

Integrated Impact Assessment – Summary Report

1. Title of proposal

Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy

2. What will change as a result of this proposal?

The Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy (The Strategy) provides non-statutory guidance to support delivery of the local development plan - [City Plan 2030's](#) Place 1 – Edinburgh City Centre Policy and will represent a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The Strategy out the Council's long-term plan for:

- the regeneration of Princes Street's urban blocks and buildings;
- the renewal of its public realm; and
- the future management of the Waverley Valley.

The Strategy brings together and expands existing planning guidance for development on Princes Street and sets out new planning considerations for the Ross Bandstand and Waverley Station Masterplan.

The Strategy supports delivery of [Edinburgh City Centre Transformation's](#) programme for the First New Town and Waverley/Calton catalyst areas by setting out new public realm proposals for the street's footways and adjacent public spaces. This has been developed in accordance with [Our Future Streets](#)

The Strategy sets out strategic management considerations for the Waverley Valley, aligned to the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site Management Plan and provides the context for a new improvement plan for Princes Street Gardens and other public greenspaces within the valley.

3. Briefly describe public involvement in this proposal to date and planned

As part of the preparation of City Plan 2030, the Strategy was scoped with input from key stakeholders including Edinburgh Urban Design Panel, The Civic Forum and Development Forum. The public realm proposals have also been considered by the Edinburgh Access Panel.

The findings of previous and recent public consultations on the city centre have also fed into the draft for consultation, including City Centre Transformation (2019), Actions to Deliver Edinburgh's City Mobility Plan Consultation Findings Report (2023) and recent market research to inform the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh

World Heritage Site Management Plan 2025-2035, which recommended a regeneration plan for Princes Street as a local priority.

The draft Strategy was subject to a 12 week public consultation in late 2024 and early 2025, with a range of communities of interest and place. The finalised version reflects a number of changes, including views received through the Council's online survey, at stakeholder workshops and public drop-in sessions, as well as through engagement with children and young people.

4. Is the proposal considered strategic under the Fairer Scotland Duty?

Yes. The Strategy will contribute to the city's approach to tackling socio-economic disadvantage by seeking to improve access to quality greenspace and public realm which is free to use.

5. Date of IIA

The initial scoping workshop was held on 30 January 2024 and the interim report was published in July 2024. To prepare the final summary report, the IIA was reviewed following the consultation and engagement period on 8 September 2025

6. Who was present at the IIA? Identify facilitator, lead officer, report writer and any employee representative present and main stakeholder (e.g. Council, NHS)

Name	Job Title	Date of IIA training
Andrew Smith (lead officer, facilitator, and report writer)	Senior Planning Officer, City of Edinburgh Council.	24 October 2023, 17 January 2019
Ruth White	Strategy & Development Manager, Transport Strategy & Partnerships, City of Edinburgh Council.	
Julie Dewar	Planning Team Manager, City of Edinburgh Council.	15 December 2021
Clare Macdonald	Senior Planning Officer, City of Edinburgh Council.	
Lindsay Grant	Senior Public Spaces Officer, Culture & Wellbeing, City of Edinburgh Council.	
Eva Silveirinha de Oliveira	Green Spaces Project Development Officer, City of Edinburgh Council.	May 2025
Jenny Bruce	Old and New Towns of Edinburgh WHS	6 December 2023

Name	Job Title	Date of IIA training
	Coordinator, City of Edinburgh Council.	
John Lawson	Archaeology Officer, City of Edinburgh Council.	
Susan Horner	Senior Planning Officer, City of Edinburgh Council.	

