

Leader's Report

City of Edinburgh Council
20 November 2008

1 Ian Gordon Retires

Ian Gordon retires this month after 42 years service. Head of the Payments and Procurement Division, Ian's leadership and innovation has placed Edinburgh to the fore in procurement across Scottish local government.

Ian has also been company secretary to the Edinburgh Military Tattoo for the past 18 years and was recently awarded the OBE for services to the Tattoo and to the local community. I am sure members will wish to join me in wishing Ian a long and happy retirement.

2 Festive Edinburgh

Edinburgh's Hogmanay

Hogmanay in Edinburgh is not just about The Bells. This year the city offers 4 days of inspiring events. New Year celebrations kick off on 29 December with the iconic and spectacular Torchlight Procession. The following day sees a brand new event - The Dancin'- in the Grassmarket.

For many the highlight is the Hogmanay Street Party. This has been enhanced in a number of ways including: an extra stage; an earlier start time; a better sound system; a superb laser and light show and a brand new event - Boogie Wonderland - at the Mound Precinct. The centrepiece is the Concert in the Gardens this year featuring Groove Armada, Paulo Nutini and Friendly Fires. For those looking for a great start to 2009, another new event, Feet First, will take place on the Royal Mile on 1 January.

Lighting up the City

I am sure that members will join me in thanking staff involved in all aspects of Edinburgh's Christmas. There are over half a million lights in Edinburgh city centre. LED technology means that the lights are now more energy efficient, even the star on the City Chambers has bulbs which use less than 7% of the

electricity previously required - an hourly saving of over 3.5 kW. This year's event will be our greenest ever!

I am grateful to everyone who helped with George Street's display. New lights replaced the previous decorations which had reached the end of their life. Thanks go to RBS, Standard Life, George Street Traders and Essential Edinburgh for their support. And St Andrew Square is sparkling again following collaboration with Essential Edinburgh, RBS and the Council.

The tree on the Mound is a familiar landmark whilst the Grassmarket has its own tree.. There are also many local displays and I pay tribute to all those involved in setting these up.

Christmas Shopping

Edinburgh is a special place to visit at Christmas, with Winter Wonderland, the festive lights and illuminated castle providing a spectacular backdrop. To help shoppers and retailers tram works in the city centre have been suspended for December, and in Leith, from 12 December to 19 January.

We are also marketing Edinburgh city centre. Adverts appeared on STV during the first two weeks of December promoting the city, suspension of tram works, our excellent buses, park and ride and free on-street parking. There has also been local radio promotions. Edinburgh's first ever shopping podcast was launched to guide people around the city's best shopping areas and places to eat. This guide, www.edinburgh.inspiringcapital.com/shopping, can be downloaded for listening at home, or to MP3 players.

Shopping Galore

Leith has shops for every occasion. We have arranged for Forth One to run a campaign promoting vouchers discounts and special offers and you can find these at www.forthone.com.

Portobello High Street has truly diverse locally owned shops. Whether you are looking for crafts, a bike, fine wine or a deli you will most likely find it there. Participating shops on the High Street are currently giving you the chance to win prizes - including a £200 shopping spree.

If you pass through the area you will notice that the Kings Road roundabout is being converted into a signalised junction. This will make it safer and mean quicker bus journeys. You can get to Portobello High Street by following the diversion and I would encourage you to discover the local shopping. For information visit www.edinburgh.gov.uk/kingsroad

Festive Buses

Lothian Buses will, once again, be operating a bus service over the Christmas and New Year period including a limited number of buses on Christmas Day

and Hogmanay. Both Airlink and Edinburgh Shuttle services to the airport will be operating. A leaflet detailing all services will be available on-board most of Lothian's buses or from one of their travelshops. An electronic copy is also available at www.lothianbuses.com. Open top bus tours will also be operating allowing tourists to capture the history of the City. For full details and times of operation see www.edinburghtour.com.

