

**Edinburgh  
Conservatives**

# **A Better Future For Edinburgh**

**Manifesto for our city,  
May 2012**





# Introduction



Edinburgh is a great place to live, a great place to work and a great place to visit. Edinburgh Conservatives are very proud of the City, but we believe Edinburgh can still be better for all of us. Conservative Councillors have made a difference both locally and city-wide over the last 5 years but we want to do more and make more of a difference.

For the last 5 years the SNP/Liberal Democrat coalition has failed to deliver for Edinburgh. They have let us down by not giving strong leadership and by ducking the difficult decisions. Edinburgh Conservatives have stood up for the people of Edinburgh and we have a strong vision for where Edinburgh should be going.

We will work constructively with all political parties to implement the best policies for Edinburgh. The quality of life in Edinburgh is good but by focusing on what the Council should do and by making sensible financial decisions, it can be even better.

Edinburgh Conservatives will seek to provide quality services at the best price. We want the Council to work in partnership with other sectors across the City: business, the Third sector and other statutory bodies.

The elections in May will elect a Council for 5 years, so there is no better time to make a change. It is time for a new vision for Edinburgh and for strong leadership. Edinburgh Conservatives can deliver this future with your help.



Jeremy R Balfour  
Edinburgh Conservative Group Leader

# Delivering for everyone in Edinburgh



**Edinburgh can do better for people for all ages. Conservatives can improve the services that we all need.**

## **Education**

The Conservative's goal is to inspire achievement, encourage efficiency and see aspirations fulfilled. Conservatives will ensure excellent education gets the recognition it deserves, but will challenge low expectation and complacency which holds back the education of too many of our young folk. We will tackle the long lasting failure of some sink schools with innovation and determination. Bureaucracy in education must give way to freedom, balanced with responsibility and trust.

We will seek to deliver:

- A more devolved system and a move from a one size fits all mindset. Head teachers and school staff should have more freedom. Parental choice should be at the centre of decision making. Education should be less centralised.
- We will pursue choice, diversity and efficiency. Edinburgh Conservatives will actively pursue parent and pupil aspirations. We will allow schools to develop vocational and subject specialisms. We will improve the services available in the transition from primary to secondary school. We will extend the use of underused school buildings.
- Edinburgh Conservatives will address underperformance by supporting firm discipline to prevent disruption in classrooms. Conservatives will pursue partnerships with new providers: business, philanthropists and experts can all work together to deliver a better education than is currently available.



## **Health and Social Care**

Edinburgh Conservatives want to look after and protect everyone in the city who needs help whatever their stage of life. The city has a growing number of older citizens and a city can be judged on how it treats its older people.

We will seek to deliver:

- An expansion of Older People's services across the whole of the city with the aim of helping people live longer lives in their own homes so we will invest more resources in home services making sure each person gets what they need. We will provide better community services allowing individuals to socialise and stopping isolation.
- We are committed to people being allowed to use direct payments where appropriate. Conservatives will promote direct payments and continue to increase this service.
- The Council needs to work with the Third Sector and the Edinburgh Conservatives see a greater role for them to play and will work with them to facilitate the appropriate services.







# Getting Edinburgh Moving

Edinburgh's transport infrastructure has been neglected over many years without any serious traffic planning. Without regular maintenance and renewal our roads and pavements have deteriorated to a totally unacceptable condition. Edinburgh Conservatives will prioritise renewal of our traffic infrastructure and modernisation of the City's traffic plans.

## Transport

We will seek to deliver:

- The renewal and maintenance of the city's road and pavement infrastructure. We need to make sure our pavements are safe to walk on and potholes are fixed quickly and done correctly first time.
- A review of parking charges to ensure that parking provision meets the need of local residents and local businesses.
- A more efficient use of existing road space through a re-examination of traffic flows.
- More cycling in the city both for getting to work and for leisure and, in particular, improved cross-city routes.
- A tram that, within the current contract, is delivered on time and at the best possible price.
- Enabling an expansion to car clubs in suitable parts of the city.



