



Winning a Bright New Future for Edinburgh

**The Liberal Democrat manifesto for
EDINBURGH
for 2007 and beyond**

.. working with you for a bright new future ..



A Liberal Democrat run Edinburgh would:

- be a clean city
- be a green city
- be a safe city
- be a free-moving city
- be an open and democratic city
- get the basics right
- provide flexible, quality services for all
- have a listening and empowering Council
- ensure schools meet everybody's needs
- look after the vulnerable
- look after our heritage
- be a great place to live, work and play
- be business-friendly

A Liberal Democrat run Edinburgh Council would:

- put **you** first
- work **with you**
- listen to **you**
- deliver high quality services **you** want
- give **you** more say in decision-making
- give **you** value for money
- respond to **you** quickly and courteously
- give **you** a vibrant capital city to be proud of
- give **you** and the city a bright new future



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Introduction

Edinburgh is a great place to live, a fine city in which to work and a fantastic locality to visit. However, Edinburgh has been let down by a Council that is remote, impersonal and does not listen to what people want. Edinburgh needs a new Council worthy of its people.

At the last elections to the Edinburgh Council in 2003, Liberal Democrats were only a few hundred votes behind Labour. However, the First Past the Post voting system meant that we ended up with half the number of councillors that Labour had. Now, thanks to Liberal Democrat persistence in the Scottish Parliament, after 23 years of Labour rule, the introduction of a fair voting system for local council elections gives a real opportunity for political change in the City of Edinburgh Council. The more Liberal Democrat councillors that are elected in the elections on 03 May 2007, the better the chance we have of working with you to improve our great capital city.

As the main opposition group on the Council since 1999, the Liberal Democrats have worked hard to promote giving power to communities, to protecting the environment and to improving services for all. We have stood up time and again for our principles of fairness, openness and accountability. We have opposed the secrecy and arrogance that has been a mark of Labour's administration. We have questioned policies and practices that are not fair. We have sought to make life better for all in Edinburgh and further afield.

We know that people want to live in affordable houses in decent neighbourhoods, with clean streets that they can walk safely at any time of the day or night. We know that people want to have good leisure facilities with fun things to do for all the family. We know that people want better front-line services, with less red tape and with budgets spent wisely. We know that people care about what happens to their relatives and themselves as they age. We know that people want good transport links and have global concerns about protecting the world's resources.

A Liberal Democrat Edinburgh would address all of these desires, and more. A Liberal Democrat Edinburgh would be a vibrant city that would protect our unrivalled heritage and provide sustainable and people-friendly public services. It is a basic tenet of Liberal Democracy that local communities should be trusted to know what is best for their communities. We thus seek to maximise local involvement and power in local services and decisions. Liberal Democrats are committed to protecting the environment and thinking of future generations, not just today's. We recognise that Edinburgh is part of a greater City Region. We would aim to build genuine partnerships with others in the region to "grow the economy" without compromising what makes our city so attractive.

The Scottish Liberal Democrat constitution enshrines our value of liberty, equality and community. We aim to promote local democracy, foster diversity and nurture creativity. These values and aims provide the ideological base for this manifesto for Edinburgh. Our manifesto provides for a safer, greener, cleaner capital city, where the most vulnerable citizens are well cared for, and where there are flexible, accessible, good quality services for all; and where each individual has the opportunity to develop their full potential. It provides for a Bright New Future for Edinburgh.

Jenny Dawe, Leader, Liberal Democrat Group, City of Edinburgh Council, April 2007



GOVERNING EDINBURGH

Liberal Democrats want Fairness, Openness and Accountability.

We want:

- ◆ you to have a fairly run and well run city, where decisions are taken democratically
- ◆ your local views fully taken into account
- ◆ you to be kept properly informed
- ◆ you to have real opportunity to participate in decision-making
- ◆ councillors to take the lead in decision-making and officials to implement decisions
- ◆ you to have a council that responds promptly and efficiently to you

Governance

The Liberal Democrats will improve the quality of decision making in the City of Edinburgh Council.

The Liberal Democrats on the City of Edinburgh Council were the only Group to oppose the introduction of Labour's one-party Executive system in June 2000. We believed that it would not be the most efficient, effective or democratic way to run the Council. We suspected it would create alienation from decision-making for all but the 13 Labour Executive councillors able to participate in most decision-making at the most crucial time, when the decision is actually being taken. Our fears were justified.

The introduction of the new fairer Single Transferable Voting system for local council elections and the prospect of true multi-party politics, means that there will be no place in future for a closed cabinet style of governance in Edinburgh.

When the Executive/Scrutiny model was first discussed, we stressed the importance of having local area committees. Local Development Committees have performed a useful function but have lacked decision-making and budget powers. The 12 new Neighbourhood Partnerships, which will replace them, will form the basis of better community involvement in local government.

We would democratise the council by replacing the Executive/Scrutiny structure with a streamlined committee system with elements of scrutiny, review, and monitoring. The membership of these committees will reflect the political balance on the council. Views and debate will be heard before decisions are taken. We would give an enhanced role to Neighbourhood Partnerships.

Immediately after the election, we would engage with officials to advise us and help us implement an open, accountable, effective administration based on:

- a cross-party **Policy and Strategy Committee**, chaired by the Leader of the Council, its main role being to ensure broad policy objectives, core policies and strategies are in place. This committee will ensure the Core Committees are



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working in concert and that council delivers the administration's manifesto commitments and the Corporate Plan. The Conveners of the Core Committees and Audit Committee will be members of this committee, as will Leaders of the main opposition groups. The Deputy Leader of the Council will be Vice Convener of the Policy & Strategy Committee.

- five cross-party **Core Committees (Finance & Resources; Children & Families; Community Services; Environment & Infrastructure; Culture & Leisure)** to deliver the policies of the Council, with cross-departmental responsibilities, to monitor against targets and to instruct reviews into service delivery. They will hold dedicated scrutiny meetings on a regular basis, building on the positive experiences of some Scrutiny Panel meetings and the Select Committee type of meeting that was an occasional feature of the old committee system. There will be public question times at these meetings of Core Committees.
- a cross-party **Audit Committee**, chaired by an opposition councillor, continuing the audit functions of the current Resource Management & Audit Scrutiny Panel. This committee will be the overall financial watchdog of the Council. It would promote, monitor and develop continuous improvement. It would be supported by a small team of financially qualified auditors, with the Council's Internal Auditor as lead officer.
- **12 Neighbourhood Partnerships** with an enhanced role and budgets to increase local decision-making

The five **Core Committees** would be more focussed and efficient than the old style of council committee but would be much more democratic than the current cabinet system.

The **Finance & Resources Committee** would manage the Council's corporate resources (including finance, property, people, technology) in an efficient and effective manner to achieve best value for the citizens of Edinburgh. We would consider forming a **Corporate Health & Safety Sub-Committee** to deal with issues pertaining to health and safety of Council staff.

The **Children & Families Committee** would be responsible for the Council's statutory functions as an education authority and would deliver improvements and services in education and children's services. This committee would include teacher and religious representatives as required by statute.

The **Community Services Committee** would lead on Health & Social Care issues, with strategic oversight of the housing, community safety and environmental health functions of the Services for Communities Department. It would also cover problems of inequality, social exclusion and welfare. The Joint Board of Governance on Health and Social Care would report to this Committee.

The **Environment & Infrastructure Committee** would centre on creating a prosperous, environmentally sustainable city that promotes the city as a great place to do business, live and work. It would deal with transport, including delivery of the strategic transport functions; and many environmental issues, such as cleansing, waste management and recycling. An **Economic Development Sub-Committee** would deal with matters of economic development, international strategy and relationships with organisations such as the Edinburgh Business Assembly, Chamber of Commerce, EDI, Waterfront Edinburgh, EICC.

The **Culture & Leisure Committee** would be responsible for festivals, the Arts, culture in general, libraries, Edinburgh Leisure, sports, archives, promotion of tourism, Parks.



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Current sub-committees, such as Educational Standards, would become sub-committees of the relevant Core Committee. The current five **Children & Families Sub-Committees on Standards** will continue but their geographical coverage may be better aligned to Neighbourhood Partnership areas.

Neighbourhood Partnerships will play an important role in the Liberal Democrat alternative decision-making structure. Localisation is an important tenet of our programme for the city. We believe that the best decisions for local communities come from genuine involvement of communities in decision-making. As set up presently, the new Neighbourhood Partnerships will be Advisory Committees, empowered to make recommendations to Council and to guide and direct Neighbourhood Managers. This is a good step forward but we would want to have an early review of Neighbourhood Partnerships. Neighbourhood Partnerships provide a good opportunity for innovative community engagement but need to have real decision-making powers and devolved budgets to deliver local initiatives, supported by a senior officer. Ideally, they would each have a local neighbourhood office. They would be key to providing flexible citizen-centric services with empowerment and choice for individuals and communities.

Past failure to support a vital city centre warrants the **City Centre area** having an enhanced Neighbourhood Partnership, with additional members appointed to it, reflecting the political balance of the council as a whole, to control a dedicated revenue and capital budget.

These new proposals for better decision-making would not affect the **Regulatory Committee, Licensing Board and Development Quality Sub-Committee**, though we would wish to investigate means of making it easier for local communities and individuals to access the decision-making processes of these bodies. As the system of Neighbourhood Partnerships matures, this may allow for easier consultation and representation on matters related to these committees.

The **Planning Committee** works well but we would seek to ensure that input from the Core Committees is sought before approving or amending major statutory policy documents, such as Local Plans and Structure Plan.

We would encourage the formation of **cross-party sub-committees and member/officer short life working groups**, as appropriate. These have worked well in the past.

Making the Council Work for You and with You

In addition to this core change to make the council more open and accountable, with much more opportunity for local input and influence, a Liberal Democrat Edinburgh would look at ways of **encouraging participation, addressing inequality**, and providing a **more approachable, more relevant local government**.

A Liberal Democrat Edinburgh would:-

- **Within the first year of the new Council, review partnerships and relationships with key organisations**, public and private, including NHS Lothian, Lothian & Borders Police, Fire & Rescue Service, to ensure that we are cooperating in an open and fruitful way.
- **Give elected Councillors and local people, not appointed Directors, more control.** Liberal Democrats would review the delegation of power to Directors, to ensure that elected members are fully in control of awards of contracts and sale of land/property and that decisions are made at the most



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appropriate level by local people through their elected representatives and local committees.

