SERVICE DIRECTOR – CULTURE WELLBEING AND ECONOMY

RECRUITMENT PACK

2026



EDINBVRGH
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Contents

Contents	1
Introduction from Council Leader Jane Meagher	1
Welcome from Chief Executive Paul Lawrence	2
Spotlight on the City of Edinburgh Council	3
Creating a council for the future	4
Creating a great place to work for the people of Edinburgh	5
Edinburgh - an outstanding capital city	6
Discover Edinburgh	7
More information	10
Political leadership	11
Role summary	12
Person specification	14
Our behaviours	15
How to apply	16
Summary of terms	17

Introduction from Council Leader Jane Meagher



Thank you for your interest in the Service Director Culture Wellbeing and Economy position with the City of Edinburgh Council.

The post is responsible for leading a range of major Council services that include:

- Cultural Venues
- Museums and Galleries
- Libraries
- Cultural Strategy and Partnerships
- Sport and Wellbeing
- Business Growth and Inclusion

This is an exciting opportunity for an exceptionally talented senior leader to lead key services which support the attraction of skilled people and investment, enhance the image of the city while also helping to reduce inequalities, promote inclusive economic growth, and revitalise areas.

The responsibilities of this position are both challenging and fulfilling, offering significant accomplishment and job satisfaction to an ambitious and driven individual.

Welcome from Chief Executive Paul Lawrence



Leading our Culture, Wellbeing and Economy Services presents an incredible chance for an individual who possesses exceptional leadership abilities, a clear strategic vision, ambition, and a strong drive that matches our needs.

This significant leadership position, which reports to our Corporate Director of Place, Gareth Barwell, involves managing a variety of important services provided by the Council which are integral in supporting our communities, celebrating the culture and heritage of Edinburgh and enhancing the wellbeing of those who live in, or visit Edinburgh. Alongside this, the role has responsibility for maintaining strong relationships with the cultural and sporting organisations in the city who we work in partnership with to deliver our strategic aims.

At the heart of our work are the people we serve: our colleagues, residents, and visitors. Each of our 19,000 team members across approximately 700 services plays a vital role in shaping our organisational culture and business operations, ensuring we effectively serve the citizens of our vibrant capital.

If you believe you have the right experience, enthusiasm, and energy to guide our Culture Wellbeing and Economy Services, we would be delighted to receive your application.

Spotlight on the City of Edinburgh Council

The City of Edinburgh Council is the second largest council in Scotland and the ninth largest in the UK, we spend over £1 billion in revenue and around £400 million of capital each year.

Our responsibilities are wide-ranging, from our superb school system through to social work, housing, business growth, inclusion, parks and green spaces, culture and wellbeing, festivals and events, and roads and transport.

The Council is committed to playing a dynamic role on the local, national and international stage.

The Council employs the equivalent of 19,000 full-time colleagues and is one of the largest employers in the city. We gained the Living Wage accreditation through the Scottish Living Wage Accreditation Initiative. This work led to Edinburgh becoming a Living Wage City in 2021 and a leader on the Fair Work Agenda.

As the city's population increases, with growing numbers of young children and older people, we have an increasing demand for our services. Even with a buoyant economy and increasing population, Edinburgh has issues of social inequality, poverty and vulnerable citizens, and we're committed to addressing these issues.

The Council faces several key policy challenges, including a housing emergency, budget pressures, and the need to address climate change. These challenges are intertwined with broader issues like rising living costs, and the need to ensure a sustainable and equitable future for the city.

The Council is actively pursuing a prevention-led approach to address various social issues, including poverty, homelessness, and health inequalities. This involves early intervention, focusing on community-based support, and maximising resources for individuals and families.



Creating a council for the future

We have big ambitions for Edinburgh. We know the world is changing quickly, and with it, residents' expectations of our services have also changed. To meet their needs, we need to adapt and modernise our systems and how we work.

We aim to create a Council that's more agile, more empowering of others and more connected to our residents' lives and communities. That means structuring and delivering services differently, working with communities and from fewer, but better local buildings.

It means working with our partners to ensure there is no wrong door for people to get support, tailoring services around people who need help and making sure those in our care are safe and protected. In doing so, we will work with equality groups to consider the needs of all our residents.