# A Thriving City

Edinburgh's economy is the key to our success now and in the future. The last few years have been difficult and politicians must give workers and business the tools to become successful.

## Economic Development

Economic development is an integral part of Edinburgh Conservatives approach on a range of issues. We will continue the promotion of Edinburgh as an innovative and enterprising capital city, outward-looking in attracting investment and realising potential: a city which is ready and open for business.

We will seek to deliver:

- A larger return of business rate receipts from central government.
- Support for all our town centres not simply the 9 presently designated.
- A reduction in unemployment in the city with a particular focus on youth employment.
- Continued support for the Edinburgh to Glasgow rail improvement programme.
- No tourist tax.



## **Planning and City Development**

Edinburgh is one of the most attractive cities in the world and highly rated as a place to live. Edinburgh has seen growth in its population over the last 5 years and this likely to continue.

We will seek to deliver:

- Planning guidance to be reduced and clarified so that it is easily understood and the reason behind it is clearly explicable.
- Prioritised housing development on brownfield sites.
- A pilot self build project on an area of land where the Council will put in some infrastructure and individuals can build their own homes.
- A World Heritage Site which is promoted and cherished including designation of a buffer around the site where it is not already abutted by a Conservation zone.
- The reintroduction of a self financing Edinburgh stair partnership seeking sponsorship from the private sector.







## Finance

Edinburgh Conservatives aim to do things more efficiently and get best value for money. Crucial to achieving this is the need to work alongside other public bodies, private companies and the Third Sector. The Council needs to facilitate some services and does not need to do everything.

We will seek to deliver:

- A zero based budget for the year 2013/14. This will force each Council Department to justify what they do and make sure we are getting value for money from all services. We will review what the Council is obliged to do by statute and assess whether services can be delivered better by, or with, someone else.
- The Conservative Group will re-visit the alternative business models programme to examine the potential of all sectors to deliver better and more effective services.
- We support the on-going Council Tax freeze and over the 5 year term will seek to reduce Council Tax if possible.
- A commitment to a 3 year funding package from the 2013 budget onward to give Third sector certainty for their budgets.
- Establish a high profile role for a Councillor to advocate on behalf of the Third Sector.



# **An Edinburgh for Residents and Visitors**

**Conservatives want Edinburgh to be an even better city than it already is. To maintain the city's reputation as a great place to live and a great place to visit, we must always strive for improvement. We need an Edinburgh fit for purpose.**

## **Fit for Residents**

Our primary objective is to make Edinburgh fit for residents. To help achieve this we will take bold and new steps.

We will seek to deliver:

- A continued increase in recycling levels across the city.
- An increase in the number of dog waste bins and bags available especially around our parks and green spaces.
- Manage and maintain the trees in our city and make sure it is done in a more efficient way.
- A new cultural body, similar to Edinburgh Leisure, to run and maintain facilities such as the King's Theatre, the Festival Theatre and the Usher Hall. We would encourage this body to use outside experience and believe that it would have far greater success in managing these venues than the Council.
- Increased investment in our parks and libraries across the city.
- Piloting a trust management approach for some community centres.
- Continued support of and invest in Edinburgh Leisure.





## Visitors

Tourism is vitally important to our city. The tourism industry creates thousands of jobs and brings millions of pounds in to the local economy. Edinburgh is often the gateway into the rest of Scotland.

We will seek to deliver:

- Growing and commercially successful festivals across the year and help to see visitors coming to our city at different times.
- More private sponsorship to run our festivals.



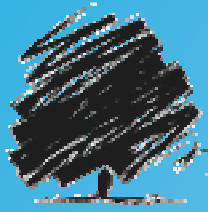


Edinburgh Conservatives have a strong vision for the city. We will give leadership and be prepared to make difficult decisions that will benefit everyone who lives, works and visits. We want make to sure we have efficient services that meet local needs and help people have a high quality of life. We will work with business and the Third sector to deliver these services and make sure that our streets are safe well kept and clean.









# **Edinburgh Conservatives**

**Promoted by Jeremy Balfour on behalf of Edinburgh Conservatives,  
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