

International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics >

Volume 10, 2018 - [Issue 1: Austerity](#)

760 | 11 | 1
Views | CrossRef citations to date | Altmetric

Article

Managing budget cuts in Edinburgh's sport and recreation services: progressive localism in a resilient local authority?

Gavin Reid 

Pages 113-129 | Received 07 Feb 2017, Accepted 09 Jan 2018, Published online: 23 Jan 2018

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2018.1427127>



Sample our
Politics & International
Relations Journals

>> [Sign in here](#) to start your access
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

 Full Article  Figures & data  References  Citations  Metrics

 Reprints & Permissions

Read this article

Share

ABSTRACT

While the Westminster government's class-driven austerity is UK-wide, Scottish social democracy influences how it is conceptualised and resisted. The Scottish Parliament's limited devolved powers and a broken system of local government funding – with roots in both Scottish and Westminster Governments – leaves little room for challenging austerity. Responding to increased demand for services and financial constraints, Edinburgh Council's 'transformation programme' sought a leaner, agile council to promote community resilience. As a discretionary service, protected by a weak legislative requirement, sport received significant cuts. Using interviews with policy actors, this article contends that, by embracing the conservative concept of resilience over the more critical concept of resourcefulness, the council's management of cuts revolved around financial savings and income generation not socially just progressive

localism. The leisure trust's success in managing cuts encouraged more, mirroring the argument that, in resilient councils, councillors think the 'outer organisation' can be diminished without damaging the core. This accelerated neoliberal processes pre-dating austerity. Apparent progressive localism from asset transfers downplays how, driven by financial savings, this empowered some middle-class individuals while deflecting attention from the state's withdrawal from promoting social justice. A campaign to save a leisure pool in a deprived area saw arguments for an ethical 'play' space to support community resilience. However, within neoliberalism's 'cracks and fissures', protestors encouraged council support for community management - later rescinded amidst much acrimony - for a facility they could never run progressively.

KEYWORDS:

[Austerity](#) [resilience](#) [local government](#) [progressive localism](#) [sport](#) [community protest](#)

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Related research

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by
11

[Local authority sport services under the UK coalition government: retention, revision or curtailment? >](#)

Neil King

International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics

Published online: 14 Aug 2013

Information for

[Authors](#)

[R&D professionals](#)

[Editors](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Societies](#)

Opportunities

[Reprints and e-prints](#)

[Advertising solutions](#)

[Accelerated publication](#)

[Corporate access solutions](#)

Open access

[Overview](#)

[Open journals](#)

[Open Select](#)

[Dove Medical Press](#)

[F1000Research](#)

Help and information

[Help and contact](#)

[Newsroom](#)

[All journals](#)

[Books](#)

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email



Sign me up



Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited [Privacy policy](#)

[Cookies](#) [Terms & conditions](#) [Accessibility](#)

Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG



Taylor & Francis
by informa