

Notice of decision regarding the Implementation of Firework Control Zones

Thursday, 21 August 2025

Firework Control Zones

1. Confirmation of Council Decision

- 1.1 This notice summarises the decision taken by the City of Edinburgh Council, Culture and Communities Committee to implement Firework Control Zones (FCZ's) in Edinburgh at Balerno, Calton Hill, Corstorphine, Gracemount, Longstone, Moredun, Niddrie, Seafield, and Sighthill for the period between the 31st of October to 9th of November 2025 in line with Police Scotland's Dispersal zones.
- 1.2 The report also sets out the provisions being created to tackle youth inclusion and participation surrounding the bonfire period across the city.

2. Background

Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022

- 2.1 The Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022 ("the Act") became law on 10 August 2022. The Act contains key provisions designed to support a cultural shift in how fireworks and other pyrotechnic articles are used in Scotland.
- 2.2 A FCZ is an area within a local authority's boundaries in which if you ignite a firework in a zone or knowingly or recklessly throw, cast or fire a firework into a zone it is a criminal offence including on a private property (such as a garden) and would apply to individuals or households who wish to arrange a firework display at their home.
- 2.3 This does not apply to public firework displays delivered by professional firework operators or community groups, clubs or similar organisations.
- 2.4 Designation of FCZs is a discretionary power for local authorities, providing the option of a specific targeted response that meets the needs of communities. They are not designed to be the first or only step taken by local authorities to tackle issues associated with firework use, to be used extensively, or to encompass an entire local authority area and should be viewed as one tool within a range of enforcement and preventative tools available to seek to resolve issues involving

fireworks.

- 2.5 The Scottish Government has published [Firework Control Zones Guidance for Local Authorities](#) (“the Guidance”) to which local authorities must have regard. The Guidance supports local authorities to make informed decisions concerning the designation, amendment, or revocation of FCZs.
- 2.6 The factors to consider in respect of a FCZ are:
 - 2.6.1 Mitigating circumstances: misuse of fireworks/injuries, impact on vulnerable groups, environmental protection, and animal welfare;
 - 2.6.2 Is there a historical nature to complaints within the designated area a FCZ has been requested from the police or fire services; and
 - 2.6.3 Are there any historical complaints about the designated area of a proposed FCZ made to the Council in Family and Household Support, Trading Standards or Public Safety. If there has, has it been captured via the city's CCTV network to show just cause for the implementation of an FCZ.

Dispersal Zones

- 2.7 As set out in 3.4 above, FCZ's are not intended to be a catch-all solution to deal with issues involving fireworks and should be used alongside other preventative and enforcement tools such as Dispersal Zones and the preventative Community Improvement Partnership (CIP).
- 2.8 It is likely that Police Scotland will again introduce Dispersal Zones this year in an attempt to combat antisocial behaviour and disorder over the bonfire period using the powers set out within the [Antisocial Behaviour Scotland Act 2004](#). Dispersal Zones enable the Police to instruct groups of two or more people who are congregating and behaving in an antisocial manner in these areas to disperse. Those who fail to comply or fail to stay away for up to 24 hours can face arrest.

Citywide Bonfire Strategic Planning Community Improvement Partnership (CIP)

- 2.9 Partners created the Bonfire CIP in January 2018, to develop a co-ordinated and consistent partnership response to resource planning for Bonfire Night focusing on keeping people safe.
- 2.10 The CIP convenes regularly, its membership includes Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), Lothian Association of Youth Clubs (LAYC), Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) (in particular Places for People and Wheatley Group), Lothian Buses, Scottish Ambulance Service, the City of Edinburgh Council, and EHSCP (Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership). Since February 2025, the Bonfire CIP has had regular meetings to support Bonfire Night safety planning and preparations for this year.
- 2.11 Bonfire CIP partners individually and collectively are planning to progress a range of preparatory activities in the lead up to Bonfire Night including:
 - 2.11.1 Concierge services (for the Council) and RSLs conducting spotter patrols

and uplift activities in communal stairs and green spaces to ensure areas were free from combustibles;

