

Gordon Macdonald

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Pentlands

March
2021



Spaces for People Consultation Extended



City of Edinburgh Council has extended the consultation with members of the public to 5 April whether to keep some “Spaces for People” measures in place, either on a trial basis or more permanently.

The measures, which have generated a lot of discussion, include most of the recent road and lane changes affecting buses, car users, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Since the plans were first published, Gordon has been in direct contact with the council and made sure that concerns being raised are being heard.

However, many of the measures which have been introduced to allow people to get out and about during the pandemic are also helping the Council achieve objectives unrelated to the Coronavirus pandemic. They are helping the Council achieve net zero carbon by 2030 by encouraging people to switch to walking or cycling as more sustainable ways of travelling, supporting high streets and city centre businesses by providing more space for people to enjoy them, improving road safety and health, and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Therefore, the Council are eager to hear people’s views before deciding whether to go through the legal processes necessary to keep projects.

Gordon commented, “I know there are many strong views regarding these temporary measures so I would encourage as many people to contribute to the consultation—this is your opportunity to let your voice be heard.”

To respond to the consultation, please go to: -

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/bi/retainingspacesforpeopleconsultation/>

Alternatively, if you would like a printed version of the questionnaire, please call 0131 200 2000 or email: street.schemes@edinburgh.gov.uk

Bus Passes for Young People



In last year’s Scottish Government Budget, free bus travel for people under the age of 19 was introduced. This has now been extended for those aged 21 and under.

This scheme will be called the National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Young Persons and comes into force on 1 April 2021.

Gordon praised the scheme, “This is a fantastic measure for the young people of Scotland. It will enable them to be able to travel cost free when they begin work or start at college or university,

“This benefits the young person directly, but also benefits everyone else: fewer vehicles on the road means less congestion and less pollution.

“It will also make their first years employment or further and higher education more affordable - removing the worry of being able to get there.”

ALSO THIS MONTH...

Local Authority Discretionary Fund



The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Last year, the SNP Government announced £60 million in support for businesses and self-employed people in Scotland impacted by restrictions introduced to control the spread of COVID-19. The fund was doubled from its original £60 million to £120 million as of 10 February 2021 and will help with the short-term financial challenges being experienced by businesses.

However, unlike previous funds which have been targeted towards specific groups or sectors, this fund seeks to empower local authorities to direct the support based on the characteristics of their local economies.

Commenting, Gordon noted, "This measure recognises the insight that councils have on the business community in their area — Edinburgh Council will have a better understanding of where funding would be most effectively deployed."

Applications to the fund are now open. You can apply via the below link: -

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/coronavirus-4/businesses-employers

Back to School



The Scottish Government has announced that the next phase of the reopening of schools. Primary schools already have P1-3 children back in school and, from 15 March, all P4-7 pupils will return. Breakfast clubs and after school care services will also be able to recommence, but please contact your school for further details.

Gordon noted, "I am sure many parents will be relieved that schools are reopening and pupils can get back to learning in a school environment with their friends. This has been an incredibly difficult for young people and our focus must be on their learning and wellbeing."

Secondary school learners will also start to receive a blend of in-school and remote learning.

New Vaccination Campaign for Unpaid Carers



The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Unpaid carers who have not already been identified through social security data or GP systems will be able to register themselves for a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination appointment.

The new online service, which opens on Monday 15 March, is for unpaid carers aged between 16 and 64 who provide face-to-face care for a family member or friend.

Gordon commented, "Carers who receive relevant benefits, such as Carer's Allowance, Young Carer Grant, or Child Winter Heating Payment, will receive a letter with details of their appointment. However, I want to encourage all unpaid carers to self-register too."

To register, go to: -

www.nhsinform.scot/carersregister

Contact Gordon Macdonald MSP

✉ gordon.macdonald.msp@parliament.scot

☎ 0131 443 0595

📄 The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

📱 Gordon Macdonald MSP

🐦 @GMacdonaldMSP

Monthly Surgeries

Due to the ongoing public health concern, in the interest of public and staff safety, Gordon's surgeries are suspended until further notice but he will continue to handle enquiries as usual.

Working for Edinburgh Pentlands