Ensuring a Safe Christmas

The Edinburgh Community Safety Partnership, Council, Police and Transport Police have joined forces to ensure that residents and visitors can enjoy the night-time festivities in the city centre as safely as possible, with the return of the successful More Christmas Presence campaign. Measures will be in operation throughout the festive season to: combat alcohol-related violence and disorder; help people get home safely after a night out; and, bolster public confidence through a highly visible presence. The package includes:

- Extending the popular Transport Marshals scheme to help people get home safely and highlight alternative night time transport options;
- Additional police patrols on Friday and Saturday nights;
- Extra patrols of Community Safety Officers and Environmental Wardens;
- Youth work supporting City Centre Police Unit operations at Winter Wonderland;
- Mobile CCTV units at hotspots within the city;
- A joint initiative between Police and Council Licensing Standards Officers, providing support and guidance for licensed premises. This will include: early evening patrols of off sales premises to prevent underage selling; patrols of pubs and nightclubs with advice and support to licensees to prevent over-consumption of alcohol and associated problems; and monitoring of licensed premises to ensure compliance with licensing laws;
- Gateway checks by police and bus route managers on main arterial routes into town, providing a visible presence and early identification of potential problems; and
- Transport Police will conduct a Safe Journey operation on the rail network throughout the city providing reassurance and to address issues of antisocial behaviour.

Green Christmas

The Council is providing a Christmas tree recycling and composting service in January for residents without brown garden waste bins. Details are being sent to the relevant premises. The compost will help keep Edinburgh's parks and gardens looking good.

Residents should place their Christmas tree beside their on-street communal wheelie bins (or on the kerbside if in an area without communal refuse

containers) by 7am on one of the following days, depending on which neighbourhood they live in:

East	6th, 13th, 20th January
North	7th, 14th, 21st January
West/South West	8th, 15th, 22nd January
South	9th, 16th, 23rd January
City Centre	Between 5th-9th, 12th-16th or 19th-23rd January

Christmas trees can also be recycled at Edinburgh's four community recycling centres. Residents in the garden waste collection scheme, which was recently extended to a year-round service, should cut up their trees and place them in their brown bin for collection. Details of Edinburgh's festive waste arrangements can be found at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/waste Details of Edinburgh's all year round recycling services can be found at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/recycle

3 Lloyds TSB a commitment to Scotland

I met recently with Archie Kane and Eric Daniels, who are leading for Lloyds TSB on the merger with HBOS. They advised me of the main points of the strategy they will pursue should the proposed acquisition of HBOS plc complete in January 2009. In particular they advised me that Bank of Scotland, Halifax and Lloyds TSB will all continue to operate on the high street once the proposed acquisition is completed.

The integration of Bank of Scotland and Lloyds TSB Scotland's banking businesses will extend over a two to three year period. The Mound would become the Scottish Headquarters for the Lloyds Banking Group. A detailed review of the new Group's Scottish portfolio, including the size and shape of the branch network, is currently being undertaken. This work will not be completed for some time. Until then, there will be no change to any of the current brands, customers, branches or colleagues.

4 Building for the Future

Princes Street Set for First Tram Tracks

Princes Street will see its first tram tracks early next year. This phase of construction work is quite different to the previous utility works where the complex task of moving and upgrading pipes and cables was all underground. You will now get a real sense of the tram system coming together as the actual tracks go down.

This major construction work will mean traffic management changes. These have been rigorously examined by a Peer Review Group I established, as I was determined that lessons would be learned from previous road closures. The option being recommended is a closure to all traffic on Princes Street. This will enable work to be completed more quickly. Businesses and retailers

have strongly advocated progressing the work as quickly as possible. Should Council agree, closure would begin in February, and the work completed in time for Christmas 2009. We are liaising with stakeholders on whether a Summer Festivals' embargo would be desirable.

21st Century Homes

As part of the Council's proposals to build council homes for the first time in nearly 20 years, Development Groups have now been set up in Pennywell, Gracemount and North Sighthill. Led by Services for Communities, each group has representation from local residents as well as other local stakeholders and will be heavily involved in guiding the development of the masterplan for their area. This work will be taken forward once consultants have been appointed in March 2009.

New Sports Pavilions

Good progress is being made on the sports pavilions which the Council is building at Bingham Park, East Pilton Park and Fernieside Recreation Ground. The pavilion at Fernieside Recreation Ground was handed over to the Council on 24 November 2008 and the pavilions at the other two sites are on schedule to be completed by the end of the year. The three pavilions cost £1.56M. This work is part of the Council's commitment to improve the quality of Edinburgh's pavilions and pitches as outlined in the Sports Pitch Strategy. Edinburgh Leisure will manage these pavilions for the rest of this football season. Each pavilion will be leased to a club before the start of the next football season in August 2009.