Our Business Plan, titled Our Future Council, Our Future City, sets out our priorities for the period 2023 to 2027, the actions we'll take to achieve our priorities, and how we'll work together to change our organisation. Our three core priorities are to:

1. Create good places to live and work in Edinburgh.
2. Take all the local actions needed to end poverty in Edinburgh.
3. Work to deliver a net zero city by 2030.

We'll use this plan to guide our budget and investment decisions, ensuring that spending is focused on those activities with the biggest impact.

This plan stands as one part of a golden thread linking and guiding our operations through to the shared goals and commitments of the Edinburgh Partnership and towards our citizens' long-term ambitions as expressed by the 2050 Edinburgh City Vision.

It's a guide for our colleagues, partners, businesses, and everyone who has a role to play in delivering Our Future Council and city.

By delivering this plan, we can make sure that Our Future Council is:

- clear about its priorities and focused on the delivery
- more empowering of local communities, residents, colleagues, and partners
- determined there will be no 'wrong door' to find support
- digitally enabled and accessible
- more diverse, inclusive, and welcoming
- a more efficient organisation with the right buildings in the right places to meet service needs
- financially sustainable, delivering a balanced budget
- open and transparent in our decision making.

Creating a great place to work for the people of Edinburgh

We're proud to work together for the people of Edinburgh – making a positive difference to the city and the lives of our residents and communities every single day. But this can only happen through the hard work and commitment of our colleagues, who are the most valuable part of our organisation.

Our shared behaviours

Our Behaviours of **Respect**, **Integrity** and **Flexibility** are the foundations for driving positive change in our workplace.

They support everything we do and are threaded through all our processes, policies and ways of working.

Our People Strategy

Our People Strategy sets out what we'll do in relation to our workforce ambitions to ensure we can deliver the priorities and actions set out in Our Future Council: Our Future City.

We have five strategic themes which underpin what we do and how we measure our success. These are:

- attract the best people
- grow and retain our talent
- develop exceptional leaders
- sustain a healthy workplace where our people can thrive
- invest in equalities, diversity and inclusion.



Edinburgh - an outstanding capital city

Edinburgh is the inspiring capital of Scotland where centuries of history meet a vibrant, cosmopolitan city in an unforgettable setting.

A major tourism centre and gateway to the rest of Scotland, the city is home to the world's biggest arts festival and offers an excellent quality of life. Winner of numerous accolades and awards, the capital was voted one of the best city in the world to visit by Time Out magazine, the only British city listed.

In 2024, Edinburgh was voted Europe's leading cultural city destination in the World Travel Awards.

Edinburgh is the UK's most prosperous city outside of London and the UK's second largest financial centre. It has long held a reputation for high quality education and academic excellence.

In 2024, the Institute for Quality of Life has announced its annual "happy city index" with Edinburgh 15th in the gold category. The same year Edinburgh was named the world's best in which to raise a family.

To get a taste of life in our fabulous city, visit Forever Edinburgh, the Official Guide to Edinburgh.







Discover Edinburgh

People

- Over 500,000 people call Edinburgh home, and the population is projected to grow to over 586,566 by 2043.
- 70% of people working in Edinburgh are educated to degree level or above.

Education and training

- Edinburgh's four universities are internationally renowned for their academic research base. The University of Edinburgh was in 22nd place in the 2024 QS World University Rankings.
- The city is home to around 160,000 students based in education institutions including schools, universities and colleges.







Business and economy

- Edinburgh attracts the highest salary levels and residents have the most disposable income outside of London.
- Edinburgh Airport is Scotland's busiest airport and the UK's sixth busiest airport and Edinburgh Waverley is the fifth most used station outside London. The gross value added (GVA) in Edinburgh of the financial and insurance sector was £6.1 billion in 2021. This represents 26% of Edinburgh's total GVA.
- Edinburgh has the largest proportion of workers in high skilled occupations, such as corporate managers, directors, and science, research and engineering professions than any other UK city including London.



Tourism and culture

- There were around 19.2 million visitor nights in Edinburgh in 2019 from domestic and international overnight visitors with a total spending of £1.87 billion.
- In 2026 the City of Edinburgh Council is introducing a Visitor Levy with the aim of sustaining Edinburgh's status as one of the world's greatest cultural and heritage cities.
- The Edinburgh Festival Fringe had over 2.5 million attendees in 2023 and over half of the visitors came from outside of Scotland.
- Edinburgh is home to seven out of ten of Scotland’s most visited attractions.
- Nine out of ten people in Edinburgh are satisfied with parks or other green and blue spaces in their neighbourhood.