7. Evidence available at the time of the IIA

Evidence	Available – detail source	Comments: what does the evidence tell you with regard to different groups who may be affected and to the environmental impacts of your proposal
Data on populations in need	Census 2022 National Records for Scotland Mid-year estimates 2019, 2020, 2021 The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Edinburgh by Numbers 2024	<p>The City of Edinburgh has one of the fastest growing populations of any city in the UK, increasing by 8.4% between 2013-23</p> <p>By 2043 the proportion of dependents (0-15 and 65+) will represent almost half of the population in Edinburgh (to 47.6%).</p> <p>The City Centre has a much higher proportion (29%) of residents in the 16-24 age group compared with an Edinburgh- wide share of 13%. Conversely, the city centre has a lower share of its population over 65 years of age (12%), compared to the wider city region (22%).</p> <p>Based on 2011 Census Data the wards with the highest number of health conditions (including Deafness, Blindness, Physical, mental health, learning disabilities etc.) are Portobello/Craigmillar and Liberton/Gilmerton. Both had 31% of their total reporting health conditions. The City Centre had the lowest proportion (22%).</p> <p>The SIMD details that the most deprived communities are in the peripheral areas of the city (e.g. Granton, Pilton, Niddrie, Saughton and</p>

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		<p>Wester Hailes), furthest from the City Centre.</p> <p>The City Centre includes some communities which fall within the most deprived in the city (such as the Old Town, Princes Street and Leith Street) and others which are among the least deprived (such as New Town West and Dean Village) in Edinburgh.</p>
Data on service uptake/access	Essential Edinburgh Edinburgh's retail survey Princes Street Gardens Interim Management Plan 2017-20	<p>Monitors footfall, retail and hospitality sales. Metrics may be accessed but not reproduced.</p> <p>The Planning Service periodically surveys and monitors retail occupancy to inform policy.</p> <p>Reports daily high levels of use from residents and visitors.</p> <p>GIS analysis identifies over 15,000 homes within 800m or 10-minute walk of the Gardens. Most residents city-wide can access the Gardens within a 30–45-minute public transport journey.</p>
Data on socio-economic disadvantage e.g. low income, low wealth, material deprivation, area deprivation.	Census 2011 The Edinburgh Poverty Commission's data and evidence 2020	<p>Evidence in Edinburgh shows that the risk of low income and deprivation is strongly associated with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Households with adults or children with specific characteristics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BAME backgrounds • Disability • Families with 3 or more children 2. Unemployment: Some 74% of all unemployed people in Scotland are in poverty, compared to only 5% of people in households where all adults are in full time work.

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		<p>3. Limited or insecure working hours: 29% of households which rely on part time employment are in poverty, as well as 26% of multiple adult households where only one adult is in full time employment.</p> <p>4. Low pay: Prior to Covid-19 the majority (65%) of people in poverty in Edinburgh were in working households</p> <p>5. High housing costs: High housing costs in Edinburgh are estimated to have pushed 22,600 people in the city into poverty (29% of all people in poverty, more than double the Scottish average ratio). People in poverty are highly concentrated in rented accommodation in Scotland.</p> <p>6. Car ownership and access to a bike follow a clear income gradient (higher income having higher access) in urban areas. Users of public transport tend to be younger (16-29) and older age groups (60+)</p> <p>7. Access to transport is lowest around the periphery of the city, for example Niddrie, Baberton, Clermiston and Granton. Many of these are areas of high deprivation as ranked by the SIMD</p>
Data on equality outcomes	Yes	See data on 'Populations in Need'
Research/literature evidence	City Plan 2030 commercial needs studies The Pedestrian Pound (2018)	<p>Background studies to inform City Plan 2030. Outlines future demand for office, industrial, retail and visitor accommodation to 2030.</p> <p>Living Street's research reveals improved public space in urban centres can boost commercial trading by 40%.</p>

