

## Forth Bridge World Heritage Site

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January 2016

### Background

The Forth Bridge was added to the list of World Heritage Sites by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) on Sunday 5th July 2015 at its 39<sup>th</sup> meeting in Bonn, Germany.

**The Forth Bridge**



The Forth Bridge from South Queensferry,  
Source: (Historic Environment Scotland)

It was inscribed under Criterion I (to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius) and Criterion IV (to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history).

The Bridge was recognised to be a “masterpiece of creative genius because of its distinctive industrial aesthetic, which is the result of a forthright, unadorned display of its massive, functional structural elements” as well as an “extraordinary and impressive milestone in the evolution of bridge design and construction during the period when railways came to dominate long-distance land travel, innovative in its concept, its use of mild steel, and its enormous scale”.

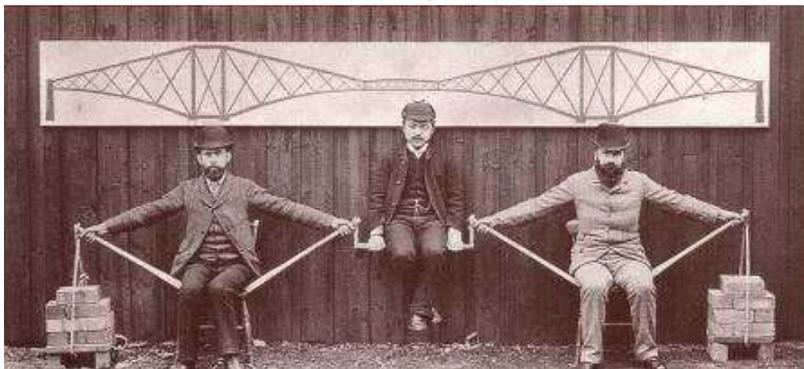
It became Scotland’s sixth World Heritage Site - there are currently 1031 properties on the World Heritage List (January 2016).

## Nomination

The announcement in July 2015 marked the culmination of over 3 years work since the UK Government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) announced a nomination would be prepared for the Forth Bridge in May 2012.

The nomination was taken forward by the Forth Bridge World Heritage Steering Group (FBWHSG), a subgroup of the Forth Bridges Forum - a body set up by the Scottish Government to promote the Forth Bridge, Forth Road Bridge and forthcoming Queensferry Crossing. The Steering Group was made up of 13 members including Network Rail as owner of the Bridge, City of Edinburgh and Fife Councils, Transport Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland, Queensferry and District Community Council, Queensferry Ambition, North Queensferry Community Council, North Queensferry Heritage Trust, Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA) and VisitScotland.

**The Human Cantilever**



Foremen including Japanese engineer, Kaichi Watanabe, demonstrate the cantilever principle. This photograph was taken in 1887 during construction, three years before the bridge was opened. (Source: Imperial College London)

## Forth Bridge World Heritage Site Management

The Culture and Heritage Directorate (CHED) in the Scottish Government fulfils the State Party function in Scotland on behalf of DCMS. The obligations placed on the State Parties for World Heritage Sites include monitoring the state of conservation of the Sites and reporting any issues/ potential issues to UNESCO's World Heritage Centre.

The operation and maintenance of the Bridge is the responsibility of its owners, Network Rail but its management also involves the City of Edinburgh Council, Fife Council and Historic Environment Scotland.

The City of Edinburgh and Fife Councils both act as the planning authority for the bridge. They are the first point of contact in the Listed Building Consent process and, in line with the Forth Bridge Partnership Agreement, will consult each other upon receiving an application from Network Rail for the Forth Bridge.

The Forth Bridge Management Plan was prepared as part of the nomination document. The Plan sets out a prioritised list of 45 agreed actions for a six year period (2014-2020), with lead partners for each.

The City of Edinburgh Council is a key partner in the Forth Bridge World Heritage Management Group - the Group tasked with delivery of the actions in the Management Plan. This group has evolved from the pre-existing Forth Bridge World Heritage Steering Group. The Forth Bridge World Heritage Site Management Group is made up of Historic Environment Scotland, Network Rail, Transport Scotland, Visit Scotland, City of Edinburgh, Fife and West Lothian Councils, Queensferry Ambition, Queensferry and District Community Council, North Queensferry Heritage Trust, North Queensferry Community Council, the Briggers, Bridge Replacement Interest Group and Kirkliston Community Council.

## Local Issues

The Group meets quarterly to review progress. Out of the 45 actions of the Management Plan, 5 actions involve the City of Edinburgh Council in Year 1 (see Table 1 below). The Council is also involved in other actions as part of the Group.

### City of Edinburgh Council Actions for Year 1

Theme	Action	Group
Protection	Ensure that the property and its wider setting are properly integrated into Local Development Plans and Frameworks	CEC, Fife and West Lothian Councils
Presentation	Introduce a programme of vegetation management around key public viewpoints	CEC Fife Council
Community Benefit	In anticipation of further increases in visitors, initiate an infrastructure review, to include roads and parking, in both Queensferry and North Queensferry, as well as in adjacent areas where more capacity might be available	CEC Transport Scotland Fife Council
Community Benefit	Carry out a review of public transport serving the communities at both ends of the property, to include ways in which it can be better integrated and improved to help accommodate an anticipated increase in visitors	Transport Scotland CEC Fife Council
Management	The Steering group to ensure that the property (and this Management Plan, including later revisions) is properly included in any future Development Plans, planning policies, revisions ect. in both City of Edinburgh and Fife	CEC, Fife and West Lothian Councils

Further long-term expectations of the Action Plan relate to exploring means by which the property can act as a positive socio-economic driver in the local communities and seeking ways that broaden the understanding of the bridges.

## What's next?

- The Council will report on the progress with the actions in an annual Planning Information Bulletin
- A priority for action is to review the existing key views guidance to include views to the Forth Bridge
- A further priority is to review the Forth Bridge Partnership Management Agreement in the light of Historic Scotland's changed status to become the non departmental public body Historic Environment Scotland

## Contact

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