



Councillor Kate Campbell
Convener, Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee
City of Edinburgh Council
City Chambers
High Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1YJ

4th November 2019

Dear Councillor Campbell

Marketing Edinburgh

I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of Marketing Edinburgh to confirm its resignation. All Non-Executive Directors, including the Councillors and myself resign with immediate effect.

Given our recent conversations on the future of Marketing Edinburgh and my letter of last week I'm in no doubt that this is not a surprise.

Your Committee has rejected the plan that the Board has supported. This is the only plan the Board feels would meet the needs of the city by involving all, providing a forum for tourism beyond the current and driving change.

We therefore have no option but to step aside and allow you to proceed the Council to appoint Directors that share the Council's view and plan and immediately put in place what is needed to execute your plan.

Our very real regret as a Board is that we could not deliver a solution for the team at Marketing Edinburgh. They work incredibly hard and do not deserve to lose their jobs. We again note the policy of non-compulsory redundancy the Council operates for itself.

It has been our privilege to work with the Marketing Edinburgh team and we would urge you to redeploy them – they would be an asset to any organisation. If this cannot be the case, we trust they will be treated with compassion by whomever you appoint to the Board.

We believe that we share with the Council a desire to change how Edinburgh manages tourism, its impacts and its sense of place for residents and visitors alike. Having contributed to the emerging tourism strategy, ran the Council's consultation and campaign on TVL and ran the Council's campaign on City Vision, we know the Council's work and consideration in these areas.

We also understand and have great sympathy with the very real constraints that your administration is wrestling with across the range of the services you provide and the support you give to other areas.

The prioritisation of spend and resource is where we disagree however you must do what you believe to be right.

The Council's focus now is the winding up of Marketing Edinburgh as a company whilst trying to maintain the Convention Bureau and the Film Unit on a quarter of the funding they currently run on.

We regret that as it stands, Edinburgh is left with no plan to engage with residents, to manage the city brand, to understand tourism trends or data, develop policy, manage the new tourism strategy; no climate for partnership or to provide a cross industry forum to manage tourism for the better in the city.

We are confident that in the future the Marketing Edinburgh Transformation Plan, rejected this week but which delivers the above, will be dusted down and put into practice. Perhaps this will be when the tourist tax bears fruit and the Council's financial settlement is less harsh.

The Board is proud of its time with Marketing Edinburgh and is bitterly disappointed that it is now being wound down. It is, in the Board's opinion, not necessary and leaves a hole in the City which whilst fixes a short-term budgetary issue, we fear will mean longer term damage.

We do not think the fact that Edinburgh stands alone globally as a city without an organisation that manages tourism is the right answer and we hope that the Council will find a solution to this issue as quickly as possible.

Kind regards



Gordon Robertson

cc. Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Members, Councillor Adam McVey, Councillor Cammy Day, Paul Lawrence

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