- 2.11.2 Patrols in fly tipping hotspots and open spaces for hazardous material and removal of accumulations;
- 2.11.3 Week of action to be supported by the Council's housing teams and community volunteers in mid-October to tidy up identified local areas (including fly tipping removal, litter picking and free removal of bulky items for a limited period ahead of Bonfire Night);
- 2.11.4 Council co-ordination of CCTV cameras in collaboration with Police Scotland, to gather any relevant evidence on Bonfire Night and deployment of movable CCTV cameras to provide coverage in known hotspots;
- 2.11.5 Lothian Buses and Police Scotland joint patrols, including police officers boarding buses in hot spot areas to engage with passengers and young people.
- 2.11.6 Engaging with young people and their parents through targeted joint partner visits to provide advice in relation to safety and antisocial behaviour during the bonfire period;
- 2.11.7 Liaising with youth clubs and diversionary activity providers to ensure that plans are in place for Bonfire Night to discourage people from engaging in antisocial behaviour;
- 2.11.8 Liaising with educational services to create a coordinated approach to addressing youth inclusion, creating plans for diversionary activities and promoting relationship building to allow lasting change in challenging behaviours;
- 2.11.9 SFRS delivering educational presentations in secondary schools on bonfire and fireworks safety;
- 2.11.10 Visits to all premises licensed to store and sell fireworks to conduct safety checks and provide advice on safe fireworks storage, underage sales, unlicensed sales and penalties for non-compliance;
- 2.11.11 Raising awareness amongst young people to improve understanding of Dispersal Zones and their impact through Police Scotland School Liaison Officers; and
- 2.11.12 Working in partnership with Police Scotland and other partners to carry out a youth summit on how to challenge and engage young people in the lead up to and throughout the bonfire period.

- 2.12 Following the successful delivery of youth diversionary activities and uptake from the Voluntary Youth Work Sector, LAYC have already started to engage youth organisations across the city to support the co-ordination of preventative and other activity in the lead up to, and on, Bonfire night this year. LAYC will again offer small grant funding for organisations to provide diversionary activities for young people,

supplementing the contributions awarded by the Bonfire CIP. The Council, Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, Police Scotland and Places for People are also providing additional engagement with young people and organisations, including match funding of resources to support different opportunities for young people particularly within the Niddrie area of the city.

Guidance for determining an FCZ

- 2.13 The Guidance set out by the Scottish Government has been universally adopted by Scottish local authorities and has informed the development of guidance for Edinburgh.

Legislation, Guidance and Advice

- 2.14 The guidance proposes an evidence-based and proportionate approach to FCZs and expects the local authority to demonstrate why it is considered necessary for any geographic area to be covered by a zone. Before designating a FCZ, the local authority must prepare and publish its proposal in relation to the designation. It must also consult with people who live or work in the place which will be affected, other members of the local community in or near the place and any other persons or bodies that the local authority considers having a connection with or be interested in/affected by the proposal.
- 2.15 The [legislation](#) enables Scottish Ministers to make further provision about FCZs and procedures to designate, amend or revoke a zone. This includes, but is not limited to, setting limits on the size of place that may be designated a FCZ or the cumulative area that a local authority may designate as zones.
- 2.16 Supporting the Guidance, Scottish Government officials have emphasised that the legislation was not intended to enable a FCZ to cover an entire local authority area and have indicated that, should one be implemented, they are likely to challenge this decision.
- 2.17 The SFRS have indicated that, where possible, they would support FCZs but have highlighted an issue of resources if a too large of an area is designated. Their consultation response confirms that they are concerned about committing to supporting something they do not have capacity to fulfil.
- 2.18 Police Scotland have indicated that their resources are focused on keeping the public, police and emergency personnel as well as wider partners safe and to ensure those responsible for the criminal and antisocial use of fireworks are brought to account. Planning for this year has been ongoing for several months and they are committed to working alongside SFRS, Scottish Ambulance Service, Scottish Government, SSPCA and the City of Edinburgh Council. They will also be engaging with young people through schools and youth services partners around the risks associated with fireworks and will be working with housing partners and waste services around collections throughout Edinburgh. Joint activity will also be conducted throughout October with Trading Standards to ensure the responsible sale and security of fireworks. Police officers will also be out with Lothian Buses and

Edinburgh Trams engaging with staff and public. There will be additional resources and patrols throughout the bonfire period and there will be a zero-tolerance approach towards violence and threatening behaviour.

- 2.19 Police Scotland have engaged with the FCZ process as a consultee providing analytical data to allow informed assessment by the Council. Their policing approach is always intelligence led, focusing resources where there is the greatest threat of risk and harm. If implemented, FCZ's will be one of a number of tactical options open to police to tackle criminality and anti-social behaviour.
- 2.20 Police Scotland have also taken a lead in working alongside partners to engage youth groups around Edinburgh by convening a youth summit to look at gaining their views on the best ways to speak, and work with them around this difficult period. This is due to take place in September 2025 and will include pupils from all of the state high schools around Edinburgh.