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	The Value of City of Edinburgh Council's Parks (2014) Valuing Edinburgh's Urban Trees (2017)	<p>Social Return on Investment study estimated each £1 spent on Edinburgh's parks delivered £12 of social, economic, and environmental benefits.</p> <p>Forest Research valued the ecosystem services provided by Edinburgh's urban forest as being worth £1.82m per year.</p>
Public/patient/client experience information	Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI) Assessment Edinburgh City Centre Transformation. Ideas generation and testing (2018) consultation on the draft Strategy in 2019. Actions to Deliver Edinburgh's CMP – Consultation Findings (2023) Thriving Greenspaces	<p>The CVI concluded that the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site is vulnerable to environmental, social and economic impacts from climate change, including flooding and heatwaves, which are already being experienced.</p> <p>Princes Street forms part of the recommendations in Edinburgh City Centre Transformation.</p> <p>A 'Transformed City Centre' was embedded as a Place policy in the finalised City Mobility Plan (2021).</p> <p>Feedback on priority measures included improving footways, expanding the cycle network, bus priority, junction redesign to protect vulnerable road users and expansion of 'School Streets'. Comments were received on the need to improve Princes Street, which received 275 'pins' as a street where respondents wished to see traffic reduced.</p> <p>30 year strategy to align with Edinburgh's 2050 Vision, focussing on</p>

Evidence	Available – detail source	Comments: what does the evidence tell you with regard to different groups who may be affected and to the environmental impacts of your proposal
	Vision and Strategy (2023) Our Future Streets – A Circulation Plan for Edinburgh (February 2024)	<p>greenspaces that are connected, thriving, valued and resourced.</p> <p>Sets out strategic roadspace allocation priorities and augments measures within ECCT to remove car traffic from much of the city centre, prioritise climate-adapted public realm and to prioritise walking, wheeling, safe cycling and for reliable and efficient public transport.</p>
Evidence of inclusive engagement of people who use the service and involvement findings.		<p>In addition to the review of recent and previous consultations, the Draft Strategy was informed by key stakeholder input incl. Edinburgh Urban Design Panel, The Civic Forum, Development Forum and liaison with Network Rail during development of their Stage 1 masterplan.</p> <p>The public realm proposals involved meetings with Edinburgh Access Panel, HES and EWH, Police Scotland, Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams.</p> <p>The Draft Strategy was subject to public consultation with a range of communities of interest and place and the finalised version has been shaped by the outcomes of the consultation period.</p>
Evidence of unmet need	draft Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site Management Plan 2024-2035 Review of 2007 City Centre Princes Street Development	<p>Pre-draft consultation undertaken through market research focus groups recommended: a regeneration plan for Princes Street, a visitor levy to mitigate tourism impacts, and clarity around transport proposals in the city centre.</p> <p>Identified that whilst redevelopment activity has progressed in each block of Princes Street, across the blocks, the planned upgrading of Princes Street's public realm remains outstanding.</p>

Evidence	Available – detail source	Comments: what does the evidence tell you with regard to different groups who may be affected and to the environmental impacts of your proposal
	<p>Framework (Feb 2021)</p> <p>Princes Street Gardens Interim Management Plan 2017-20</p> <p>Princes Street Gardens Conservation Management Plan (2003)</p> <p>Women's Safety in Public Places (2022)</p>	<p>Outlines findings of Parks and Greenspace survey (2008-2009). Sets out accessible and routes at steeper gradients due to the Garden's topography based on a site audit 1999.</p> <p>Priorities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of disabled access to the Terrace Walk and valley floor in the West Gardens • to reduce the gradient of ramps from Princes Street by extending one or more pairs of ramps. <p>Consultation report highlighting the parts of the city centre which feel safe and unsafe, as identified by women and girls.</p>
Good practice guidelines	<p>Edinburgh Design Guidance (2025)</p> <p>Edinburgh Street Design Guidance</p> <p>Getting Home Safely</p> <p>UNESCO recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape</p>	<p>Provides guidance to interpret City Plan 2030 policies and sets out the Council's expectations for design quality in development.</p> <p>Best practice guidance for street design to be followed during design. Factsheet P09 includes Women's Safety.</p> <p>Focussing on women's safety, this toolkit for designers and transport planners promotes safety and security for all.</p> <p>Emphasises the importance and urgency of integrating heritage conservation in development plans and climate action.</p>