- **Stop rigid departmental boundaries delaying action.** Liberal Democrats would encourage cross-departmental working within the Council, so that issues are dealt with more quickly and effectively. Where projects cross departmental boundaries, managerial responsibility will rest with a named department with responsibility for breaking down barriers.
- **Concentrate on getting the basic services right.** Liberal Democrats believe that it is vital to get the nuts and bolts right (cleaning, weeding, pavement and road maintenance, teaching, providing care etc.).
- **Put you, the customer, first.** Too many constituents tell us that they can't get through to anyone to help with issues they raise, or, if they do, they feel dissatisfied with the outcome. We would review Call Centre operations and Customer Service Strategy with the aim of achieving excellence in customer satisfaction ratings.
- **Keep people informed.** Liberal Democrat Councillors are renowned for "Keeping in touch all year round, not just at election times like the other parties." We would continue that tradition of keeping constituents informed through local newsletters and newspapers, that we pay for and distribute using our own resources. We think it is wrong to use tax-payers' money for such purposes. We would review the Council's publications to ensure that there is no duplication of effort but that citizens are given information in the most appropriate manner.
- **Make appropriate use of e-technology.** We would examine the best way to continue to use Information & Computer Technology to access services and information, remaining aware of the "Digital Divide" that means some people are excluded by the use of ICT. In response to students' suggestions, we would have a student portal on the Council web-site to provide information about Council services particularly relevant to students. This could be extended to other groups. We would continue to explore the feasibility and advantages of a city-wide wireless network.
- **Listen to people.** Liberal Democrats have welcomed the public question time at Local Development Committee meetings and would continue this in Neighbourhood Partnerships. They would also listen to citizens of all ages, through surveys, public meetings, Citizens' Panels, online interaction, as appropriate. They would have a public question time, initially at the dedicated scrutiny meetings of the Core Committees, at which Directors and senior councillors would be held to account. If this proves successful, we would introduce Public Question Time at Full Council meetings on a trial basis. We would consider the timings of meetings to make it easier for the public to interact.
- **Make it easier to participate.** By bringing decision making closer to people, Liberal Democrats will make it easier to participate. We would seek views on the best way of aiding engagement of various age and interest groups and would seek to remedy anything that discourages participation by any groups or communities in the city.
- **Encourage exemplary practice and conduct.** Liberal Democrats would take pride in ensuring that the Council does not indulge in words or actions that might be construed in any way as prejudicial or hostile to the many diverse communities that live in or contribute to the city



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- **Only support the creation of additional arms length companies in very exceptional circumstances and make appointments to existing companies fairer.** Arms length companies are not as open or accountable as local councils, especially when, as so often happens, there are no opposition councillors involved in directing them. We will ensure that where it is appropriate for Councillors to be the Council's representative on these companies, councillors of more than one party will be appointed where more than one place exists.
- **Recognise Edinburgh's role as an international city.** Liberal Democrats are proud of Edinburgh's reputation, which they would enhance by pursuing transport, housing, school and environmental policies to ensure that Edinburgh is a highly desirable place to visit and to live in. We would encourage meaningful links with other countries. We would put pressure on the Scottish Executive to recognise Edinburgh's unique role as a capital city.
- **Work with the business community, valuing both the big and small businesses that play an integral part of life in the city.** Through interaction and partnership with the business community and organisations, we would work together for the betterment of the city.
- **Value the voluntary sector.** Edinburgh has a wide-ranging, dedicated voluntary sector. It is estimated that about a quarter of Edinburgh's adult population does some voluntary work through 650 different agencies. The services of volunteers are vital for the city's economic and social prosperity. For every £1 that the Council gives in grant to the voluntary sector, it raises £9.78. Volunteering gives social value in providing new opportunities and empowerment to individuals. To support the voluntary sector, we would sign up to a stable, sustainable funding framework and would not allow "efficiency savings" to disproportionately affect voluntary organisations. We would monitor voluntary organisations, service level contracts and grants regularly and would encourage voluntary organisations to work together to provide services.
- **Argue against inappropriate job and organisation relocation.** The Audit Committee of the Scottish Parliament has described the Scottish Executive's relocation policy as a "blunt instrument", with some organisations best located in Edinburgh. 54% of the jobs that have left Edinburgh have gone to Glasgow. We would look at each situation on its merits but with a presumption against relocation from Edinburgh. Although the debate about its precise remit is still ongoing, we support the campaign to have Creative Scotland in Edinburgh.
- **Address inequality.** Liberal Democrats want every resident to be confident that they will receive the same high standard of service, no matter what their status or where they live. All policies and service delivery will reflect equity.

Working with staff

A Liberal Democrat Council would:

- **Be an excellent employer.** The Council depends upon a highly-motivated, competent workforce. The low unemployment rate in Edinburgh makes it all the more important that the Council is seen as a safe, pleasant place to work. Liberal Democrats would follow best practice in employing and retaining staff, including the extension of flexible working and ensuring that all employment policies and practices are non-discriminatory. We would continue to seek to address in a humane way the high sickness rates in some departments. We would ensure that the Council's "Whistleblowing" policy is properly adhered to; and address any deficiencies in it.



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- **Address the weaknesses shown up in the 2006 MORI staff survey.** Liberal Democrats would make a concerted effort to address the findings of the survey and, in particular, that only 57% of staff feel they are making best use of their skills and abilities; only 39% are satisfied with career development; only 39% believe they have sufficient resources to do the job; only 39% have confidence in their department's senior management.; only 20% feel the council is good at listening to its employees; only 29% think the IT service is good; and only 15% think that change is well managed in the Council.

Paying for local services

Edinburgh's Liberal Democrats support **Local Income Tax** to replace the unfair Council Tax. The poorest 20% in our society pay 6 times more of their income in Council Tax than the richest 20%. Local Income Tax is a fairer and more efficient local tax, linked to people's ability to pay. Liberal Democrats want Local Income Tax introduced as part of the "green tax switch" - a fairer, greener, simpler tax system that would mean lower tax bills for most households, and would tackle inequality and environmental damage by prioritising taxes on pollution not people. The Liberal Democrat Local Income Tax is a true local tax, unlike the SNP's strange new hybrid of a centrally set local income tax.

For now, we have the Council Tax system and many people dependent on Council Tax Benefit and on Housing Benefit to enable them to meet their tax and rent demands. Although the processing time for benefit claims has reduced over the past few years, we would prioritise ensuring that the **Revenues and Benefits Service** meets customer needs for a fast, efficient, transparent service.



CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Liberal Democrats want a child-centred Children and Families service that ensures that every school is as good as the best, all children fulfil their potential and every family is supported.

We want to:

- ◆ raise attainment in schools
- ◆ care for the vulnerable
- ◆ help those being failed by the system
- ◆ stretch the gifted
- ◆ promote arts, sports and adult education
- ◆ make better use of the school estate, creating “community hubs”
- ◆ develop and help, not demonise, young people
- ◆ intervene early to prevent social and academic problems later

Liberal Democrats are committed to **high quality education, training and lifelong learning** as the key to individuals’ self-confidence, personal fulfilment and prosperity. This requires teaching staff to be well-supported in their efforts, with parents, pupils and teachers fully involved in a properly resourced constructive partnership. It also requires well-kept, fit for purpose school buildings.

The **new structure** in Edinburgh that combines education with children’s social work still has some critics, but appears to be working better than many initially feared. Liberal Democrats were not convinced that this was the right route for best services for all and remain concerned at the potential budget shortfall for meeting the needs of vulnerable children, but have no plans for immediate reorganisation.

Edinburgh’s Liberal Democrats welcome the Scottish Liberal Democrats’ commitment to **put young people first**; to maximise opportunities for young people; to give early support to children and families; to provide wide after school activities; to entrench the rights of young people in decision-making; to provide a Young Opportunity Fund to make young people’s priorities happen; to inspire creativity; to increase the flexibility of teaching as a career; to tackle bullying effectively; to develop a National Languages Strategy; and to provide extra sports coaches and PE teachers.

We would wish to continue the positive links that the Council has with young people in order to **improve services for all young people**. We recognise the importance of young people setting their own agenda for change. We support the recently produced themes and objectives document produced by Youngedinburgh that seeks high quality learning; enhanced participation in decision-making; improved access to sport, physical education and culture; skatepark facilities; better access to health and care services; improved transport access; help to make informed choices regarding work and money; and involvement of young people in creating a safer, cleaner, more attractive environment.

It is essential that continued steps are taken to **raise attainment** at all levels. Particular issues that need to be addressed to help raise attainment, **support**



learning and teaching, to develop learning ability at all stages of life, and to provide a high quality inclusive education are:

- **fulfilling the aim of** as close as possible to 100% leaving primary school able to read and write.
- **greater early intervention by specialist learning support staff. Extra support staff, especially in early years**, can help to minimise the number of children who are being failed by the system. This includes involving youth workers, school nurses, social workers, speech therapists, educational psychologists, health visitors, potential employers, as appropriate. It means early identification (potentially as early as 3, with further assessments at 5 and 10) of risk factors and a non-judgemental, supportive approach to help children and families.
- **tackling truancy** through a partnership with parents who sometimes condone it. Early identification of children likely to play truant can help prevent the problem.
- **ensuring that excluded youngsters have continuing education and supervision**
- investigating the best way to **educate boys**, whose performance tends to lag behind girls', while maintaining the good results achieved by girls
- **looking after children with special needs**, whether these be physical, mental, learning, social or educational. There should be enhanced provision for those with autistic spectrum disorders, and more respite provision.
- **improving transition experiences** for pupils at nursery/primary and primary/secondary stages: More nurseries on the site of primary schools would minimise some of the difficulties for young children.
- encouraging **movement between schools for S6** pupils to obtain specialist teaching
- covering shortages in particular subjects by **linking with commerce, business and other institutions** to bring tutors into school
- investigating **a transition year between pre-school and formal primary school education**, raising to six years old the entry to formal primary school.
- **involving universities and colleges** in aiding high achievers to think, discuss and debate
- **stretching the gifted.** Individual organisations provide subject-specific help for children with particular gifts but we need to do much more to create a creative, learning environment, with talks, seminars and workshops on subjects not on the school curriculum; finance for specialist training in the performing arts; extending the sort of creative involvement pioneered between the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School and Balgreen Primary School. There is a failure to implement the current policy, so we would seek to redress this.
- **providing education, such as global citizenship, that meets the needs of today's young people:** For example, a recent MORI survey indicates that 79% of 11-16 year olds want to know more about what is happening in developing countries.
- **developing modern language skills initiatives:** This would include Gaelic and ethnic minority languages, as well as the more obvious European languages, to try to redress Britain's poor record in modern languages. Offering languages, such as Mandarin and Arabic, will expand horizons and improve employability in the widening global economy. It is well established that children learn languages more easily, the earlier they start, so we would aim to expand language education in early school years.
- **striking the right balance between computer-based and traditional teaching.** The March 2007 HMIE report found extensive use of Information



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- and Computer Technology (ICT) in schools had had little impact on learning and teaching.
- using Edinburgh International Science Festival's **Generation Science** programme to inspire interest in science for 5-14 year olds
 - **promoting healthy eating and healthy living:** This includes providing healthy food and drinking water in schools, as well as education on diet, nutrition, sex, drugs, alcohol, solvents and smoking. Wherever possible, parents should be involved to help them know how to help their children and how to cope with problems.
 - **encouraging secondary schools to develop individual strengths,** offering pupils a greater element of choice, including **more vocational and non-academic education:** The existing curriculum does not meet the needs of the less academic and those most in danger of offending. There should be a focus on emotional and social literacy, communication and interpersonal skills, and skills needed to improve employability.
 - **peer support and buddying schemes**
 - **tackling racism, bullying, discrimination**
 - **providing parenting programmes:** The quality of early childhood has a lasting influence on an individual. Support and education in parenting reaps financial, social and educational dividends later on. The good models run at present by Lothian Health should be rolled out across the city.
 - utilising "**Integrated Case Management**" for young offenders
 - **support for child carers**
 - **giving teachers the support they need to minimise stress levels**
 - **bringing the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School into the Council orbit:** We would renew our call for a feasibility study on how the Edinburgh Steiner School could be brought within the state-funded framework, as they wish, without losing the distinctive ethos and philosophy of the school.

The Liberal Democrats would encourage more involvement in **Arts and Sporting activities.** On the sports side, we would build on the good work of **Active School Coordinators.** We recognise that, although the statutory increase in P.E. is most welcome, some primary schools, with limited available space, will find it difficult to accommodate all pupils for the required length of time. **Maintaining pitches and providing adequate changing facilities and pavilions** is vital for schools and communities. There must be the strongest of presumptions against selling off more playing fields – if this ever does happen in very exceptional circumstances, there must be a like-for-like or improved replacement.

On the Arts side, the annual Fanfare musical event is an ideal way of **showcasing achievement** in music of all sorts. There should be an equivalent event for drama and opportunities for the best of artwork to be displayed publicly.