Sale and Purchase Controls

- 2.21 The Scottish Government have committed to a national fireworks licensing regime under part 2 of the Act, which is now expected in 2026 at the earliest.
- 2.22 The legislation will introduce a requirement that anyone buying retail fireworks in Scotland will need to be licensed and probably have completed relevant training as set by the Scottish Ministers. It is worth noting that this licensing regime will be national, including a national register, and will not be overseen by the City of Edinburgh Council or any other local authorities.
- 2.23 However, the Council will be responsible for compliance and enforcement in relation to any premises selling fireworks, to ensure they comply with the relevant legislation.

Fireworks licenses for retail premises

- 2.24 The number of retail premises licensed for the sale of fireworks remains at 22 licensed premises in Edinburgh. Informal feedback from several operators indicates they intend to review their position and plans for any sales following the consultation and implementation of FCZs in Edinburgh this year.

Committee and Council Decisions

- 2.25 On 19 June 2025, the Council approved an adjusted motion by Councillor Heap which requested:
 - 2.25.1 That officers make available the application form on the Council website; and
 - 2.25.2 That applications are accepted from the beginning of January until the end of April each calendar year in order to be considered in time for the traditional fireworks season in November and around Hogmanay.

3. Main report

Community Request Process

- 3.1 On 3 March 2025, the Council launched the application process for community organisations to apply for an FCZ for their local area for the period 31 October to the 9 November 2025 inclusive.

- 3.2 The communications plan for this included a dedicated webpage, alongside radio, social media and newspaper journals.
- 3.3 45 enquiries were received from citizens, community councils and various organisations, which included animal welfare organisations.
- 3.4 Four community applications which were in force in 2024 have now been approved for another FCZ which will be in place for a two-year period:
 - 3.4.1 The Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA) in Balerno.
 - 3.4.2 Edinburgh Cat and Dog Home in Seafield.
 - 3.4.3 Calton Hill Trust in the City Centre; and
 - 3.4.4 Elderly vulnerable service users and various services in the Niddrie area.
- 3.5 Five community applications for FCZs were received from for a one-year period:
 - 3.5.1 Edinburgh Zoo in Corstorphine.
 - 3.5.2 Longstone Community Council in Longstone.
 - 3.5.3 Gilmerton Community Council for Moredun area.
 - 3.5.4 The Murrays Residents Group in Gracemount; and
 - 3.5.5 Sighthill, Broomhouse and Parkhead Community council for the Sighthill area.
- 3.6 Two community applications for Greenbank West and East were not taken forward due to the lack of evidence presented and there was no endorsement from statutory partners.

Firework Control Zone consultations

- 3.7 Nine local applications were progressed for wider consultation with residents, businesses and local community councils within the area that is being proposed for an FCZ.
- 3.8 A six-week period of consultation was held from June to July, with approximately 1800 responses regarding the nine proposed FCZ's.
- 3.9 Details of the consultation responses are provided in Section 9 of this report.

Youth Engagement

- 3.10 After a meeting held by the Chief Executive, with lead partners in from Police Scotland, SFRS, Council services (Education, Youth Services, Community Safety) and third sector representatives, there has been work carried out to create a comprehensive suite of measures in each locality around the city focusing on various youth organised events taking place over the bonfire period:
 - 3.10.1 Police Scotland has taken a lead role in the creation of a Youth Summit which looks to bring together various partner agencies in the Council, SFRS, NHS Lothian, Lothian Buses and third sector organisations. At this event the hope is to have representation of a number of students from every school in Edinburgh coming together to understand the issues at the bonfire period

and to give their voice on how to help shape and address these issues. This will then create a platform from which we can engage the youth around Edinburgh with;

3.10.2 SFRS have now created a role for an Officer to work solely with young people across the city. Their remit is to carry out the Fire Skills course over a shorter period of time, allowing more young people to access this course; and