Evidence	Available – detail source	Comments: what does the evidence tell you with regard to different groups who may be affected and to the environmental impacts of your proposal
	Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context The Care and Conservation of Shared Georgian Gardens (2018)	UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee have prepared guidance for assessing impacts from projects that could potentially affect the planet's most precious heritage places. By John Byrom, published in association with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust to mark the 250th anniversary of Edinburgh's Georgian New Town.
Carbon emissions generated/reduced data	Climate Emissions Analysis and 2030 City Sustainability Approach	In 2020, the city's baseline carbon emissions comprised: transport (31%), housing/domestic (29%), public and commercial buildings (23%), industry (17%). The City Mobility Plan and statutory development plan support Edinburgh's 2030 net zero target.
Environmental data	SEA Screening Determination	The City of Edinburgh Council has determined that the Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects in relation to the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 Act and that Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.
Risk from cumulative impacts		The Strategy recognises inter-relationships between its components and takes a co-ordinated approach to manage change, avoiding significant cumulative or synergistic effects. The additional detail set out is not likely to have significant environmental effects, as established through SEA of higher-level plans, City Plan 2030 and Edinburgh City Centre Transformation.

Evidence	Available – detail source	Comments: what does the evidence tell you with regard to different groups who may be affected and to the environmental impacts of your proposal
Other (please specify)		
Additional evidence required		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People counters and park user survey for greenspace use. • Feedback on the profile of events attendees.

8. In summary, what impacts were identified, and which groups will they affect?

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights and Children's Rights	Affected populations
<p>Positive</p> <p>Improved accessibility within the built environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to shops and services. • de-cluttering, reduced overcrowding and improved surfacing of public realm; • inclusive routes into and through West Princes Street Gardens for recreation, wellbeing and access to urban heritage; and • to Waverley Station for sustainable mobility. <p>Welcoming, public rest points with inclusive seating provided in quieter spaces, fostering good relations between all users.</p> <p>Wider areas of level public realm creating more space for interchange and walking and wheeling. Enforcement of goods for sale on street will ensure footways are unobstructed.</p> <p>Maintaining safe cycle access alongside strategic cycle network on George Street and Queen Street and public transport network.</p> <p>Maintaining and increasing vitality during the day and evening can improve surveillance and reduce fear of crime.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>Older people, disabled people, families with a child under 1, carers, children and young people.</p>

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights and Children's Rights	Affected populations
<p>The improvement of Princes Street Gardens will benefit health and wellbeing. Consultation revealed a main reason to visit the gardens was to walk and enjoy their peace and tranquillity. Children and Young People also value the gardens and this Strategy directs future improvements to provide playful and social spaces for different ages of children and young people.</p> <p>Additionally, opening up the bandstand amphitheatre space for year-round recreation outwith events use will provide greater access to green space.</p> <p>Alongside operational changes to the bandstand to promote community use, accessibility will be improved, including to the stage.</p>	
<p>Negative</p> <p>Relocation of benches on south footway of Princes Street area to be balanced with the need for rest points at approximately 50 m intervals.</p> <p>Redevelopment may affect locations used by people experiencing homelessness/rough sleeping.</p> <p>Princes Street already restricts access by car, which may in combination with other changes across the city centre, impact on people with a disability who rely on a car e.g. to transport certain mobility aids.</p>	<p>Older people, disabled people, carers</p> <p>People experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Older people, disabled people, carers</p>
Environment and Sustainability including climate change emissions and impacts	Affected populations
<p>Positive</p> <p>Supports retrofit and energy efficiency of existing Listed Buildings and redevelopment of unlisted properties to achieve net zero. Some potential for green/blue infrastructure outwith prominent roofscape. Re-use of upper floors upgrades existing physical environment and makes efficient use of existing building stock. Safeguards regional focus for shopping, leisure and culture within ease of reach by sustainable transport.</p> <p>Access improvements to West Princes Street Gardens avoids tree removal, includes potential for SUDs, re-use</p>	<p>Business community</p> <p>All, different geographical communities.</p> <p>All, older people, disabled people, families</p>