Craigmillar Country Park

A new £120,000 adventure play park was opened recently as part of the attractions of Craigmillar Castle Country Park. The structure boasts slides and aerial walkways, nets, swings and hammocks, all adding to the wow factor for children and is the biggest structure of its type in the UK. The Council's Parks Design Team took a green approach to reduce the impact of the construction works on the Country Park environment, by retaining and shaping the excavations to form a grass mound around the play area replacing the need for a fence and off-site transport costs.

Grassmarket Improvements

Improvements to the public realm in the Grassmarket, as part of the larger Capital Streets Project, will be completed by the end of December. The redevelopment and planned programme of quality events will help ensure that the Grassmarket becomes a unique focus for tourism activity within the city's World Heritage Site. A creative lighting strategy, commissioned by the Council as part of the redevelopment project, will enhance points of interest such as the Flodden Wall, the Covenanters Memorial and the Gallows. I would

encourage you all to visit the newly redeveloped Grassmarket if you have not already done so – and do check www.grassmarket.net for information about other events throughout the year.

5 Edinburgh – Scotland’s Capital

Homecoming Scotland 2009

Homecoming Scotland 2009 celebrates the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns with a year-long programme of events across the country. The programme also recognises some of Scotland’s great contributions to the world: great minds and innovations, entrepreneurial spirit, golf, whisky and Scotland’s rich culture and heritage. For every Scot living in their native land there are estimated to be at least five more living overseas with Scottish ancestry: Homecoming programme is an invitation to them to return and visit.

Scotland’s capital city has a crucial role to play. Edinburgh is hosting some of the most important events, including *The Gathering* – one of the largest clan gatherings ever. Two days of Highland Games in Holyrood Park, on 25/26 July, will culminate with a parade by clan members up the Royal Mile to take part in a spectacular Clan Pageant on the Castle esplanade.

IAAF Cross Country Championship

The Sunday Mail awarded the title of Scottish Sports Event of 2008 to the World Cross Country Championships held in Edinburgh in March. I am pleased that the joint work by the Council and its partners to make this a successful event has achieved this recognition, following nominations from the general public. To build on the success of the World Cross Country Championships a legacy event is being developed and will target young people to encourage their participation in the sport.

The Council, EventScotland and Nova International have also worked in partnership to present the Great Edinburgh International Cross Country Race in January 2009. This annual race is a prestigious event, second only to the World Cross Country Championships. The race will be televised live on BBC1 on 10 January. A mass participation event, the Great Winter Run, will take place around Arthur’s Seat on the same day.

6 Looking After Our Citizens

Improving Care for Older People

We are determined to provide care at home for those who want it, and modern, custom built facilities for those for whom independent living is no longer appropriate. Building new modernised care homes, affordable and accessible housing and providing intensive support to people in their own homes are three key proposals included in Live Well in Later Life, the joint Capacity Plan for Older People. These developments will progress our

objective of shifting the balance of care away from residential accommodation towards people receiving tailor-made support in their own homes. The Council currently owns 14 residential homes which will require to be replaced with homes built to modern standards. It is intended to use some of the sites of the existing homes for the development of custom built housing for older people.

Protecting Adults

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 came into force in October. It established a statutory basis for the good practice followed in Edinburgh under the "Protection of Vulnerable Adults" multi-agency guidance. The Act introduced new measures for the support and protection of adults at risk of harm and complements other adult protection legislation.

The City of Edinburgh's Adult Protection Committee – responsible for overseeing the delivery of better coordinated adult protection services and for developing guidance, procedures and multi-agency training – has been operating for over a year. This mirrors the long-established Child Protection Committee arrangements and brings a welcome emphasis to this important area of the Council's work. A comprehensive programme has been established in Edinburgh to ensure that elected members and staff are aware of their respective roles and responsibilities under the Act. The Council and its partners in health and the police respond to increasing numbers of adult protection referrals – over 55 in October alone. This Act represents a welcome focus on this difficult subject.