Community Education has a vital role to play in **Lifelong Learning,** in particular in trying to engage non-participants from all social and economic backgrounds and to encourage excluded individuals and communities to lead a full, active and participative life. To this end, we would encourage closer working between Community Education, Social Work and Lothian Health.

Although remaining unconvinced that Public Private Partnership provides the best way to finance new and refurbished school buildings, we accept that the Labour administration has chosen that route to make up for years of serious under-investment in **school buildings.** We are pleased that lessons appear to have been learned from the PPP1 process and that the new tranche of PPP2 schools have more interesting designs and that steps are being taken to allow for greater out-of-



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school hours use of facilities. If schools are available for community use in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays, then community “ownership” may reduce vandalism and other problems. However, we condemn the overall loss of playing fields and green space for school and community use in PPP projects, such as at St. Augustine’s/Forrester High Schools.

Liberal Democrats would aim for **better community use of the school estate**. Schools can and should be at the heart of the community but school rolls in most parts of Edinburgh are falling. The cost of maintaining half empty buildings drains resources. There are some two stream primaries which could be maintained as one stream if other parts of the building were used for other purposes. This would not be the solution for all primaries, since some would become too small to maintain, and the staffing cost would not be acceptable. There are some hard decisions to be taken in the early years of the new council to deal with rationalisation of the school estate. Communities need to be fully informed about the environmental costs of maintaining under-used buildings. Communities need to be involved in deciding on the best use of schools.

Wherever possible, Liberal Democrats would investigate using the school estate to provide:

- **local offices:** As the governance of Edinburgh moves towards more community control, there will be a continuing need for office space throughout the city.
- **sporting uses:** Secondary school facilities are in more demand than Primary, apart from the 5-a-side pitches which some Primaries have.
- **Community Hubs:** If schools were used differently, and were open for longer hours, the community would feel differently about them. If parents saw their value, they would feel less alienated from the process.
- **Arts Hubs:** Groups, like Imagine, who organise the Children’s Theatre Festival, are the sort of organisation that, if given sufficient funding, could move into part of a school.
- **Youth Centres and Youth Cafes:** There is a need for facilities in all parts of the city. A recent survey shows that 71 % of young people support having new youth cafes. The model of 6VT, inspired by a retired Liberal Democrat councillor, is an exemplar for similar ventures.
- **Community Education facilities.**
- **Day Care provision:** Use of school buildings for lunch clubs and day centres for the elderly and others
- **Playgroups and nurseries**

Unlike the rest of Edinburgh, in the south of the city, there is a static or rising school population. To deal with **inadequate provision of schools** in this area, Liberal Democrats would:

- press for a change in legislation to allow NHS Lothian to sell land for public service purposes at less than its commercial value on the open market
- obtain from the Executive a funding package which would include the cost of buying land for new school building
- bid for funding to build a new Boroughmuir High School, an additional primary school for Morningside and major refurbishment of James Gillespie’s

Even with excellent preventative work, **social work intervention** will always be needed in society. Where social work support is needed, we would wish this to be provided quickly and sympathetically. We appreciate the very difficult job that children and families social workers undertake and believe that, with proper “joined



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up” working and shared information between all those with the interests of the child at heart, it is easier to ensure that children are protected as far as they can be and that every step is taken to try to prevent another tragedy. The recommendations of the O'Brien report on the death of Caleb Ness have led to more funding, more manageable caseloads and the “Amethyst” council/police/health team working together in a more coherent way. We want to see all of this continue. Joint working and co-location is the way forward for efficiency and quality services. Amongst particular actions that Liberal Democrats would support are:

- ◆ **attracting and retaining adequate numbers of social workers**
- ◆ ensuring that every child or family that needs social work support is **allocated a social worker speedily** – this may well mean employing more staff to get caseloads down to the 14 per social worker that was recommended by Lord Laming following the Victoria Climbié inquiry
- ◆ **increasing support for foster-carers**, including kinship carers. Children’s Panel members have expressed frustration at the lack of foster homes and young people centre beds for those who require a “place of safety”. This needs addressed.
- ◆ small, **specialised day care units**, with specialist residential workers for “looked after” children with behavioural and emotional problems
- ◆ **Neighbourhood Management Team designating a professional to make sure that children receive the full care** to which they are entitled and that the Council recognises its obligation to parent Edinburgh’s most vulnerable children
- ◆ continuing to learn from and **implement recommendations that have emerged from local and national inquiry findings**. A recent **Serious Case Review**, instigated by Edinburgh’s Child Protection Committee and reported in March 2007, includes the need for more resources, for more Social Work and inter-agency training, and the need to evaluate overcompliance of parents as just as much a risk factor as hostile behaviour.
- ◆ **careful management of the transition from children’s to adult services**
- ◆ **early identification of children with mental health problems** and closer working with NHS Lothian for young people with mental health issues
- ◆ for the 12-18 age group, providing services for the **mentally or emotionally troubled** through a multi-disciplinary team, to try to curb the growing numbers of self-harmers and suicides.
- ◆ quality assurance of **residential schools** and robust commissioning arrangements. Two thirds of children in care homes or residential schools in Scotland leave with no job, training or college place.
- ◆ providing a good service to **young people in trouble** with an increase in the number of secure accommodation places for the hard core for whom this is the best remedy. We would set up a pilot scheme for disruptive or continuously truanting pupils, facing exclusion, based on Oxford’s Rapid Response Unit which works with families, teachers, psychologists, social workers, etc. to encourage young people to take responsibility for their own actions as a step towards becoming good citizens in the future.
- ◆ an **urgent review of “looked after” children’s services and progress reports on “looked after” children** when they leave the Council’s care to ensure that money is well-spent and that it delivers the desired outcomes. At the moment, 60-70% go on to offend. This must be monitored, analysed and prevented.



Culture, Leisure & Tourism

Liberal Democrats want inclusive cultural, sport and leisure services of the highest quality in Scotland for residents and visitors of all ages.

We want to:

- ◆ give culture and leisure in the city the high status and funding it needs
- ◆ make it easy for all to participate in healthy activities
- ◆ create more children's and youth facilities
- ◆ ensure Edinburgh has first class, user-friendly facilities
- ◆ give local people more say over local green spaces
- ◆ enhance Edinburgh's attraction for tourists
- ◆ make sure Edinburgh's Festivals retain their great reputation

With the erosion of its services over the preceding months and the retiral of the Director of Culture & Leisure at the end of 2006, a once-thriving department has disappeared. Its core sections have been split between several departments and there is a serious danger that the impetus for revitalized services will be dissipated. We believe that it is vital that **culture, sport, leisure and tourism are promoted strongly by the Council**. For too long Culture and Leisure has been underfunded and under-valued. We would call for an **early review of the effects of the Council Review 2007 on the functions previously carried out by the Department** and take whatever steps may be necessary to redress any diminution in status and impact. This might well involve creation of a Culture, Sport and Tourism department.

Physical and cultural recreation should be much more than an optional extra on the Council's agenda. Sports and the Arts can both play a big part in good physical, mental and social wellbeing, whether an individual is a spectator or a participant. Leisure activities are an essential part of school and community life. They enrich people's lives, can build self-esteem, can attract tourists, and can promote social interaction and team working. Participation should be made easy for people of all ages.

As part of the Liberal Democrat scheme to **give local people more control** and influence on local matters, we would devolve appropriate parts of the culture and leisure activities budget to Neighbourhood Partnerships. We would encourage young people to participate in decision-making on local facilities, so that youth cafes and facilities for young people would be what young people want, not what adults think young people ought to want.

Sport, Green Spaces, Play

On **Sport**, we regret the way that our once envied national facilities have been allowed to stagnate and deteriorate. Our 1999 Manifesto recorded: "Edinburgh now has some of the best facilities in Scotland, including Meadowbank Stadium and the Commonwealth Pool". Both these facilities now need major work done on them and have been the subject of several reports on funding replacements/refurbishment.



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The correlation between good health and physical recreation is well known, and the earlier that good habits begin, the better. Those involved in **sporting activities for young people** often express their discontent at the cost of facilities, the state of pavilions and changing rooms, and the difficulties sometimes experienced in accessing facilities. Recent instances of youth team bookings for important games being cancelled at the last minute, for no good reason, are unacceptable.

The means by which Liberal Democrats would address these matters would include:

- continuing the programme of refurbishing the **Royal Commonwealth Pool**, especially important with the prospect of housing the diving events if Glasgow hosts the 2014 Commonwealth Games. We welcome the statement by Nichol Stephen, Deputy First Minister at Aviemore in February 2007 that *“The Liberal Democrats ... will ensure the major refurbishment of the Royal Commonwealth Pool in Edinburgh proceeds without delay.”*
- commissioning a **report on the refurbishment of Meadowbank Stadium**, without prejudicing funding for the Royal Commonwealth Pool. There is a growing momentum from local residents, athletes, youth clubs and other users of Meadowbank to “Save Meadowbank”, matched by concerns that the proposed new sports complex and stadium at Sighthill may not be a first class replacement for all the facilities currently available at Meadowbank and may deprive local people of local community facilities.
- doing everything possible to save **Glenogle Baths** from sale for housing. The Baths are an architecturally outstanding, well-loved Edinburgh facility.
- ongoing **co-ordination** with Glasgow and other councils to ensure there is no unnecessary duplication of major international standard facilities.
- making sure that the local community and sailing community get the best for **Port Edgar Marina**.
- delivering a **Skateboard Park**, preferably on a brownfield site
- having proper marketing and transport links in place to allow the **Edinburgh International Climbing Arena at Ratho** to flourish
- reconsidering the best way forward for the **Jack Kane Centre**, with close consultation with the local community
- having **proper cross-party representation on Edinburgh Leisure** (there is no Liberal Democrat on the Board), the not-for-profit organisation that manages an extensive portfolio of sport and recreation facilities on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council
- encouraging **agreements between GPs and Leisure Centres** regarding patients' use of facilities, to allow participation in exercise to help reduce the prescription drugs bill
- ensuring that **all facilities are user-friendly**, in first-class condition, attractive for all ages to use, and meet not just Disability Discrimination Act requirements but the best of practice identified from elsewhere
- providing **excellent pavilions, changing facilities, multi-purpose pitches and green spaces** for schools and communities. The conditions that led to the 14/02/07 march, protesting to the Council and Scottish Parliament about “Third World” conditions in changing rooms and sports pitches, have to be remedied.
- additional help with **coaching development** and **Sports Grants**
- improved partnership and liaison with schools' PE Departments and Sports Coordinators, with local Sports Clubs and national organisations to **identify talent at an early age and nurture it** and to **bring enjoyment to those with less ability** but a desire to learn and improve



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- **better use of schools' facilities** outwith school hours, including ensuring that the better deal for access offered through PPP2 is adhered to
- recognising that **alternative forms of exercise**, especially for children, such as different types of dance, should be provided
- building on the success of the Youth Games with a more ambitious **School Olympics**
- working with those keen to promote a **European Youth Football Tournament**

As well as more formal Sports promotion, the Liberal Democrats want to ensure that there is plenty of opportunity for enjoyment from **green spaces, parks, play areas and allotments**. We would beautify Edinburgh with more pocket parks, trees, community art and sculptures.

One of Edinburgh's main attractions are its **green spaces**. By devolution of relevant budgets and decision-making to local areas, Liberal Democrats would help our parks, playgrounds, gardens and green areas get the attention they need. Litter, graffiti, motorcycling youths, threatening gangs and vandals all blight many of the city's parks. If local people of all ages feel they have more say in what happens, there might be less likelihood of anti-social behaviour. There would be positive encouragement for local communities to devise small-scale garden, bulb-planting and tree-planting projects. We would assist local people to set up Friends of Parks groups to inject a sense of ownership and to enable access to funds for minor projects. We would use local knowledge to direct Youth Action Teams to divert potential trouble-makers.

