on earth. For four weeks, we welcome the world to share in our festival spirit and sample some of the thousands of performances taking place in this unique and beautiful city.

This constant flow of new people and talent helps keep the festivals fresh, and it's great to see the weather isn't dampening anyone's festival spirits. In fact, according to our People's Survey, more residents are attending the festival performances than ever before and the vast majority of us believe they make Edinburgh a better place to live.

But with that popularity, success and acclaim, comes the other side of the same coin: the pressure on our core services and on the people who live and work here.

This has been brought into sharp focus in recent days with the debate over the use of Princes Street Gardens, a hugely valuable space for residents to relax, play, eat and enjoy events. This is why we are keen to promote a [citywide discussion around the vibrancy of the Gardens](#) and the role they play in Edinburgh's cultural scene.

Of course, we're glad that so many people want to visit our beautiful city and we recognise the importance of tourism to our economy. But we also recognise the impact this has on residents and that we have a responsibility to manage that impact – which is why we are taking steps to control the use of short term lets, such as Air BnB, exploring new ways of better managing footfall and 'keeping the city moving' during busy periods, while continuing to build a compelling case to introduce a Transient Visitor Levy.

Depute Leader, Cammy Day, and I have set out our [priorities for the six months ahead](#) – and beyond – and a key theme running through all of this is the need to balance the undoubted potential of this thriving city alongside the needs of our residents.

Edinburgh will continue to grow, to thrive – of that there is no doubt. But our focus must be on promoting fair and sustainable growth. We live in a city full of opportunity and, as a coalition, we are working extremely hard to ensure that all residents can share in that success.

Truly transformational

Last week I joined the Prime Minister, First Minister, University colleagues and my fellow council leaders in signing the [transformative £1.3bn City Region Deal](#).

The impressive Bayes Centre, Edinburgh University's brand-new research facility, provided a fitting backdrop for the ceremony, marking the start of an exciting period for Edinburgh and the South-East of Scotland, with unprecedented levels of investment driving inclusive economic growth.

This is a deal designed to deliver real, tangible opportunities for everyone across the region, allowing us to unlock our potential to become a global powerhouse in data-driven innovation through our exceptional research & development activities. The commitment, meanwhile, to a skills programme will allow us to capitalise on the opportunities created by new technologies and innovation as well as opportunities in construction as we deliver 20,000 new affordable homes in the Capital.

It will also greatly enhance the region's infrastructure through significant funding for transport projects and housing development, building a vibrant region for our people and businesses to thrive in.

A city centre that works for everyone

Staying on the subject of transformation, we will soon be launching a major public consultation to find out how Edinburgh people want the heart of their city to look, feel and function. Under the banner of ['Edinburgh: connecting our city, transforming our places'](#), we'll be putting forward a series of options and ideas which have come directly from preliminary conversations with stakeholders.

These range from more or less the status quo to a more radical proposal involving things like bus and freight hubs and pedestrianised streets. Everyone should take the time to have their say. We've got an incredible opportunity here to make sure our streets and public spaces really do put people first.

Then, towards the end of September, we'll be coming back with refreshed designs and plans for taking trams to Newhaven following the invaluable help and feedback from the public during our consultation. This is another project which has the potential to deliver real benefits for our growing Capital and we're on track to have a final business case ready for Council's consideration by the end of 2018.

Top marks

Once again, the positive exam results achieved by our pupils demonstrate what a great learning environment our schools provide here in Edinburgh.

Results by pupils at the end of S5 and S6 either improved or were maintained at all levels, which is very encouraging, and, although National 5 passes did drop slightly, SQA statistics show that this was mirrored across the country.

And let's not forget the dedicated teachers and staff who worked so hard to prepare pupils and parents/carers who supported their children over the past year. For some the results may not have been what they were hoping for but there are still many opportunities to explore, such as our own Edinburgh Guarantee, and [advice available on choosing a career path](#) #nowrongpath

Social Care progress

This month, the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board published its second [annual performance report](#), setting out progress against its six main priorities and key performance indicators set by the Scottish Government.

There were many positives: performance in terms of reducing emergency admissions to hospital is the best in Scotland and 80% of those surveyed rated the care they received as good, an increase from the previous survey undertaken two years ago.

Noticeable improvement has also been made in the average length of wait for an assessment – reduced from a high of 93 days last year to 44 (in June). Now, of course, these numbers are still far higher than they should be but I'm pleased to see things moving in the right direction. Elsewhere, it was encouraging also to see our additional [£4.5m investment in the service](#) bearing fruit. This has already helped fund 50 additional care home places and created a team to address the assessment waiting lists of approximately 750 cases.

It is reassuring to see clear priorities being set for next year and how the challenges facing the services will be met. There's still a long way to go, but these successes and the innovation and hard work of colleagues in the Partnership should be recognised.

Meadowbank: have your say

I'm pleased that our plans for a new Meadowbank Sports Centre took a leap forward in June with the approval of the [planning application](#).

The £47m project will see a state-of-the-art community sports facility built on the site of the original Meadowbank, which closed last December. On reopening in 2020, the accessible new venue will become one of the top centres for community sport in the country, helping to support participation in sport and physical activity for all ages and abilities for generations to come.

Of course, there are much wider considerations in terms of the future of the area and we're now starting to gather views on the wider regeneration of the site starting with [two public meetings](#) next week. If you have an interest in or live in the area I would really encourage you to go along and share your views. For anyone who can't make the meetings you can also have your say online from Monday (August 20).

The online survey and events are the first step in the process to help us shape our plans to deliver more much-needed affordable homes and local amenities that people want. We're also hoping to bring some of the history of the area back to life and deliver quality public realm that the community can all benefit from.

Get involved

Keep up to date with all council news via our [news section online](#). You can watch live council and committee meetings via our [webcast](#) service and join the debate on Twitter using #edinwebcast. If you wish to unsubscribe, please [email](#) us.

[Follow us on twitter](#)



[Follow us on Facebook](#)

