

Gordon Macdonald MSP

October 2024 Newsletter



Edinburgh Allocated Additional Housing Funds



Gordon welcomes the Scottish Government announcement of £40 million for councils across Scotland, including almost £15 million for Edinburgh, to boost the supply of affordable homes.

First Minister John Swinney outlined in the Programme for Government that £600 million would be committed to affordable housing in the current financial year and allocating this £40 million will allow for the purchase of properties to reduce temporary accommodation and bring vacant buildings back into use.

Scotland's councils have been supported to purchase almost 1,500 properties in 2023-24 for use as affordable homes and the allocation of this £40 million will accelerate that work to ensure that families across Edinburgh have a safe and warm place to call home.

Gordon said "Tackling the housing emergency is one of the major issues across the city and one of the key ways we can solve it is by bringing empty and vacant buildings back into use.

"This £40m fund, introduced by the Scottish Government as part of the £600m affordable housing budget, will ensure that we can build on the 1,500 properties that were brought into use for affordable housing in the past year and the almost £15m allocated to Edinburgh will have a significant impact in tackling the housing crisis across the city. Since 2007 the Scottish Government has supported Edinburgh build 16,802 social and affordable homes."

"Every family in Edinburgh deserves to have a safe and warm place that they can call home and with the decisions taken by the Scottish Government that is exactly what they will get."

Oxgangs Neighbourhood Cupboard



Gordon made a visit to the Oxgangs Neighbourhood Cupboard, a community pantry supported by and hosted at Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre.

The address is 71 Firrhill Drive and current opening hours are Tuesdays 11am-1pm and Thursdays 11am-1pm.

Membership is free to join with proof of local address. Cost is £4 per visit and

people can then help themselves to food they need, saving plenty of money in the process.

The Cupboard are looking for volunteers to help with heavy lifting for shelf-stacking etc. This may be an ideal opportunity for young people looking for volunteering opportunities and interested people are asked to contact them on 0131 466 0678.

Gordon said "Food prices have certainly been affected by the cost of living crisis and I'm proud of the contribution made to alleviate food poverty by Oxgangs Neighbourhood Cupboard."

Surgery Notice



Wester Hailes Library will remain closed until mid-October whilst essential works are completed. Please be advised that the next surgery in Wester Hailes will take place on **Friday 4th October** at **10-11am** at:

**The Health Agency
Wester Hailes Healthy Living Centre
30 Harvesters Way
EH14 3JF**



Balerno Fairtrade Fortnight



It was a special Fairtrade Fortnight this year with the Fairtrade movement marking two special milestones, one nationally with the UK movement celebrating 30 years and Balerno Fairtrade Village celebrating their 20th anniversary.

Gordon took the opportunity to highlight the achievement and lodged a parliamentary motion acknowledging the incredible efforts of the members of Balerno Fairtrade Village, local retailers, local schools, and residents.

Gordon said "Balerno Fairtrade has enthusiastically supported Fairtrade Fortnight and Fairtrade throughout the years, by raising awareness for fairer trade by stocking and buying Fairtrade which supports farmers in low-income countries.

"I'm pleased that the motion I lodged received cross-party support in Parliament as it's important we continue to highlight the Fairtrade initiative to maintain conditions and stability for workers and the environment."

Dreghorn Barracks Redevelopment



A 'Proposal Of Application' notice has been submitted for permission to redevelop the Dreghorn Barracks site.

The development work is described as 'the delivery of technical, accommodation, and support facilities including

a new medical centre, new offices, new accommodation blocks, new stores, new garaging and workshops, a new sports pitch, and car parking'.

Two public consultation exhibition events at Colinton Bowling Club are proposed, provisionally on **Wednesday 16th October 3-7pm** and **Wednesday 30th October 3-7pm**.

Gordon said "I very much welcome the plans to upgrade Dreghorn Barracks ensuring it is fit for purpose. I will be attending the consultation exhibition which will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders and members of the public to raise questions and submit feedback.

"I encourage local constituents to engage and, if they can, take the time to attend the consultation exhibition."

Financial Support for Tenants



Following the success of the Tenant Hardship Fund, Edinburgh Council plans to increase the maximum average payment to around £480.

The Fund, established in 2023, aids tenants struggling with rent due to the cost-of-living crisis.

For 2024/25, the award has increased to a maximum of two fortnightly charges which will help tenants who need intervention to prevent court escalation and secure an affordable repayment plan.

Around 80% of Council tenants in Edinburgh receive assistance with their rent in the form of housing benefits or Universal Credit. The changes will also apply to new Universal Credit claimants, where deferred payments may create a rent pressure.

Gordon said "The cost of living crisis is affecting us all and I encourage council tenants worried about rent payments to contact their Housing Officer or email tenanthardshipfund@edinburgh.gov.uk."

Funding For Mid-Market Homes



The construction of 2,800 mid-market rent homes will be supported by £100 million of investment from the Scottish Government.

Mid-market rent is a type of affordable housing aimed at assisting households on low to moderate incomes to access

affordable rented accommodation and helps those who have difficulty accessing social rented housing, buying their own home or renting privately.

This commitment forms part of the Government's approach to leverage in more private investment to deliver housing, making public funds go further.

It will build on the success of the Thriving Investments model which has grown an initial £47.5 million investment from the Scottish Government to £222.5 million to deliver up to 1,200 mid-market homes across Scotland.

Gordon said "Mid-market homes help reduce pressures on housing waiting lists and provide affordable options for tenants, therefore I welcome this investment."

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Gordon holds open weekly surgeries for constituents every Friday at 10am.

The locations for these can be found at: <https://www.gordonmacdonaldmsp.info/surgery>

