Mothers' CAN Edinburgh Vision
Prioritising a healthy and sustainable future for children in Edinburgh

Purpose

This document outlines our vision to make **a sustainable future for children Edinburgh's top priority.**

The vision is rooted in a simple principle:

If a city meets the needs of children now, it plans for the wellbeing of future generations and is sustainable for all

Cities across Europe — including Oslo and Copenhagen — have demonstrated that designing urban systems around people rather than cars produces dramatic improvements in:

- road safety
- public health
- quality of life
- environmental sustainability.

Edinburgh has the opportunity to become the **UK's first Children Focused Capital**, showing how a historic European city can protect children's health, safety and future, and strengthening Edinburgh's position as an inspiration for the rest of Scotland and cities around the world.

Core vision

Edinburgh: a Children focused city

Our vision calls for a city where children can:

- breathe clean air
- enjoy clean water and nature
- grow up in warm, affordable homes
- access safe places to play and gather
- travel safely and sustainably through their neighbourhoods and city
- live in a community that is actively prepared for climate breakdown and greater volatility
- effectively exercise their voice in decisions that impact them
- look forward to a stable climate future.

Designing cities for children naturally delivers broader benefits:

- safer streets
- cleaner environments
- healthier communities
- lower energy costs
- stronger climate action.

Core message

Design cities that prioritise children's futures.
If we design cities for children, we design them for everyone.

Vision pillars

The vision focuses on four interconnected areas that shape children's lives in cities.

1. Streets that are safe for children

Children should be able to walk and cycle safely across the city.

Possible policy priorities include:

- congestion charging to reduce traffic and fund public transport
- regulation or pricing of oversized vehicles such as SUVs
- expansion of pedestrian streets and child-friendly neighbourhoods
- safer speed limits and street design.

Cities such as Oslo have dramatically reduced traffic deaths through similar policies.

2. Clean and healthy environments

Children deserve access to clean air, clean water and nature.

Potential policy priorities include:

- improving water quality at Portobello and other urban beaches
- reducing air pollution in residential areas
- expanding urban tree canopy and access to nature, including in both new developments and in existing urban environments
- climate resilient city and neighbourhoods
- improving environmental monitoring and transparency.

Cities such as Copenhagen have transformed urban waterways into safe spaces for swimming and recreation.

3. Affordable clean energy for families

The clean energy transition can improve living conditions while lowering household costs.

Policy priorities may include:

- large-scale home energy retrofit programmes (local emphasis)
- Requirements to build the best modern housing when building new housing, including renewable considerations
- expansion of renewable energy infrastructure
- modern district heating systems
- targeted support for families facing energy poverty.

These programmes can create jobs while reducing household energy bills and improving health.

4. Safe futures for young people

Children and teenagers need safe environments and opportunities to thrive.

Potential initiatives include:

- expanded youth clubs and activity programmes that promote access to outdoor recreation and nature
- Wider access to active transport options
- programmes that support young people's wellbeing and development.

Investments in youth opportunity can help reduce violence and improve community safety.

Theory of change

Edinburgh is a leading capital city and an example for cities around the world. By driving our city to meet the needs of children now and support a future for them that is sustainable, we will directly encourage and enable other cities to do the same. In this way, we will effect change across the top capitals in Europe and beyond, not only in Edinburgh.