Local consultation would fuel decisions on where to modernise and where to construct **children's play areas and facilities for older children and youths**. So often, we hear complaints that "There's nothing to do here." By partnership working with different departments, the voluntary and private sector, and relevant age groups, our aim would be to remedy that, right across the city. The 6VT youth café provides a model for the roll out of similar ventures across the city.

Play is vital to a healthy and happy childhood. It can improve physical and mental health. It helps young people understand themselves and their relationships with those around them. It encourages use of imagination and creativity. Play can take place anywhere but good, safe outdoor facilities provide an excellent base. Edinburgh has only 1 public play space for every 400 children. A recent Play Scotland survey indicates that this is the lowest number per child in Scotland, with the national average being 1 playground for every 250 children. We would aim to bring Edinburgh up to at least the national average.

Gardening provides excellent exercise for all ages. Growing fruit and vegetables gives healthy exercise and fresh, wholesome food. We welcomed the belated introduction in November 2002 of an **Allotment Strategy** for the city and would take advice from allotment-holders about how best to improve and increase a facility that brings physical and mental benefits to many people. The current waiting list for all sites indicates the demand.

Our Cultural Heritage

Edinburgh's **enviable reputation** in the Arts has been **achieved despite, not because of, 23 years of Labour administration**.

The 2006 **'Thundering Hooves'** report, commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council, confirms that Edinburgh is "the jewel in the crown of international festival cities". Its 11 festivals contribute over £184 million to the Scottish economy but there are many



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other festivals and cities waiting in the wings to usurp its position. The Council has made a start on implementing some of the recommendations for action in the report. The Liberal Democrats would continue to implement those recommendations within its control and play a full part in cultural partnership.

Working closely with interested individuals, groups and organisations, our manifesto for maintaining and improving our cultural heritage includes:

- ◆ monitoring the **Usher Hall refurbishment** to minimize slippage and keep its reopening on time and on budget
- ◆ striving to generate funding for necessary infrastructure renewal of the **King's Theatre**, such a vital asset to the city throughout the year
- ◆ **prioritising work on other projects**, such as the Ross Bandstand, the Assembly Rooms, the Mid Scale Music Venue, improvements to the Queen's Hall
- ◆ **nurturing arts development and education**, in collaboration with schools and community education
- ◆ investigating the **Waterfront** as an Arts Quarter, including identifying an area for a Sculpture Park and aiming to attract a cornerstone cultural facility, such as a Museum and/or concert hall.
- ◆ emphasizing and promoting **Edinburgh as an historic city**, including upgrading the neglected City Archives
- ◆ improving the marketing of Edinburgh's **Museums**, and seeking "Friends of Edinburgh's Museums" help in encouraging voluntary help to keep Museums open
- ◆ involving local communities, libraries, young people and Neighbourhood Partnerships in exploring ways of **expanding interest in all forms of the Arts**
- ◆ ensuring that Edinburgh becomes a true **City of Literature**.
- ◆ developing more outreach projects with the **Scottish Storytelling Centre**
- ◆ encouraging the **business community** to support the city's cultural events
- ◆ supporting **local festivals and galas**
- ◆ recognizing that some of the buildings are in a dangerous state, particularly the **City Observatory**, supporting the urgent implementation of the **Calton Hill Conservation Plan**, as agreed by the Council Executive in 2000. We would continue to press for funding to deliver the Plan.

Libraries in Edinburgh are now part of the Services for Communities department. Liberal Democrats believe that libraries could be more vibrant hubs in neighbourhoods, encouraging participation by people of all ages. Sighthill Library is an excellent example of what can be done, particularly with young people. The Sighthill Library Team has won national awards for its groundbreaking work with troubled young people in Edinburgh. We would like to see all libraries providing more local information, publicising activities, perhaps taking bookings for local events. We would want to ensure that every citizen has a library within easy reach, which would require new Drum Brae and Alnwickhill Libraries. We also make a commitment, as we have done in our annual Alternative Budgets, to stock libraries well.



Tourism

Good recreational facilities and our cultural heritage help to encourage the tourism that is so vital to the economy of the city and the city region.

Edinburgh is an international and national tourist destination, renowned for its history, architecture, cultural and literary heritage. It is estimated that well over 30,000 people are employed directly in tourism, with many others dependent on it for part of their income. In 2006, tourism generated £1.7bn expenditure in the city. The more Edinburgh exhibits itself as a truly international capital, the more people will want to visit and do business here.

Liberal Democrats give tourist promotion a high priority and would work to improve facilities for visitors to the city all year round. This includes ensuring the streets are clean, that there are adequate numbers of immaculate public conveniences, that the city is easy to get around, that there are pleasant green spaces and gardens in which to relax, and having more of a “24 hour city” culture.

The Year of Homecoming 2009, promoted by the Scottish Executive, gives an added incentive to make Edinburgh as attractive a destination as possible.

In partnership where appropriate with bodies such as the Scottish Executive, the business community, Edinburgh Tourism Action Group, VisitScotland, other councils and tourist organisations, we would work to make Edinburgh even more attractive to visitors, by:

- providing **more activities** and promoting **more new attractions**, such as visiting art exhibitions and one-off world-class events
- encouraging **user-friendly opening hours** of venues and facilities
- “ **dressing**” the city appropriately
- improving **public transport access** to venues
- restoring the harbour area of **South Queensferry**, following the Hawes Pier refurbishment, and commissioning a feasibility study for a South Queensferry Visitor Centre
- encouraging **more direct flights** to and from Edinburgh, reducing the need to use London airports as flight hubs
- seeking more **business and conference tourism** via the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) and other conference facilities. Edinburgh is the 23rd most popular destination in the world for international association conferences. Especially with the proposed Additional Function Space at the EICC, the aim would be to improve that position.
- continuing to support Edinburgh as a **Festival City** – this would include support for the **Science Festival** and investigating pushing Edinburgh as a **City of Science**
- making Edinburgh more **child-friendly**, in the way that facilities are run and in what is provided
- mindful of an affluent, ageing tourist group, making the city **disabled and elderly-friendly**
- selling it as a **unique city** destination
- encouraging **TV and film companies** to use Edinburgh
- promoting **tourism as a career**, with a well-trained workforce
- **increasing global awareness** of Edinburgh



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. The environment:

Liberal Democrats want to create a greener, cleaner city, where good environmental practice is at the core of all policy and practice, and where resources are protected for future generations.

We want to:

- ◆ improve waste reduction, reuse and recycling immediately
- ◆ aim for 75% recycling by 2020 on the way to Zero Waste as soon as possible thereafter
- ◆ have cleaner streets in the centre and the suburbs
- ◆ reduce the city's carbon footprint to a Zero Carbon economy by 2050
- ◆ improve air quality
- ◆ increase renewable energy use
- ◆ conduct a full environmental audit

"Climate change" is acknowledged by many leading scientists and environmentalists as the greatest threat to humankind today. Edinburgh's Liberal Democrats welcome the Scottish Parliamentary Liberal Democrat manifesto commitments to meeting the challenge of climate change by making "the green switch" to lead Scotland into becoming the green energy powerhouse of Europe. To do this, there are targets to have 100% of Scotland's electricity from renewable energy by 2050, with an intermediate target of 60% by 2020; to create power locally in every community in Scotland; to have energy efficiency at the heart of energy policy; to switch to microgeneration; to reduce "food miles"; to encourage the purchase and use of local, healthy food; to make Scotland's homes fuel and energy efficient; to help businesses to achieve lower energy bills; and to continue to reduce, reuse and recycle. Our manifesto for Edinburgh aims to meet these challenges set at national level, by actions, such as:

- using **renewable energy sources** and micro-renewables generators in council buildings and new developments
- using **energy-efficient lighting** in council properties and promote energy efficient lighting generally. We welcome the very recent EU proposal that all member states should switch to energy efficient bulbs by 2009.
- investigating the feasibility from a technical and street safety angle, of **turning off every second street light in the middle hours of the night** in some areas that would be prepared to accept this.
- determining the feasibility of a **Decentralised Energy** strategy for Edinburgh, utilising combined heat and power systems and renewables, as suggested in the recently published study, "Powering Edinburgh into the 21st Century"



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- encouraging the building of **eco-homes**, using energy-saving and sustainable technology and construction systems
- recognising that food consumption contributes 20% to the country's carbon footprint, **encourage consumption of local and seasonal foods**. Look into having a permanent 6-7 day Farmer's Market retail outlet in Edinburgh.
- continuing to support Edinburgh as a **Fairtrade City**, thus guaranteeing producers in Third World countries a fair price for their goods.
- assessing, with a view to adopting, the Islington Council **Climate Change Partnership** with a range of organisations to target reduction in carbon emissions.

The developed nations have 20% of the world's population but consume 80% of the world's resources. That is not a sustainable situation. That is one of the reasons for the Liberal Democrats putting environmental issues at the heart of their agenda. It is why the Liberal Democrat vision for Edinburgh's bright new future has care for the environment at its core. It is vital for current well-being that Edinburgh becomes a truly **environmentally sustainable city**. It is vital for future generations that we do not squander resources and pollute the atmosphere.

Waste damages the environment. It uses up global resources, contributes to global warming and is expensive to get rid of. Thanks to Liberal Democrat influence on the Scottish Executive and on the Council, Edinburgh has made some headway in tackling its previous **atrocious record (one of the worst councils in Scotland) on recycling and waste minimisation**. The Scottish Executive Strategic Waste Fund has provided the investment necessary for Edinburgh to be on track to meet its 27% recycling target for 2007/08. The Viridor Landfill Disposal Contract at Dunbar runs to 2020. This contract committing the city to dumping 70% of domestic waste to a landfill site – a decision opposed by Liberal Democrats - has been an impediment to green thinking.

The formation of the Services for Communities department, with the new local Neighbourhood Partnerships, has the potential to allow **flexible local delivery of services**. Together, they provide a means through which to involve the community (including schools, businesses, community councils, residents' groups, environment campaign organisations) in developing sustainable local action programmes. It is essential that Edinburgh's citizens fully support the sustainable Edinburgh agenda. Every individual, every household and every business has to play a part in reducing energy consumption and reducing waste.

Liberal Democrat Councils in other parts of the UK have enviable records on protecting and enhancing the environment and making sustainability a priority. Liberal Democrats in Edinburgh would look to these councils for sound advice and **good practice** to put into effect here. In the first few months of the new Council, we would seek a review of good practice with a view to adapting the best and most suitable to Edinburgh's situation.

We would conduct a **full environmental audit** of the Council's operations and working practices and ensure that the public are clear about **who to contact** on environmental issues. Have a "green champion" in each department to promote green awareness.