Read more key facts and stats in Edinburgh by Numbers.





More information

Find out more about our vision and priorities Council Business Plan 2023-27

Follow us on social media:

Facebook

LinkedIn

Bluesky

YouTube

Political leadership

The City of Edinburgh has 63 elected members – councillors – who set policy and make decisions at meetings of the full Council or a committee or sub-committee.

The Labour Group formed an administration following the Local Government elections in May 2022. Jane Meagher became council leader in December 2024.

You can find more information on the political make-up of the Council and committee structure and membership on our website.



How this post works with councillors

As a senior member of the Council's leadership team, the post holder will work very closely with councillors, both in an advisory role and in delivering Council policies and decisions through the operational teams.

This will involve the post holder preparing and speaking to reports for committees or the meeting of all councillors - The City of Edinburgh Council - and attending meetings with appropriate councillors as required.

Role summary

The responsibility for the development and provision of various frontline services at both the local and city-wide levels rests within our Place directorate. As senior leader in this directorate, this role is crucial in ensuring that services adhere to the most stringent standards of governance, finance, personnel management, risk assessment, integrity, legality, and delivery.

The individual in this position must possess exceptional political insight and a strong sense of personal integrity. Additionally, they must be able to employ effective critical thinking skills to assist the organisation in achieving its goals while adhering to legal, constitutional, and cost-effective standards.

Main duties and responsibilities:

The post is responsible for a range of major Council services that include:

- Cultural Venues
- Museums and Galleries
- Libraries
- Cultural Strategy and Partnerships
- Sport and Wellbeing
- Business Growth and Inclusion

Alongside their designated duties, the position will encompass various corporate responsibilities:

- Lead on delivery of key priorities of reaching net zero by 2030, tackling poverty, and fostering outstanding living and working conditions.
- Take a key role in the strategic direction, financing and culture of the Council via contribution to the Council Strategic Plan, budget and policy framework, as a core member of the Place senior leadership team.
- Ensures that resource management and financial planning are at the heart of strategic decision making so that services are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- Ensure that the Council's long term financial viability is assured and drives organisational modernisation in line with the transformation agenda to support delivery of efficient, high quality services which enable citizen choice and a 'one Council' approach.
- Manages relationships with stakeholders, partner organisations and other agencies and authorities to enhance the Council's performance, reputation and image externally.
- Contribute to and influence national policy.
- Provides clear, strong and motivational leadership to create a high-performance culture, both across the Council and within the Directorate that drives continual improvement and high levels of citizen satisfaction.

Building culture

Champion culture change and acts as overall executive sponsor of innovation and transformation.

Ensures that the core values and behaviours of the Council are maintained and promoted in all activities, at all times.

- Leads employee engagement and motivates employees to reach their potential.
- Sets the 'tone from the top' and creates an environment in which all employees are able to be the best they can be.

Leadership

- Provides inspirational leadership to the management and employees of the Council and establishes an effective means of control, assurance and coordination for all operations and activities.
- Works with the Corporate Leadership Team to ensure commitment to corporate goals and an integrated approach to service delivery.
- Sets the tone, standards and values of the Council by personal example, being a highly visible role model both within the organisation and externally at local and national level.
- Ensures that effective communications and appropriate relationships are maintained with all stakeholders, including partners, neighbouring Councils, the Scottish Parliament, the media, the private sector and the citizens of Edinburgh.

Person specification

Training and qualifications

- Relevant degree or equivalent experience and evidence of career progression taking on roles of increasing scale, complexity and importance within an organisation of comparable scope, size and complexity
- Membership of a relevant professional body and a further management qualification or demonstration of up-to-date knowledge and continual professional development

Setting strategy and vision

- Developing and driving strategy and policy to deliver sustainable and successful outcomes
- Business and commercial acumen to support strategic delivery of service to clients and partners
- Setting the direction for the service managed; based on the principles of enablement, localisation, citizen choice and best value
- Evidence of sound financial management skills with the ability to interpret and understand complex financial and budgetary information