3.10.3 Engagement with the third sector has begun to look at support for the city wide issues that took place in Edinburgh, however there has also been particular support above this to look at putting in place more robust measures for areas affected by large issues affecting areas around Edinburgh for e.g. Moredun, Sighthill and Gracemount.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The nine zones emerged because of applications received from residents or organisations and from previous applications which have been asked to be extended for a longer period. These FCZ's have been broadly supported through consultation. Further information on the feedback received is outlined in Section 9.
- 4.2 The decision of Committee will be provided in writing to each of the organisations who have submitted an application, and the required 60-day lay period will be applied from 29 August 2025 to allow for appeals to be made. If no appeals are received, following the 60 day lay period, the Council can proceed with designating a FCZ to take effect from 31 October 2025.
- 4.3 The Committee decision will be communicated in writing to each of the organisations who have applied, and the required 60 day lay period will be applied from 29 August 2025 to allow for appeals to be made. If no appeals are received, following the 60 day lay period, the Council can proceed with designating a FCZ to take effect from 31 October 2025.
- 4.4 A summary of the implementation in November 2025 will be reported to Committee in February 2026, with details of plans for 2026.

Other Activities

- 4.5 Through the Citywide Bonfire Strategic Planning CIP, the activities outlined in this report will be carried out. These will be supported by co-ordinated public safety messages, social media activity and posters. Safety awareness letters will be issued to residents in hotspot areas.
- 4.6 A multi-agency command arrangement (with the Council, Police Scotland, SFRS and Lothian Buses) will be in place to ensure efficient and co-ordinated deployment of resources where required, allowing a swift response to address reports of bonfire/fire-related antisocial behaviour, criminal activity and minimising the risk of harm to staff, the public and transport/emergency services.

- 4.7 A Youth Summit is being held on the 9th of September 2025 in conjunction with partners, led by Police Scotland and supported by the City of Edinburgh Council. This will look at including all the schools across the City of Edinburgh. This is to look at gaining the young people's insight on the best ways to engage in conversation with them in the guise of various different formats and media types regarding the bonfire period.
- 4.8 There are also on-going discussions with the local community in the Niddrie area, including Sandy's Community Centre and other partners, following the success of the community led event which took place in the Niddrie area in 2024.

Planning for 2026

- 4.9 Officers are working on updating the Council website with information about the application process for 2026, including (if possible) making the application form available on the Council website.
- 4.10 Applications will be accepted from early January until the end of April 2026.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The Scottish Government has agreed to provide local authorities with additional funding equivalent of up to £19,000 per consulted and implemented zone.

6. Key Policies

Equality and Poverty

- 6.1 The proposals within this report will be subject to the Council's Equality and Poverty Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process, in line with the Equality and Diversity Framework 2021–2025 and the End Poverty in Edinburgh Delivery Plan. The Council has a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. The implementation of FCZs must therefore ensure that:
- 6.1.1 Measures do not disproportionately impact protected groups or those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage;
 - 6.1.2 Communications and consultations are accessible to all residents, including provision in multiple formats and languages;
 - 6.1.3 Opportunities for youth and community engagement are maximised, particularly in areas identified as having higher levels of deprivation.
 - 6.1.4 This approach will ensure that the FCZs contribute positively to community safety while aligning with the Council's strategic objective to reduce poverty and inequality across the city.

Climate and Nature Emergencies

- 6.2 An [International Evidence Review](#), published by the Scottish Government in October 2019, highlighted that fireworks can pollute the air with gases and particles, which can contain metals and other elements that are potentially harmful to human health. Local air pollution, the frequency of cultural traditions involving fireworks and meteorological factors can all influence the impacts of fireworks on the environment; and the extent of these impacts in Scotland is unknown.

Environmental Impacts

- 6.3 Fireworks release a range of pollutants, including fine particulate matter (PM2.5), heavy metals, and gases that can have adverse effects on air quality, soil health, and water systems. In addition to these chemical pollutants, firework debris can pose littering hazards and threaten wildlife if not properly managed. The introduction of FCZs provides an opportunity to:
- 6.3.1 Minimise emissions in areas already experiencing air quality pressures;
 - 6.3.2 Reduce risks to sensitive habitats, particularly near watercourses, parks, and conservation sites; and
 - 6.3.3 Support public education on the environmental impacts of fireworks and promote cleaner alternatives.
 - 6.3.4 This policy area directly supports the Council's Environmental Policy 2024–2029 and Waste Prevention and Recycling Plan, ensuring that FCZs contribute to a broader approach to environmental protection and responsible resource use.