Working for Families

Working for Families aims to help parents to access employment and training opportunities. The Advisor Service has registered over 1400 parents. A recent event provided key stakeholders with an opportunity to meet parents who had benefited from the service and to discuss with a wide range of agencies how they had worked with the service to support the target group. Advisors help at all stages in taking up a job, through confidence building, job workshops, guidance on training, volunteering and childcare. The service can also help parents to sustain their employment during difficult periods.

Tackling Homelessness

The Homelessness Strategy was agreed earlier this year by the Council and voluntary sector partners. The priorities are to prevent homelessness, to give better access to homes (particularly those in the private sector) and to help people stay in their accommodation.

Since launching the strategy, the Council and its partners have been increasingly successful in helping people prevent homelessness and find and keep a home. Over one-third of people who approach the Council receive advice which prevents them becoming homeless. Similarly, more people are

being helped to find accommodation in the private rented sector. So far this year, over 12% of people have found housing in the private rented sector as a solution to their homelessness.

New services are currently being commissioned to make sure we can deliver on the strategy's priorities. Commissioning is being done through a clear and transparent tendering process to make sure that services are high quality and provide value for money. This will secure services which help us deliver our ambitious strategy to end homelessness in the city. These will increase access to private sector housing for those who are homeless and deliver a wide range of support to help people stay in their homes. For the first time support will be more clearly aimed at preventing people from losing their homes in the first place. New services are due to be in place from 1 April.

In the run up to, and over, the Christmas and New Year period, services will be available to people who are at risk of losing their home. The Council operates an emergency out of office telephone number (0800 032 5968) and temporary accommodation can be made available as necessary. Staff will also provide advice and information throughout the period.

Investment in Affordable Housing

The Council has submitted its Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) for affordable housing to the Scottish Government. The Plan shows that the Council and Registered Social Landlords in the city could deliver 6,700 additional affordable homes over the next five years if sufficient funding was available from the Scottish Government. The SHIP estimates that funding should be increased from £36m to £83m in 2009/10 and £95m in 2010/11 to enable the Council to deliver its long term housing strategy to meet the need for 12,000 new affordable homes over ten years.

Edinburgh's chronic shortage of affordable housing is now well established. The city has some of the highest house prices in the UK, an acute shortage of council and housing association homes for people on low incomes, and a growing demand as the population of the city grows. Over 150 people bid for every available council and housing association house in the city. Provision of a range of housing options across all tenures is essential if the city is to maintain its economic viability and its desire to remain one of the main drivers of the Scottish economy.

The credit crunch and current economic climate is having a major impact on the delivery of new housing. However, the current climate also provides opportunities to increase the pace of delivery of affordable housing. The Council and partners have identified opportunities to purchase land and unsold properties that could go a long way towards addressing the need.

Recently the Scottish Government announced additional funding of £18m for affordable housing projects in 16 local authority areas. The Council was disappointed not to receive any of this funding. The Council is continuing to

make the case to Scottish Government for a share of the remaining £12m of additional funding that is yet to be allocated in this financial year.

Enhanced Environmental Warden Service

An evening Environmental Warden service has been introduced throughout the city, to complement existing provision. Environmental Wardens now provide a 24/7 presence ensuring the safe operation of tables and chairs permits as well as tackling problems such as the illegal presentation of business and domestic waste, littering, dog fouling, fly tipping and graffiti.

Besides complementing the existing Night-time Noise Teams and Licensing Standards Officers, the Environmental Wardens will work closely with the Police in undertaking joint patrols to provide public reassurance. The city-wide CCTV network capability will also benefit from the presence of more officers on the streets.

7 Showcasing the City

Lothian Pension Fund

Congratulations to Lothian Pension Fund who have become the first division in the Council to achieve the Cabinet Office's Customer Service Excellence Award. This new scheme has replaced Charter Mark and ensures that services are designed around the needs of the members. Lothian Pension Fund is the first local government pension scheme in the UK to achieve the award for administration, investment and accounting.

Standard Life Achievement Awards

Congratulations to all the winners at the Standard Life Achievement Awards. This is the ninth year of the awards, which are a partnership between Standard Life and Children and Families. The awards celebrate success, best practice, and innovation in all aspects of Children and Families work. An audience of more than 300 watched the winning teams receive awards including, St Augustine's RC High School, Queensferry Early Years Centre and the Quality Improvement Team.