Building culture

- Experience of developing strong links between professional groupings to bring together services linked by locality and liveability issues
- Successful and constructive partnership working and networking with Trade Unions and other key stakeholders
- A personal and professional credibility that promotes and enhances the organisation's reputation locally, nationally and internationally
- High standard of personal and professional integrity
- Has ethics, values and personal qualities consistent with the vision, culture and values of the Council
- Experience of promoting the Health and Safety and wellbeing of a large workforce

Change and transformation

- Strong evidence of the ability to conceptualise the need for change and transformation and to lead the organisation effectively from current to future state
- Experience of successfully leading radical transformation of services through inception to delivery
- Ability to manage multiple complex projects within statutory, constitutional and value for money requirements

Leadership

- Significant experience of leading one or more services within the service portfolio within an organisation of comparable scope, size and complexity within the public or private sector
- Inclusive and visible role model providing inspiration to empower others
- An inspirational leader with integrity at the core, able to create a clear sense of purpose

Our behaviours

These behaviours apply to all posts in our organisation.

Respect	We're inclusive, we promote equality, we treat people with fairness, understanding and kindness and we consider others in all our decisions and actions.
Integrity	We're open and honest, we take responsibility, we build trust, and we pull together to do what's right for our residents, colleagues and city.
Flexibility	We're open minded, we keep it simple, we adapt to provide great service and find better ways of doing things, and we embrace opportunities for shared working and learning.



How to apply

Diversity and inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are important to us. Growing, maintaining and promoting a diverse Corporate Leadership Team is a key priority. We're passionate about creating an inclusive workplace that promotes and values diversity. We have inclusive working practices and diverse teams. If you'd prefer to work flexibly, we'll facilitate this wherever we can – whether to help you meet other commitments or to help you strike a work-life balance. We're keen to ensure we're developing a culture that works for everyone, so we particularly encourage applications from different under-represented demographics.

Applications

We welcome applications through https://myjobscotland.gov.uk/

If you would like more information or an informal chat about the role, please contact Gareth Barwell, Corporate Director of Place, by emailing gareth.barwell@edinburgh.gov.uk

Medical assessment

Following the interview, we will require the preferred candidate to undergo pre-employment health screening.

Criminal conviction check

Due to the nature of this post, it is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Convictions, whether spent or unspent, must be declared.

Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 – Prevention of illegal working

You must be eligible to work in the UK. If successful, you will be required to provide original evidence of your eligibility to work in the UK. We will provide you with guidance on suitable documentation.

Canvassing

You should note that canvassing councillors in support of your application, either directly or indirectly, in connection with this post will lead to disqualification.

Providing false information

You should also note that the provision of false information or the omission of material information in your application, or at interview may lead to the offer of employment being withdrawn or summary dismissal.

Timetable

As a Chief Officer position, a Recruitment Committee has been established to undertake the assessment process. An outline of the draft timetable is:

Dates	Activity
26 February 2026	Closing date for applications
During March 2026	Assessment centre
14 April 2026	Final face to face interviews

Summary of terms

Terms and conditions of employment

The conditions of service applicable to the post are set out in the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service of the Joint Negotiating Committee of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Government Employees (Scotland), as adopted by the City of Edinburgh Council.

Salary

£139,156 (Scottish JNC single point 46)

Holiday entitlement

The annual holiday entitlement is 27 days. There are also six public holidays in a year.

Hours of work

Normal hours of work are 36 per week but given the nature of your role, we expect you to have a flexible approach to working the hours necessary to meet the demands of the post.

Place of work

This position is not suitable for remote working. However, consideration will be given to ad-hoc blended working arrangements.

Pension fund

Employees may join the Lothian Pension Fund which is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The Scheme is a statutory local government scheme, and the Council pays some of the cost. Employee contributions are tiered and depend on an individual's pay. The rate for this post is 10.5% of salary. You can find more information about the fund on the Lothian Pension Fund website.

Relocation

The Council may provide appropriate financial support to meet relocation expenses of up to £10,000.

Political restriction

The post is politically restricted under the terms of the Local Government Housing Act 1989. This means that the post holder is restricted in their activity with a political party.

Other employment

The postholder may not engage in any other business or take up any additional employment without the express consent of the Chief Executive of the Council.

Other languages and formats

If you would like the leaflet in another language or format such as Braille or large print, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service email its@edinburgh.gov.uk quoting reference **26-0120**.

HAPPY TO **TRANSLATE**