Our Liberal Democrat manifesto for action on the environment in Edinburgh includes:-

■ **Action on Recycling and Waste Minimisation en route to Zero Waste**

➤ Liberal Democrats would **increase recycling to 75% of waste by 2020**.
To reach this target, we would:-

- **complete blue/red/brown bin delivery across the city** - kerbside recycling of paper, textiles, glass, cans, card and compostable material has proved popular – the long-term aim is to have as full a kerbside collection of biodegradable materials, hazardous household goods and non-organic recyclables as possible, as one of the best means of implementing waste reduction strategies
- **investigate the best way forward for convenient envelope and plastics recycling** – these materials are lightweight, so expensive to collect – it might be that street bins in suburban areas would be best
- **label bins with acceptable contents** – a simple way of ensuring that the bins are fully and properly utilised
- **ensure that days and times for collection are properly communicated to households**
- **look into having brown bin collections all year round**, especially in view of changing climate
- **speed up the roll-out of on-street recycling in tenement areas**
- **do more to encourage recycling in tenement areas**
- **provide free/cheap compost bins for all who want them, including for tenemental gardens**, and investigate ‘Community Composting’ sites on open spaces. It is important to encourage those in tenement areas - most blocks of tenements have garden areas and currently garden waste often fills up on-street containers.
- **give information on street bins about special uplifts, nearest recycling bins, nearest community recycling centre**
- **review numbers and sizes of general and recycling bins** and get rid of unhelpful rules that mean residents are not supposed to cross roads to access bins
- **introduce a programme for washing communal bins**
- **investigate sources of soundproof bottle banks** and, in the meantime, label bottlebanks for social hours use only
- provide **more recycling sites**, with opportunities at as many sites as possible to recycle as many materials as possible
- consider a “**short-term van permit**” scheme to allow ordinary householders to access community recycling centres by van with genuine domestic and garden waste, to allow for one-off events such as house clearing
- **encourage non-recyclers to recycle**, especially businesses and small businesses
- implement a **recycling and waste minimisation education and publicity programme** in schools, communities and businesses



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- find a clean and acceptable solution to **World Heritage Site** waste collection and recycling – probably underground bins – the mess from black bags is aesthetically intrusive in itself
- encourage **use of reusable containers** (bottles, shopping bags etc) and discourage use (e.g. by charging) of plastic bags. The UK Government's Waste Resources Action programme estimates that packaging costs a family £470 a year. Nearly 60% of household rubbish volume is packaging waste.
- encourage **battery recycling** at point of sale, or at the least at collection points in shopping centres, and get across the message that the onus of getting rid of old technology should be on those introducing new technology.
- encourage **recycling of small household goods**, and continue to support organisations such as the **Edinburgh Furniture Initiative (EFI)**.
- support projects that **divert discarded but still usable goods**, such as books, spectacles, mobile phones, printer cartridges and computers to voluntary organisations
- consider introducing **Freecycling Sunday** one day a month when householders can put out unwanted items for others to collect
- encourage suppliers/fitters of **new “white goods”** to remove the old item and take it for appropriate recycling. The long-awaited EU Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations to reduce the amount of this waste going to landfill, and increase recovery and recycling rates, came into force on 2 January 2007. Full responsibility for treating and recycling household WEEE begins on 1 July 2007 with suppliers compelled to provide an in-store take-back scheme or details of designated collection points.
- support **"Real Nappy"** schemes
- publicise schemes that **reduce the receipt of junk mail**
- work with other authorities to deliver the Area Waste Plan, including an investigation into the feasibility of setting up **an organisation to deal with sorting, packing and marketing recycled materials**
- make sure that the Council itself and partner organisations are **“green exemplars”** and would encourage other employers to be the same.

■ **Action on Litter/Refuse/Waste Management**

- The February 2007 Best Value and Community Planning Audit of the Council by Audit Scotland, noted at paragraph 240, “... Edinburgh's cleanliness index of 66 is slightly below the national minimum standard of 67 and street cleansing remains a problem for the council. In 2005/06, the rate of improvement did not keep pace with other councils and it is now the worst performing among all Scottish councils.” To address this, Liberal Democrats would:
 - have **more “scaffies”**, especially away from the city centre, in local shopping areas and on school lunch run routes
 - **review the working arrangements** of the open Space Task Forces, Environmental Wardens, Rapid Response Service, in



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conjunction with the rest of the cleansing services, in order to provide the most effective, integrated service for the city, so that the entire city, including its parks and open spaces, is cleaned to the highest standard

- promote **more sensible working practices**, so that, for example, staff on refuse lorries are responsible for cleaning up the litter that arises from the collection of bins and bags
- change routes/times to **avoid refuse collection vehicles holding up traffic at rush hours on bus routes**
- ensure that there are **adequate litter bins, regularly emptied**, in both the city centre and the suburbs, especially near schools and shopping and food outlets. Labour's ill-advised decision to get rid of nearly 2,000 litter bins in 1996 did nothing to encourage considerate disposal of rubbish.
- ensure that all schools implemented an **education programme** on the desirability of waste minimisation and the avoidance of litter.
- encourage **school children to collect litter**
- provide **attractive lunch menus in schools** to discourage visits to "the chippie" and the consequent litter
- give consideration to and take soundings on **differential licence fees for businesses that produce litter**
- take tough action on **fly-tipping** and would encourage the Scottish Environment Protection Agency to follow up and take action against those dumping rubbish illegally in our city.
- **investigate ways of easy disposal of hazardous goods, such as paint tins:** Look at the potential of providing on-street bins for this on an occasional, but well-advertised, basis.
- **encourage responsible dog ownership** by widening the provision of poop scoops/plastic bags, increasing the number of bins with signs on them to say they can be used for dog mess, and a publicity campaign on the hazards of irresponsible dog-owners.
- consider the **Area Waste Plan**, when the situation on this becomes clearer after May 2007. It is expected that the first tranche of funding from the Scottish Executive Strategic Waste Fund will be £12.6m a year to City of Edinburgh Council and partners for the treatment of residual waste. Edinburgh needs to take decisions on disposal, collection, location of processing facility, what type of processor, the Viridor Dunbar Contract, financial and technical risks etc.

■ **Action on Pollution**

- Edinburgh has an Air Quality Action Plan to **improve air quality**, which we support. There are "hot spots" in the city and monitoring and research is underway, at St. Johns Road for example, to get a better understanding of the reasons. To address air quality issues, Liberal Democrats would:
 - seek to **reduce council vehicle emissions and investigate the use of alternative fuels**, converting vehicles to this wherever practicable, and would inform the public of how they can reduce pollution for their own vehicles.



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- encourage **car-sharing, Green Travel Plans, walking and cycling to work, City Car Club membership**
- monitor **air quality along the canal**.
- **Potential ship-to-ship oil transfer pollution:** We oppose allowing transfers in the Firth of Forth, very concerned at the unacceptable risk of an eco-disaster if Forth Ports approves the transfer plan. We support moves to legislate to stop Forth Ports having the final say on the application from SPT Marine Services.
- **Fly Posting:** We will provide special advertising sites and encourage the prosecution of offenders.
- **Noise Pollution** is a source of considerable worry and stress for many Edinburgh residents. We support the powers given to environmental health officers in combating noise pollution.
- **Light Pollution** can be very intrusive. The council must recognise that this is a problem and take steps to reduce it, accepting that safe street lighting, does not have to be bright lighting. Encourage offices to switch off lights at night. Set an example with the new Council HQ.
- **Graffiti:** Where graffiti is particularly offensive, we would support its immediate removal. In other cases, graffiti should be removed as quickly as possible.

■ **Action on Public Conveniences**

Liberal Democrats recognise the particular importance of accessible public conveniences in a tourist city. For the benefit of tourists and residents, we would:

- audit availability throughout the city, identifying where there is public demand.
- ensure that facilities are provided close to shopping areas and public parks.
- refurbish any public conveniences in need of it
- assess the best means of keeping public conveniences clean and attractive, taking lessons from East Lothian where public toilets gain awards every year.
- consider charging for use of toilets

■ **Action on Cemeteries**

Liberal Democrats would:

- retain services within the city for both burial and cremation.
- ensure that all city-owned cemeteries are well maintained and safe for public access, that staff are suitably trained, and that the public are advised in advance of any major works being done or audits conducted.
- monitor provision of cemeteries

■ **Action on Pest Control**

Liberal Democrats would ensure that the Council offers a service to help residents subjected to pest infestations, including rats, mice, and wasps. A nest-removal service for gull nests would be available.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT cont.

2. Transport

Liberal Democrats want a free-moving city with excellent integrated public transport, that encourages people out of cars; and local traffic management projects and road/pavement maintenance scrutinised locally.

We want to:

- ◆ strongly promote the benefits of public transport
- ◆ create a safer city for pedestrians, young and old
- ◆ make Edinburgh a model cycle-friendly and walker-friendly city
- ◆ improve roads and pavements throughout the city
- ◆ involve local people in decisions on local traffic issues
- ◆ complete the ring of Park & Ride sites round the city's perimeter
- ◆ encourage Green Travel Plans

Public Transport

Economic growth, tourism, and businesses are all dependent on good international, national and local transport links. Liberal Democrat commitment to reliable public transport recognises its social, economic and environmental benefit to communities and to individuals. We are not opposed to car ownership but want people to have a real choice about using a car for a journey or not. In Continental Europe, car ownership is higher but car use, especially in cities, is lower.

Edinburgh is a major economic and employment hub, drawing in people from a significant part of Scotland. This means that we cannot treat Edinburgh in isolation. We have to work closely with other councils, especially our neighbours in the SEStran region, to ensure the delivery of efficient, effective and sustainable transport services across the whole of south-east Scotland.

In Edinburgh City Council, transport has been a contentious political issue over many years. Much of our Liberal Democrat scepticism about plans suggested by the Labour administration has been because of their blatant failure to deliver on so many previous proposals or manifesto promises. We opposed Labour's two cordon congestion charging scheme on the grounds that it was the "Wrong scheme, Wrong Time" and that Edinburgh could and should have a tramline delivered without tolls. The electorate agreed with our judgment and the overwhelming "No" vote in the February 2005 congestion charging referendum led to the collapse of Labour's previous transport strategy. Liberal Democrat councillors pressed for the creation of an all-party Member/Officer Working Group to oversee the preparation of a revised Local Transport Strategy. Our participation in that Group and later amendments to the Strategy have created a much better Local Transport Strategy for Edinburgh.



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We are enthusiastic about Trams for Edinburgh and welcome the approval given in March 2007 by Tavish Scott, Transport Minister, for work to commence on the Edinburgh tram project.

On **public transport issues**, Liberal Democrats want to:

- **deliver by 2010 Edinburgh's first Tramline from Newhaven to Edinburgh Airport via Princes Street.** This is affordable with the funding available and is viable in revenue terms. Evidence suggests that trams prove a more attractive alternative than buses to the car, so this should reduce car use.
- raise the additional funds from developers, land sales and the Scottish Executive to build a **second Tramline from Roseburn to Granton.**
- **ensure trams are fully integrated** with Lothian Bus services, with **through ticketing** and the same fares on both
- **keep Lothian Buses and Edinburgh's Trams 100% publicly and locally owned** with both companies operating an all year round service to the whole city, including **better evening and weekend bus services.**
- as the main shareholder of Lothian Buses work with the company to ensure that **bus and tram fare increases** are no more than the rate of inflation plus 1% and aim for an all low floor bus fleet by 2010.
- develop a proposal for a **guided busway along the route of Tramline 3** from Craigmillar Park towards the Royal Infirmary. We would seek to build this link as a precursor to the tramline and to make up-front investment in infrastructure works on this section. We would work with Lothian Buses to develop rapid and frequent bus services along the guided busway.
- obtain by 2011 the powers to **build Tramline 3** to Newington, Cameron Toll and the Royal Infirmary with further extensions as can be afforded. We would seek to fund this extension by a mix of developer contributions, additional Scottish Executive funding and borrowing by the Tram company secured against future revenue.
- work with Lothian Buses, other public transport operators and the Scottish Executive Route Development Fund to **improve orbital bus services** in Edinburgh – especially those connecting Park and Ride Sites, hospitals, colleges, suburban shopping centres and the tramlines.
- expand capacity at existing **Park and Ride Sites** as they fill up and seek to develop additional sites for the A702 and the west of the city.
- encourage the **longer-haul bus companies to improve their services** to Edinburgh.
- complete the **roll-out of the "Bustracker" real-time information system** right across the city to increase bus travel, by giving passengers confidence in the reliability of bus services. We would encourage all bus operators to join in. We would make sure that all the terminals can be read by all and in all light levels.
- where appropriate, seek funding to **support additional bus services.** All sections of the community should have access to reliable, affordable public transport, no matter where they live.
- improve the **bus services in Rural West Edinburgh**, so that residents can travel more easily between villages and centres, as well as into the city centre
- produce during summer 2007 a business case for the reintroduction of the **Edinburgh South Suburban Railway** for passenger services. We would work with the private sector to attract developer contributions to the re-opening of stations without softening development control standards.