Reducing Household Waste

Edinburgh is producing less waste per household than any other Scottish local authority. In 2007/08, Edinburgh produced 1.18 tonnes per household, well below the Scottish average of 1.44. The city also has Scotland's second lowest level of waste to landfill per household at 881kg.

Chamber of Commerce Wins Top Award

Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce were winners of the Chamber Awards 2008 for Excellence in Membership Services. The award is made to the Chamber of Commerce that has demonstrated excellence and achievement within the field of customer care and service to its Members.

MSc in Advanced Social Work Studies

The Council's Health and Social Care Department and the Social Work Department at Edinburgh University have worked closely over the last year to develop a course focusing on services for adults at risk of harm. This is the first course of its type in the UK and will be launched as a pilot with a small group of employees from the Council and NHS Lothian undertaking the Post Graduate Certificate. Success of the pilot may lead to this course being made more widely available within the city and across the country.

Re-enablement Commended

I am delighted that the work being done in Health and Social Care in changing the way the Home Care Service operates has been identified as an example of good practice at "Into the Spotlight", a national conference. A key theme of our budget, the move to intervention through Re-abling teams, is focussed on maximising individual's independence through intensive initial care and relearning or acquiring skills which enable them to live as independently as possible. By Spring next year all areas of Edinburgh will have fully implemented Re-ablement following its successful introduction in South East and North East sectors of the city.

Schools and Nurseries in the Spotlight

Edinburgh's schools and nurseries have received more national recognition. Cowgate Under 5s Centre can now rightly claim they are the best in Britain after winning Nursery World Magazine's 'Nursery of the Year'. This is a great honour and is further recognition for the wonderful work of the centre which earlier this year received a highly positive HMIE report.

Greendykes Child and Family Centre has received one of the best ever inspection reports for a pre-school centre in Scotland being awarded excellent ratings against all evaluation criteria. In a joint report by HM Inspectorate of Education and the Care Commission praises Greendyke's high performance, strong record of improvement and inspirational leadership.

The overall quality of education at the centre was evaluated against five indicators: improvements in performance, children's experiences, meeting learning needs, the curriculum and improvement through self-evaluation. This is further evidence of the high quality of early years' education we provide in Edinburgh.

The new Niddrie Mill/St Francis Joint Campus, which officially opened last month, has also won a prestigious award. The new school building, which was designed by architects Elder and Cannon, has won the Education Category at the Glasgow Institute of Architecture annual awards. Elder and Cannon have designed our two new PPP primary schools at Bonaly and Juniper Green and these are also exceptional school buildings.

Working with Schools and Businesses

Capital Skills, our Vocational Skills Centre, is once again supporting the Construction Skills Challenge. 300 secondary pupils from Edinburgh and the Lothians are taking part in the annual challenge organised by Telford, Oatridge and West Lothian Colleges and Napier and Heriot Watt Universities as well our own Capital Skills, BEST (Building Engineering Services Training) and SECT (Scottish Electrical Charitable Training Trust). The challenge is supported by ConstructionSkills, the Sector Skills Council for Construction and funded by the Scottish Government. Teams are judged on teamwork, understanding, tidiness, time and accuracy by lecturers from the colleges and universities. The final will be held on January 29 with the winning team members receiving book vouchers and their school a cheque for £300.

FutureChef

Congratulations to Lauren Ferguson-Wardle, winner of the Edinburgh FutureChef Heat. Lauren, from George Heriot's School, will represent Edinburgh on 21st January at the Central and South Scotland Regional Final. FutureChef aims to foster an interest in cooking as a career for students aged 12 to 16 years, while also aiming to provide valuable life skills.

Planning Delegation Visit to City

Edinburgh is widely regarded as the exemplar in hosting major events and in responding to and managing crises. The Council welcomed a delegation from Northern Ireland to learn about how the Council undertakes emergency planning and business continuity. The delegation included representatives from local and national government, commercial organisations and statutory bodies. A number of presentations were made by contingency planning and public safety staff on a range of topics including emergency planning, community resilience and events planning. I welcome such opportunities to share good practice and foster relationships with colleagues in other areas of the UK and I thank all those involved in the arrangements behind this visit.