Housing Emergency

- 6.4 The Council declared a Housing Emergency in 2024, with the Housing Emergency Action Plan and forthcoming Local Housing Strategy 2025–2030 setting out a programme to prevent homelessness, protect tenants, and improve housing quality. FCZs in residential areas, particularly in communities with high proportions of social housing or temporary accommodation, will be designed and implemented to:
- 6.4.1 Reduce the risk of fire and property damage in communal and high-density housing settings;
 - 6.4.2 Avoid exacerbating stress or instability for residents in vulnerable housing situations; and
 - 6.4.3 Work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and housing services to ensure preventative safety measures are in place.
- 6.5 The approach aligns with the Council's objectives to safeguard residents, protect housing stock and maintain community stability.

7 Risk, compliance, governance and community impact

- 7.3 The Scottish Government consulted with communities, local authorities, and

stakeholders prior to developing the Act with additional public consultation events held in 2023 as part of the development of the Firework Control Zone Guidance for Local Authorities.

- 7.4 The legislation and associated guidance require that the Council demonstrates why it is considered necessary for a geographic area to be covered by a zone and any approved zone should be evidence-based and proportionate.
- 7.5 The Council sought feedback from communities on localised FCZs, with nine areas being identified.
- 7.6 The consultation closed on the 29 July 2025. The table below summarises the number of responses received.

Option	Total	Percent
An individual	1756	97.66%
On behalf of an organisation	42	2.34%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

- 7.7 The breakdown of support or opposition for each FCZ consultation is shown in the table below:

	Balerno	Calton Hill	Corstorphine	Gilmerton	Gracemount	Longstone	Niddrie	Seafield	Sighthill
Strongly support	82.00%	83.00%	94.00%	93.98%	84.00%	90%	96.00%	84.00%	90.00%
Support	4.00%	2.00%	3.00%	3.61%	6.00%	4.00%	2.00%	6.00%	3.00%
Neither support or oppose	0.00%	3.00%	0.40%	0.00%	1.00%	1.00%	0.80%	1.00%	1.00%
Oppose	0.00%	5.00%	0.09%	0.00%	1.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.00%	2.00%
Strongly oppose	12.00%	7.00%	3.00%	1.20%	8.00%	5.00%	2.00%	5.00%	4.00%

8 Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Fireworks and Pyrotechnics Articles \(Scotland\) Act 2022 relating to Firework Control Zones.](#)
- 8.2 [Scottish Government Guidance](#)
- 8.1.1 On 27 February 2025, Committee received a [report](#) on Firework Control Zones in Edinburgh. The [decision](#) of Committee was:
- 8.1.2 To note the update on Firework Control Zones (FCZs) by the Interim Executive Director of Place and the implementation of four zones in 2024, including feedback from applicants and lessons learned;

- 8.1.3 To agree to proceed with an eight week consultation on three areas where there was disorder in 2024 for the period 1 – 10 November 2025: Niddrie, Sighthill/Broomhouse and Gracemount/Moredun;
- 8.3.1 To note that applications would be invited for local FCZs in the city for the period 1 – 10 November 2025;
- 8.3.2 To agree an eight week consultation period for any local FCZ applications received;
- 8.3.3 To note that the outcome of the FCZ consultation would be reported to Culture and Communities Committee on 21 August 2025;
- 8.3.4 To note that Committee requested the Convener write to the Scottish Government seeking advice on whether there had been any change to FCZ guidance with regard to a city-wide zone, and that the response confirmed there had not;
- 8.3.5 To believe that to consult again on a city-wide zone without a change in Scottish Government guidance would be setting up respondents and campaigners for disappointment;
- 8.3.6 To note the success of the SFRS Fire Skills programme and request that ahead of the 2025 Bonfire Season, Council officers explore proactively supporting more young people within the school communities at the centre of historic incidents of ASB into the programme, detailing this work in the consultation outcome report scheduled for August;
- 8.3.7 To note there was no explanation given why it was being proposed the Calton Hill, Balerno and Seafield Zones were not being recommended for renewal;
- 8.3.8 To note that the report highlighted success of the Zones on Calton Hill and in Balerno;
- 8.3.9 That consultations proceed on these three zones (as detailed in 9 and 10 above), as well as the others proposed.
- 8.3.10 Following the decision of Committee on 27 February 2025, the period of implementation around Bonfire Night was amended (from 1 November – 9 November to 31 October – 9 November) to align with Police Scotland’s Dispersal Zone plans in 2025.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultation Report.