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- continue to lobby for **Edinburgh-Glasgow train services to stop at Edinburgh Park station**. A 2006 New Edinburgh Ltd. Survey showed a direct service to Edinburgh Park Station would attract 85% of employees on to trains *versus* the current 33%
- lobby the Scottish Executive and Network Rail for **further improvements to Waverley Station**, including increased capacity on routes to the east and Borders through Portobello East Junction.
- encourage employers to make public transport information available to employees and to create **Green Travel Plans**. Even simple measures, such as advertising car-sharing opportunities, can have a big impact on the environment. We would work closely with city developers on the integration of transport initiatives into new housing and retail developments.
- assess the cost and effect of delivering **discounted student bus travel** for all full-time students and bus services to satellite campuses

SESTran

Working with Transport Scotland and our neighbouring authorities in SESTran who cover much of the Edinburgh travel-to-work region, we see a number of opportunities and challenges, such as:

- weighing up the need to consider a new crossing to augment/replace the Forth Road Bridge with concerns about the impact of more long-distance car commuting on Edinburgh's quality of life and, particularly, on the western approaches to Edinburgh. This might favour a tunnel rather than a bridge. The crossing should not increase road traffic but should be based on a modal shift to public transport. With key studies on cables not published as yet, it is difficult to ascertain if the current road bridge is beyond repair.
- creation of a network of fast passenger ferries linking various ports in Fife to an interchange with Edinburgh's trams and buses.
- establishing a high-speed rail link between Central Scotland and London, with onward similar connections to Europe. This will compete with air travel for short-haul journeys, and so postpone/eliminate the need for a further runway at Edinburgh Airport.

City Centre

We want to **actively encourage people to shop in Princes Street and the surrounding areas**. That means improving the overall experience and making the area easy and attractive to visit. For some people, the most convenient means of travel may still be the car. To ease City Centre shopping trips, we would:

- encourage **"Park & Walk"** schemes for shoppers, perhaps with shops offering parking tokens for purchases above a certain amount.
- **create more parking spaces with least impact on the streetscape**: We would attempt to follow the model of continental cities by investigating the feasibility of a car park below George Street, or several TreviParks, with removal of on-street parking paid parking bays, using the freed-up space for pedestrians, disabled parking and public transport.
- seek to develop with retailers a **"City Centre Shuttle"** network linking "Park & Walk" sites, other parking areas, tramstops, Haymarket Station, Waverley Station and the Bus Station to shopping areas, visitors' attractions and major employers across the city centre. Ultimately this service would be run with smaller low floor low emission vehicles.



Creating a safer city

We want to see a safer city for all road and pavement users. To deliver this, we would:

- have discussion and **decisions on local priorities** for items such as road and pavement repairs and traffic calming schemes devolved to Neighbourhood Partnerships. They would be responsible for **Neighbourhood Plans**, specific to a local area, which would include possible traffic calming schemes, safe school and cycle routes, 20 mph schemes, bus shelters, pedestrian crossings and other pedestrian and environmental initiatives. In this way, there would be a properly co-ordinated approach to local road safety; and crossings, for example, subject to professional technical feasibility assessment, would be where local people need them, not where officials think they should go.
- make **road and pavement maintenance** a top priority in a co-ordinated programme that has lighting, roadway and pavements improved at the one time.
- work with the new Scottish Roads Commissioner to **prevent utility companies and the council repeatedly digging up the same stretch of road**
- avail ourselves of the new enforcement powers to ensure that the **utility companies reinstate our roads and pavements to a satisfactory standard** after their work.
- have a programme to **install dropped kerbs** at all road junctions, so that wheelchair/scooter users can more easily access services.
- keep **road markings, such as hatched boxes, in good condition and signage clear** to avoid adding to congestion through drivers being unclear about what to do and where to park
- continue to develop schemes such as **“safer routes to school”**
- work with **independent schools to produce green commuter plans**
- encourage **“walking buses”** to and from school
- **provide road safety training and education**
- **ensure lessons have been learned** from the roll-out of the Controlled Parking Zone scheme. Produce a range of options for **Suburban Controlled Parking Zones**, for communities outwith the existing controlled zone who suffer from intrusive commuter parking, which are fair to all road users and make the best use of existing road space. This could include suitable all-day parking spaces, where appropriate (e.g. in the vicinity of guest houses), and dedicated motorcycle parking spaces.
- have an **early review of parking arrangements** throughout the city, taking account of the needs of shopping areas; and ensure that **parking enforcement** throughout the city is fair, but firm, and not damaging to business or conducted in a draconian manner.
- assess the effectiveness of the Richmond Borough Council's **differential parking permit charges scheme** that charges more for more polluting vehicles, as one means of encouraging low carbon emission vehicles.
- bring in a **dedicated business parking permit scheme** that meets the needs of businesses, traders and residents, including a reassessment of “essential user status” for certain businesses, such as pharmacies.
- **review bus priority lanes and “greenways”** across the city
- continue to press for the introduction of a **city-wide ban on double parking** which can be both dangerous and cause considerable inconvenience
- press ahead with the Multi Utilities Diversion Framework Agreement (**MUDFA**) programme to divert and protect utility installations in streets



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on the route of the Tramline, whilst still ensuring that Edinburgh stays “open for business”

Cycleways & Walking

Liberal Democrats throughout the UK have consistently supported measures to help cyclists, and pioneered some of the earliest schemes. Given Edinburgh’s compact nature, and relative lack of hills, it is well-suited to cycling. Cycling improves health but many people are put off by concern that the roads are not safe for cyclists. In Edinburgh only 2% of all journeys are made by bike; in Oxford and York, it is nearer 20%.

To **encourage people to cycle**, Liberal Democrats in Edinburgh would:

- provide well-lit, high quality cycleways
- make junctions safer for cyclists with advanced stop lines at all traffic lights
- provide segregated routes, as opposed to discretionary cycle lanes on main roads where parking is allowed within the lane
- regularly renew cycle markings on roads
- have coloured cycle markings at junctions and on selected routes
- encourage joint working parties on cycling with other Councils in Lothian, so that expertise can be shared and planning of long distance routes can be co-ordinated
- work closely with SPOKES to ensure that developments coincide with cyclists’ needs
- have more 20mph limits in residential and shopping areas
- increase street bike parking racks
- offer all children on-road cycle training (and pedestrian safety training)
- aim to pilot a Cycle Resource Centre, as suggested in the Scottish Parliamentary manifesto

Cyclists must also play their part in road and pedestrian safety. In co-operation with the Police and other public bodies, we would try to ensure cyclists use lights at night, use cycling helmets, and do not disobey the rules of the road or aggravate pedestrians by cycling in inappropriate places.

Walking is the cheapest way of getting around. Currently 22% of people in Edinburgh walk to work. Too many children, however, get bundled into cars for the “school run”. The ‘Manifesto for Scottish Streets’ produced by “Living Streets Scotland” contains excellent suggestions that Liberal Democrats in Edinburgh would support. These include:

- giving walking a higher profile
- upgrading walking networks
- ensuring new developments have good pedestrian access
- stop parking on pavements
- design streets for all
- have better streetscape management
- give local communities more say in decisions on streets

Currently, walking and cycling are made less pleasant and often dangerous because of double-parked vehicles, parking on pavements and cycling on pavements. These issues are all subjects of Liberal Democrat motions under consideration by the Council.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT cont.

3. Economic Development

Liberal Democrats want a thriving Edinburgh that continues to attract businesses and tourists, that provides a creative and pleasant living environment for all

We want to:

- ◆ make Edinburgh attractive to world business players
- ◆ retain businesses and jobs already in Edinburgh
- ◆ create an attractive environment for small businesses
- ◆ support Edinburgh's first Business Improvement District if businesses vote for it to go ahead
- ◆ continue to press for special case Capital City Funding
- ◆ work with the wider city region to boost economic growth
- ◆ help local urban centres/villages

Edinburgh Liberal Democrats welcome the Scottish Party's commitment to create a dynamic Scotland. All cities and regions will benefit from the proposals to further cut business rates and to create a Business Growth Fund that would allow councils to keep more business rates revenue as new businesses are encouraged and income from business rates grows. We welcome the proposals to create a world class infrastructure (including major public transport projects, such as the airport rail links and the Borders Railway); to invest in industry; to address skills shortages; to pilot new business incubator schemes in schools and colleges; to cut regulations; to reform public procurement rules; to measure quality of life to attract and retain new talent; to promote Corporate Social Responsibility; and to help the business community invest in microgeneration and energy efficiency.

Edinburgh is often described as the "engine room" of the Scottish economy and Liberal Democrats want to see the city continue to thrive in that role and to become renowned for its enterprising spirit.. Edinburgh's success has emerged from a combination of a flourishing financial sector, businesses that have been relatively unscathed by economic downturn, a well-educated and highly regarded workforce, and being an attractive place to live. With over 60,000 students in Edinburgh, the ancient relationship between Town and Gown continues to be of great importance.

But Edinburgh is more than just a city on its own. It is part of the wider city region. They are in a symbiotic relationship and need each other for continued success. Edinburgh needs to collaborate with the other Lothians, with Fife, with Glasgow, and with the Borders, if the Edinburgh City Region is to compete nationally and globally.

To promote a thriving economy, Edinburgh Liberal Democrats would aim to:-

- **fill the vacant post of Head of Economic Development** on a permanent basis in the early months of the new council
- **review where Economic Development best lies** within the council and whether Tourism should be part of the remit of the department



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- **maintain good relations with all the key stakeholders in Edinburgh's future success** and work closely with a variety of partners, including the business community (both small businessmen and large employers), Chamber of Commerce, universities and other educational institutions, and neighbouring local authorities.
- **continue to attract national and international firms** to locate to and remain in Edinburgh, providing the resources - such as a friendly, well-educated, well-trained workforce; attractive, affordable housing; better public transport links; and excellent schooling – that this requires
- **argue against further relocation of Scottish Executive civil service jobs** from Edinburgh to other cities or urban conurbations – the transfer of Scottish Natural Heritage to Inverness, for example, cost £27m and led to 80% of staff refusing to move
- **promote areas such as the Waterfront, Craigmillar and Wester Hailes as potential sites for Scottish Executive relocations**
- **promote further growth and expansion** within an environmentally friendly city that preserves its sense of community and identity as Scotland's Capital City
- **support investigation of the merits of Tax Increment Finance/Local Tax Re-investment Programme** as a means of encouraging investment and business growth by funding infrastructure in areas such as the Waterfront and City Centre. Any such scheme must not be at the expense of transparency and accountability.
- work with local communities to ensure **integration of newly located workforces**
- work with partner organisations to provide **new business advice and support**, including for shops in local communities
- continue to support the development of the **Edinburgh International Conference Centre** as an excellent facility, which will be even more competitive when its new exhibition area is completed
- encourage scientific progress to enable Edinburgh to continue as a world leader in **bio-technology** development
- support Edinburgh's **retail sector** to retain its position as one of Scotland's best shopping centres
- **market Edinburgh** in a positive way
- keep an eye on the global and national economy and act promptly to support workforces and **try to safeguard employment** if jobs are at risk
- **review all the Council's "arms length" companies** (including City Centre Management Company) for Best Value and to determine whether they should continue to function under their present structure. Critical of the City Centre Management Company from the start, the formation of the City Centre Partnership Board would seem to make it largely superfluous.
- ensure that the city's many **Festivals** provide a safe and secure environment for visitors and local people
- encourage **"change of use" for certain retail units** in Princes Street to allow the establishment of bars, cafes and restaurants. Princes Street as a tourist attraction is sadly lacking, despite its wonderful setting. In partnership with others, we need to make the most of Princes Street.
- create additional **"zones of sensitivity"**, like the Cowgate, where no additional licences, including off sales, will be granted
- **address the difficulty faced by small businesses in competing with "big names"** for city centre premises
- create a better environment in **all urban villages** with streetscape improvements, support for small businesses, involvement of Neighbourhood Partnerships



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT cont.