International Recognition for Community Safety

Officials from The Hague visited Edinburgh last month to learn more about how the city is protected by the Police and the Council's Community Safety division. The delegation took part in a two day tour which involved visiting key community safety related destinations around the city including the CCTV unit, police headquarters, the Risk Factory and a number of other sites. The

delegation was welcomed to the city by the Lord Provost and also met the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and members of the Edinburgh Violence Reduction Programme.

Play Development

Margaret Westwood, the Council's Senior Play Development Officer, has been recognised by Play Scotland. Margaret was presented with a Play Achievement Award as part of its 10th Anniversary celebrations in recognition of her extraordinary contribution to the work of Play Scotland. Margaret has been a member of Play Scotland since 1998, has served on the Board of Directors since 2001, chairing the organisation from 2005. She navigated Play Scotland through challenging times and inspired the Board and staff to make enormous progress for the child's right to play in Scotland.

City Shortlisted for Sustainability Award

Edinburgh is Scotland's only Council shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle and Health Service Journal Sustainable Communities Awards 2009. Together with PARC (Promoting and Regenerating Craigmillar) the Council is up against three English local authorities for the 'Regeneration' award. The short listing recognises the achievements and goals of PARC in breathing new life into Craigmillar, one of Edinburgh's most deprived communities.

Established as a joint venture between the Council and the EDI Group (an arms-length company of the Council), PARC is now four years into the delivery of a 15-year, £200m business plan which will deliver new homes, primary schools, a public library, a 150-acre park, high quality public realm and transport infrastructure and a refurbished town centre with office, retail and leisure space.

Toy Design Award

Budding inventors from an Edinburgh school have received an award for their innovative safe toy designs. Pupils at Woodlands School in Currie won £500 from the British Toy & Hobby Association after impressing judges with their entry for the 2008 Trading Standards Institute PlaySafe competition. While most competition entries were in the form of A4 designs, Woodlands pupils actually constructed their interactive toys. In recognition of Woodlands' success as the first special school to enter the competition there will now be a special school category.

The Edinburgh Gang Show

This year's Gang Show should be very proud of their achievements. Keeping up the tradition of the first show held in 1960, it had everything we have come to expect from this annual jamboree of local talent - and a few surprises. Boys and girls from across the city got to tread the boards and perform at the King's

Theatre to the delight of audiences. In addition to those appearing, an army was also busy back stage ensuring music, props, make up and costumes were up to standard. The Gang Show is a huge team effort and my thanks go to all who gave up their time to produce one of Edinburgh's "certainties", which holds fond memories for many.

8 Centre Focus

Council Headquarters - Waverley Court

At our November Council meeting, we agreed to support the purchase of Waverley Court, our award winning Headquarters Building. This is a very good deal for the authority and an investment for the future. I was therefore delighted to be informed that the offer to purchase was submitted, agreed, and the bargain concluded, only seven days after our decision was made with the transfer taking place on 27 November 2008.

James Clerk Maxwell

The first statue for almost a century was recently unveiled in George Street by Alex Fergusson MSP, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament. The statue commemorates James Clerk Maxwell, upon whom much of our modern technological society, from the computer to telecommunications, rests. The unveiling of this gift to the city is a credit to everyone who raised funds and who contributed to its creation.

City Centre Neighbourhood Plan

The City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership has launched a 3-year community plan. The main objective of the plan is to improve the quality of life for people living in the City Centre by developing programmes of activities and initiatives with other partners such as the Police and the NHS to deliver better neighbourhood services.

The plan has been drawn up following a series of consultation events that involved listening to a wide range of city centre residents, workers, students, and visitors who told us what they think are the issues affecting the quality of life in the area. These included:

- Improving the cleanliness of city centre streets and public areas;
- Protecting, supporting and promoting the smaller retail areas in the city centre;
- Improving city centre pavements, roads, and drainage;
- Providing a more visible police presence in the city centre; and
- The city centre remaining a living city centre where residents have access to a full range of services

The plan deals with how the different Partnership members will address these issues over the next three years.

9 Festive Greeting

May I take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2009.

Councillor Jenny Dawe
Leader City of Edinburgh Council