4. Planning

Edinburgh has a rich architectural heritage and is proud that the city centre attained UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 1995. People travel from all over the world to soak up the atmosphere of the dank, cramped, multi-storey dwellings of the Old Town and the clean lines of the young James Craig's masterful 1766 New Town plan.

Planning continues to be at the heart of sustainable development of the city. Its effect on everyday lives and future generations means that Liberal Democrats believe that every effort must be made to:

- **achieve good design and to enhance the built environment**
- **preserve the qualities** that won the city centre its World Heritage Site status
- **protect and enhance our conservation areas** using the "character statements" produced thanks to a Liberal Democrat initiative
- require all new developments to have **recycling facilities** designed in
- **safeguard the Green Belt and the city's green open spaces and playing fields** – one of the worst features of the Public Private Partnership deals struck for Edinburgh's schools has been the loss of significant acreages of playing fields. We should develop on brown-field land as the first resort, with further debate on the need for any relaxation of this along "green finger" transport corridors.
- increase the amount of **affordable housing** in Edinburgh. Look into the South Shropshire Council requirement for 50% affordable housing in any development, with half for sale and half for rent, with the council maintaining a stake in all affordable homes sold through a shared equity scheme, with a view to examining whether this could be replicated in Edinburgh.
- have new developments with a **mix of unit sizes**
- major new developments, such as the Waterfront, should **create communities**. To do this, they should have local shopping centres, repair shops, small businesses, transport links, etc. in at the start.
- rigorously take **enforcement action** against those who flout planning regulations
- **increase democratic participation in the planning process**, by making it easier for local people to access plans and to discuss them by having major planning applications as presentation items on agendas for Neighbourhood Partnerships. This would fit in with the new Planning etc (Scotland) Act which aims to make the planning system more accessible.
- **encourage office developments to be located closer to the people** who work there or use them
- encourage **sustainable buildings**, using combined heat and power, microgeneration of electricity and other sources of renewable energy.
- **planning guidelines**, especially the very strict rules for conservation areas, should be relaxed to allow for modern eco-technology and energy efficient measures to be used in new and old buildings.
- **protect the vitality of the inner city centre**. This includes a presumption against massive out of town shopping malls.
- **adopt national standards for parking in new developments** – 100% in affordable housing; and 200% in all other residential properties. Car parking should be underground, where possible, or in garages.



COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. Health & Social Care

Liberal Democrats want a Council that has concern for people at its core, that will provide effective support and protection for those in need, that will treat all people with dignity and respect, that will act to the highest professional standards at all times.

We want to:

- review the current structures against desired outcomes
- have genuine partnership working in policy planning and service delivery
- provide choice, flexibility, and dignity in service delivery for the elderly
- provide more uniform provision of mental health services across the city
- change the emphasis from care homes to care at home for those that want it
- address those areas of service currently under-financed, such as help for those with brain injuries, those with physical disabilities, and those in need of respite care
- care for carers

Edinburgh's Liberal Democrats welcome the health and wellbeing plans being worked on for the Scottish Parliamentary manifesto. By promoting health improvement, consumption of healthy local food, health prevention, a legislative presumption against the sale of urban greenspace and playing fields, more play areas, a major investment in community health facilities, and faster diagnosis, there is every hope that Scotland will become a healthier nation. However, there will always be a need for councils to devote large sums to providing Health and Social Care services for the elderly, those with learning or physical disabilities, those with addictions, those with mental health needs and those with acute or chronic illnesses. Health and Social Care is the Council's second biggest revenue spender, utilising about 20% of the budget. Within the department, there is a continuing need to address demographic change, particularly the expected rise in the number of people surviving beyond the age of 85. The Council's Joint Capacity Plan for Older People's Services addresses key drivers for change.

The Health and Social Care Department in Edinburgh is relatively new. A Joint Director, accountable to both the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian Chief Executives, took up his post in April 2005. The Liberal Democrat Group believed at the time that there was a desperate need for better partnership working between all the organisations and agencies involved in health, social care and children's services but were not convinced that splitting up the Social Work department was the right



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way to achieve this. Professional opinion within and outside Edinburgh was overwhelmingly against the split. With Labour and Tory support, the new department was formed. We commend all those in the new Health and Social Care department who have put their misgivings aside and continued to work in a very professional and caring way through what have undoubtedly been difficult times. Particularly in view of continuing concerns expressed to us, the Liberal Democrats would seek a **fundamental review of the structure of Health and Social Care**, its staffing, resources, partnership working and service outcomes. We would particularly want to explore any barriers to close working that result from the very different ethos that pervades NHS Lothian, which is less accountable and transparent than the Council, and appears to be more target than quality driven. We do have concerns that there has been enough change for employees to cope with; but would not want to continue as at present if the structure is inhibiting the delivery of desired outcomes. Poor management of change and poor communication within the department are recurring themes in staff complaints.

Amongst our general aims in Health and Social Care would be to **give elderly people more choice, flexibility and independence**, especially by moving away from a Care Home culture for the frail and elderly to offering more support for Care at Home; and **to help those with learning difficulties and mental and physical disabilities to play a full role in life**.

Aspects of Health and Social Care that Edinburgh Liberal Democrats would prioritise would include:

- looking at the **rationalisation of estates, and co-location**, which will not only bring efficiency savings to plough back into services, but encourage better joint working.
- seeking to **recruit and retain social workers** of high calibre and experience.
- offering **training, career development and support** for social workers in their very demanding work
- encouraging **joint assessment and joint budget** between agencies, emphasising the importance of measuring service outcomes, to give best value corporately but also to prevent one individual having to be subjected to multiple assessments
- **increasing funding for the ageing population**. At present Edinburgh spends less and performs less well than many other local authorities. There is a particular need to improve home care services to allow older people to remain independently and safely in their own homes for as long as is feasible. This is recognised in the Council's recent Joint Capacity Plan for Older People.
- to fundamentally **modernise the Domiciliary Care Service** and make it more flexible especially with reference to working hours, and responsiveness to clients needs. Continuity of care worker is often important to vulnerable people, so we would try to address that. Locality management could make the service more responsive to need. There needs to be 24/7 home care provision available from well-trained workers.
- there should be **regular assessment of changing needs**, so that care packages can be adjusted accordingly.
- offering a **hazard check service and home safety package** for older people in their homes, in conjunction with Police and Fire Service
- continuing to offer community-based services, such as **home shopping and garden aid**, for all who require them
- supporting **Care & Repair** to help the elderly get small household jobs done.



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- promoting **community transport** schemes, so that people are aware of what is available, and assessing the need for increased investment in accessible/community transport schemes.
- reducing the **waiting list** for services of the current 137 adults with Learning Disabilities. These are people with complex needs who require supported accommodation.
- investigating different forms of **day care and support schemes**, such as Real Jobs, that enable people with learning difficulties to fulfil their full potential.
- promoting **independence and integration** of people with disabilities.
- ensuring high **standards of access to public buildings and to services**. This would include encouraging “Homes for All” at the planning stage of developments.
- encouraging **schemes of independent living**.
- ensuring that **hospital discharge** is appropriate, that it is the right time for the patient and that good care/support packages and aids/adaptations are in place.
- offering more of **the respite, day care and intermediate care** that is in demand. This includes access to services for those in Rural West Edinburgh, where residents currently feel under-served.
- recognising that **mental health and well being** should have a key position in health, social care and education services. We are conscious that Edinburgh spends less per head than other authorities in Lothian, and that mental health services across the city are patchy. We would audit services and expand across the city in an equitable way.
- reviewing service level contracts and grants for **voluntary sector** agencies engaged in delivering health and social care services, whether that be front-line delivery or information/ education. We would work in close partnership with the voluntary sector, recognising its value as a partner in providing social work and welfare services, in building a more compassionate society, and in involving communities.
- delivering the planned **new Care Homes** and responding to the need for a **Care Home in the Rural West of the city**
- following up and implementing any changes emerging from the ‘**Changing Lives: Report of 21st Century Social Work Review**’, especially those related to designing services round the needs of users, carers and communities.
- ensuring **service recipients, carers, voluntary organisations, trade unions and professional groups are all be involved in policy planning**
- treating **prevention and early intervention** as an efficient way to reduce service demand
- **bringing in best practice from other councils**
- **guaranteeing the rights** of all service users to be consulted and involved in decisions about their cases, with simple complaints procedures for resolving problems
- **providing support to carers**, through encouraging development of local carers’ self-help groups, through providing adequate opportunities for respite, through training, and, nationally, through continuing to press for benefits for carers to be paid at a level that better reflects the important role they play. There must be dedicated support for young carers.
- have **female workers** offered to vulnerable girls and women who access social work services



COMMUNITY SERVICES, cont.

2. Housing

Liberal Democrats recognise that everyone has the right to have a safe, warm home that is within their means. We would work with all sectors to ensure the fulfilment of that right.

We want to:

- ◆ ensure the Council meets its statutory responsibilities in an exemplary manner
- ◆ maximise tenant involvement in decisions related to their housing and communities
- ◆ provide permanent accommodation to all households who are unintentionally homeless by 2012
- ◆ work with landlords to improve standards in the private sector
- ◆ aim to facilitate safe, affordable, efficient, accessible, warm, healthy homes for all.

Three major housing issues in Edinburgh recently have been the increasing need for Affordable Housing; the rejection by tenants of Council Housing Stock Transfer, despite a £600K campaign by the Council for a “Yes” vote; and the continuing problem of Homelessness. All give the Council challenges in the years ahead.

Affordable Housing

The right-to-buy, a growing population, high house prices and full employment have led to a drastic shortage of affordable housing in Edinburgh. First time buyers, renters, key workers and students are among those needing affordable housing.

Liberal Democrats would:

- work with all relevant partners, including private developers, to try to provide **an adequate supply of good quality affordable housing for all** (for sale, rent, shared ownership, or other form of tenure). Engage with groups such as Craigmillar Self-Build Housing Association and Habitat for Humanity to investigate the potential for self-build schemes.
- aim to maintain or create **balanced and sustainable communities** throughout the city, with environmentally friendly housing designed to encourage social cohesion.
- look into **increasing the percentage of “affordable housing”** in new housing developments from 25% for developments of 12 or more houses to 50%. “Affordable housing” in this context is defined as “housing available for rent or for sale to meet the needs of people who cannot afford to buy or rent the housing generally available on the open market.”
- **ensure developers keep to conditions** regarding the affordable element of housing



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- investigate the feasibility of introducing a shared equity scheme such as that in South Shropshire where there is a 50% affordable housing quota on new developments
- encourage small zero carbon developments on brownfield land
- publicise schemes, such as Communities Scotland Mortgage to Rent, that provide rescue packages to avoid people losing their homes.
- support moves to reform VAT to encourage developers to repair and reuse empty buildings and brownfield sites.
- support the call from housing charities and others for the Scottish Executive to fund 30,000 affordable rented homes by 2012.

Council and Registered Social Landlord Housing

The Council has just over 23,000 Council houses left in its control. With over 24,000 households registered on EdIndex for an average 3,000 Council and Registered Social Landlord properties becoming available each year, it is obvious that demand far outreaches supply.

Liberal Democrats would:

- continue to upgrade, modernise and repair council housing stock, funded by rents and Scottish Executive grants.
- review the programme and delivery of maintenance for council houses, to ensure that repairs and improvements are done promptly and effectively.
- push for a change in government policy to allow the housing debt burden to be removed from those councils that want to invest in housing stock but do not go for Housing Stock Transfer. Those councils that want to invest in social rented housing should not be financially precluded from doing so.
- tenants in Edinburgh have rejected council housing stock transfer but if tenants in future do wish to opt for small-scale community stock transfer, management co-operatives or to take more power over decisions about their homes, we will facilitate this.
- endorse consultation with and participation of tenants in decisions regarding their housing and work with the Edinburgh Tenants Federation and individual tenants, and through the Tenant Participation Strategy, to ensure the best possible service is delivered according to tenants' needs and wishes. Housing solutions should be determined by tenants at a local level. Funding should be based on need, not on which type of organisation owns the housing.
- promote tenant involvement by seeking to increase the proportion of tenants or tenant advocates on the Boards of Registered Social Landlords to a minimum of 50%.
- expect good, responsible tenants to be the norm. Where necessary, we would use Anti-Social Behaviour Orders against those tormenting their neighbours but would always seek mediation where appropriate.
- aim to have well-trained decentralised neighbourhood teams in every area. Housing should work with other Council sections to help build balanced and healthy communities in line with local priorities and needs. These teams would be well known locally and would be ready to help find out, for example, the reason for rent being paid late before an accumulation of arrears sets in. Early intervention and prevention is much better than having to cope with large amounts of debt.



Private Sector Housing

With about 14% of people in Edinburgh in private rented accommodation, this sector is of vital importance. The need for more rented accommodation continues to grow. Private renting is the first choice or last resort for a wide range of individuals and households. For some, it is a stop-gap until they get a Council house; for some newcomers, it is a way to get to know the city before committing to buying a house; for some, it is the inevitable result of a family split-up; for others, it provides a home without the responsibility of home ownership; and for tens of thousands of students, it is the best way to start living an independent life away from home. All of these groups require safe, secure, warm homes.

Liberal Democrats would:

- seek a strong partnership with the private sector to encourage **good practice in the provision of high quality rented accommodation**
- work with housing associations, building societies and others to provide **more homes for rent**
- continue to support **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) legislation** and the **National Registration Scheme for Private Landlords** as a means of improving the safety and quality of rented accommodation for tenants and their neighbours. However, both need to be rigorously enforced if they are to meet the needs of tenants and neighbours.
- pay particular attention to Edinburgh's high **student population**, working with Universities/Colleges, Scottish Executive and the Council to ensure students are well-housed and are well integrated into local communities. There is a need for more purpose-built rented accommodation for students, particularly in areas that have not been designated as "sensitive" in terms of the proportion of HMOs. There is a need to develop balanced communities.
- continue to endorse the **Stair Partnership**, which makes tenemental living easier to cope with; and would consider setting up a broader factoring service for the maintenance of housing in mixed tenure areas.
- want to build on the success of the voluntary **Edinburgh Landlord Accreditation Scheme** which has raised standards in the private sector regarding communication with tenants, property condition, repairs and maintenance, safety and energy efficiency. We would promote the scheme so that the number of landlords and letting agencies in the scheme increases. We would consider an awards scheme for private rented accommodation to commend landlords and letting agencies that provide high standards of service. Examples of good practice would be used to encourage others.
- **tackle those landlords and letting agencies who do not meet standards.** The Council's Private Rented Sector Team currently investigates over 600 complaints a year. We would publish an annual report on the work of the investigation team, give it the resources to do the job properly and to liaise effectively with the Procurator Fiscal's Office to ensure there is no obstacle to the prosecution of landlords who do not adhere to the law.
- encourage and take the lead in promoting **community cohesion** in areas with a high density of private rented accommodation. This might include support for community groups and offering advice to those affected by conflicting lifestyles.



Homelessness

The Scottish Executive has promised a home for everyone by 2012. The City of Edinburgh Council has to play its part to ensure that target is met in Edinburgh.

There are many reasons for homelessness but the impact on individuals, families and communities is immense. There are still over 5,000 homeless applications a year to the Council with one in seven of those applying having been sleeping rough.

Liberal Democrats will:

- work with tenants, housing providers and the Scottish Executive towards resolving chronic homelessness and inadequate housing in the city
- bring those who are unintentionally homeless into permanent, affordable accommodation by 2012
- provide a housing and council tax benefits system that makes quick, accurate decisions, so that failure to apply benefit does not lead to arrears and eventual potential eviction
- monitor the pilot “Amber” project, run by Edinburgh Cyrenians and SACRO, that offers mediation and support to young people to try to prevent homelessness caused by parents/families/friends being 'no longer willing or able to accommodate' the young person

Housing needs change as people grow older or become disabled. It is generally preferable for homes to be adaptable enough to suit these needs, rather than that people have to seek out more suitable homes at a time when they are less able or willing to cope with such change. New houses should be designed to suit changing needs. There is a critical shortage of adapted housing throughout Scotland, with only 20% of Scotland's 36,000 wheelchair users living in an adapted home.

For all people, but especially for the elderly or those in poor health or on low incomes, Liberal Democrats would work to ensure that houses meet **high standards of energy efficiency, are safe and secure**. We would widen the availability of **Garden Aid** for those no longer able to cope with their gardens. We would continue to support the **Care & Repair schemes** within the City, which help so many elderly householders cope with small jobs needing done around the house.

There is a backlog of essential repairs and improvements needing addressed in the city's privately owned housing. The attention needed by **Edinburgh's tenements**, in particular those with sandstone facades, is a major challenge. Without urgent action to prevent deterioration, the problem is set to worsen dramatically. We would seek additional Government funds to deal with this major time bomb.

Liberal Democrats believe that Edinburgh should welcome **asylum seekers and refugees** to our city. We are glad that the government decided against building a vast and unsuitable Accommodation Centre at Turnhouse but would wish Edinburgh to play a full part in helping to house and support asylum seekers and refugees in manageable numbers.



COMMUNITY SERVICES, cont.

3. Community Safety

Liberal Democrats want a city where people of all ages feel safe and secure in their own and other neighbourhoods and communities

Edinburgh Liberal Democrats welcome the focus of the Scottish Party on making areas safer and on having an effective, efficient, fair justice system. Crime and fear of crime limit people's lives in many communities. Scotland has one of the highest rates of imprisonment in Europe but has a persistently high rate of reoffending. We endorse the action plan to cut crime in Scotland that was announced at our Party Conference in Aviemore in February. This would mean 1,000 more community police officers, where and when local communities need them; tougher community sentences to give offenders skills for work, not the further crime that often follows very short term prison sentences; a crack down on knife crime, with tougher sentences; and involvement of young people in Youth Panels that allow young people to be involved in judging and changing the behaviour of other young people. At national level, Liberal Democrats are committed to eradicating many of the known root causes of crime (poverty, unemployment, poor social conditions, lack of good education, alcohol and drug abuse). We totally reject Labour's view that a plastic ID card will cut crime.

At Council level, Liberal Democrats would work in partnership with others to develop safer communities in a way that is flexible enough to meet the needs of Edinburgh's diverse communities. Although the 2006 Edinburgh Community Safety Survey suggests Edinburgh is generally regarded as a safe place to live, one in five do worry that they might be a victim of crime. Neighbourhood Partnerships would have an important role in ensuring that local residents feel safe and that neighbourhoods have ownership of initiatives.

Amongst specific measures, Liberal Democrats would:

- continue to support **increased police numbers** for Lothian & Borders Police.
- continue to argue the **special case that Edinburgh has for extra policing** because of its role as an international, capital city, home to the Scottish Parliament.
- create a **more accountable partnership** between the Council and Lothian & Borders Police
- target high crime areas with **police led crime reduction strategies**.
- try to make sure that every community has **local community beat officers** who are based in the area long enough to build up detailed local knowledge and trust.
- ensure that **dedicated police officers work with young people**, both inside and outside schools, and, in conjunction with Social Work, Education and voluntary agencies develop a diversionary strategy to deal with youngsters who serially re-offend. The Youth Action Teams have proved very effective and we await with interest the outcome of the pilot of School Link Officers in two Edinburgh schools, based on initiatives already proving to be successful in Aberdeen, Glasgow and the Scottish Borders.
- encourage Lothian & Borders Police to **recruit and promote more women and ethnic minority officers**.



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- build **co-ordinated working and increased liaison** between all the emergency services, the courts, licensing boards, regulatory committees and council services at a practical level. The new Neighbourhood Partnerships will play a key role in promoting genuine joined-up working.
- encourage **environmental improvements** known to reduce levels of crime, such as street lighting and security precautions in buildings; and design such measures into new housing developments. This would include making more use of Police Architectural Liaison Officers and ensuring that a **community safety audit** is presented for every new build development
- support **Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Prevention Panels, Pub Watch, Shop Watch**, to encourage groups and communities to work with the police to tackle specific types of crime.
- await the outcome of the “**no cold callers**” **pilot scheme**, to see if this should be rolled out across the city. Also consider introducing the Fife “nominated neighbour” scheme where more vulnerable residents can rely on a neighbour to help them deal with unsolicited callers.
- give consistent financial support to **Victim Support**.
- **use CCTV systems in a way that discourages crime** but protects civil liberties and does not merely displace crime to other neighbourhoods. The use of roving CCTV can be helpful to target “hot spots”.
- deal in a holistic way with **anti-social behaviour** and with young offenders
- provide **more secure places** for those young offenders for whom this is the only option
- recognise **the alcohol and drug addiction** problems in society and seek to fund the Alcohol Rehabilitation Unit mooted by the Edinburgh Drugs and Alcohol Action team. We would provide educational and preventative programmes. We would particularly target underage drinkers, parents with drink/drug problems and early intervention.
- campaign vigorously against the retail sale of **cigarettes, alcohol and solvents** to young people.
- have an urgent review of licensing provision, with a view to formulating a **Licensing Strategy for the City**. This would include looking at fast food outlets, underage drinking, enforcement, off licences, promotions and cut price drinks.
- in liaison with the police and colleges/universities, help make **students** feel safe on campus and in the community.
- have **cross-party political representation** on the Edinburgh Drugs and Alcohol Action Team and the Community Safety Partnership
- appoint the **Convener of the Police Board** as Chair of the Community Safety Partnership and as a member of the Edinburgh Drugs and Alcohol Action Team
- investigate providing a choice of **Home Security Packages**, for pensioners initially, that would offer such items as mortice locks, door chains, spy holes, security light systems
- develop **innovative pilot schemes to reduce vandalism and youth crime**
- arrange **an investigation into the Council’s Secure Accommodation Service** to check that it is achieving satisfactory outcomes
- **maintain a high quality, modern, efficient fire service**
- have an **Emergency Planning system** that takes into account the new threats to the city from international unrest



“The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community and in which no-one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. We champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals, we acknowledge and respect their right to freedom of conscience and their right to develop their talents to the full. We aim to disperse power, to foster diversity and to nurture creativity. We believe that the role of the state is to enable all citizens to attain these ideals, to contribute fully to their communities and to take part in the decisions which affect their lives.

These are the conditions of liberty and social justice which it is the responsibility of each citizen and the duty of the state to protect and enlarge. The Liberal Democrats consist of women and men working together for the achievement of these aims.”

From the Scottish Liberal Democrat Constitution

.. winning with you for a bright new future ..