Environment and Sustainability including climate change emissions and impacts	Affected populations
<p>of materials and renewed, climate resilient and biodiverse ground level planting to benefit amenity and urban pollinators.</p> <p>The valley's role in the city's blue, green and nature network and its contribution to the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site is strengthened as part of a new improvement plan for Princes Street Gardens and the valley's public greenspaces, and through new public realm associated with Waverley Station.</p> <p>The value of the Station and its historic assets to the physical environment and in maintaining an open setting between the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh is emphasised, alongside principles for its adaptation to continue to support sustainable travel and ease of interchange as the city's main rail terminus.</p>	<p>with a child under 1, carers.</p> <p>All, different geographical communities.</p>
<p>Negative</p> <p>Footway surfacing requires use of natural stone to reflect historic environment context and therefore embodied carbon, but this represents a long-lasting and durable material.</p> <p>Access improvements to West Princes Street Gardens will result in the loss of two pairs of historic ramps as per the Conservation Management Plan but the central example is retained. Changes requiring planning permission to the Gardens as a site of the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland or a Listed Building, will be assessed against Statutory Development Plan policies and relevant legislation.</p> <p>The Waverley Station Place Brief, integration of SUDS measures or energy networks within the study area could impact on unscheduled archaeology and will be likely to require archaeological evaluation and survey.</p>	
Economic	Affected populations
<p>Positive</p> <p>Promotes a mix of use and high-quality public realm, attracting investment, footfall and spending time in the</p>	<p>Business community, different geographic communities.</p>

Economic	Affected populations
<p>city centre, maintaining ongoing access to retail and other services.</p> <p>Promoting temporary pop-up uses can support independent retailers and startups and redevelopment can generate jobs in construction and service sectors.</p> <p>Subject to investment in public transport and interchange, future potential for table and chairs permits at ground floor.</p> <p>Value of restored Gardens providing economic benefit as a high-quality destination. Ross Bandstand continues to cater for a range of community events and civic concerts. Improving the Station's offer and integration with Old Town, has potential to complement existing regeneration at the east end of the city centre.</p>	<p>Business community</p> <p>All, business community, different geographical communities, staff</p>
<p>Negative</p> <p>Pressure to include table and chair permits without associated footway improvements could impact negatively on footway space for walking, wheeling and access to public transport.</p>	<p>Business community, older people, disabled people, families with a child under 1, carers.</p>

9. Is any part of this policy/ service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors and if so how will equality, human rights including children's rights, environmental and sustainability issues be addressed?

Yes. The private sector will be responsible for delivering the majority of new development on Princes Street. Network Rail is the railway undertaker with responsibility to deliver the Waverley Station Masterplan.

Equality, human rights, environmental and sustainability issues will be assessed under planning applications submitted to the Council, with the ability to refuse consent, in the event that such matters have not been adequately addressed.

The Council and partner organisations would be responsible for improvements to the public realm, Princes Street Gardens and other public greenspaces in the valley.

- 10. Consider how you will communicate information about this policy/ service change to children and young people and those affected by sensory impairment, speech impairment, low level literacy or numeracy, learning difficulties or English as a second language? Please provide a summary of the communications plan.**

The Communications and Engagement Plan included a mix of staffed drop-in sessions, digital engagement and workshops with communities of interest and place. In line with Article 12 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Scotland) Act 2024, through various activities, children and young people's voices were included in the consultation and fed into the Strategy. The Edinburgh Access Panel were consulted on the proposals, which were also shared in easy read format with the Edinburgh Accessibility Commission. The Strategy includes a unique reference number for the Interpretation and Translation Service.

- 11. Is the plan, programme, strategy or policy likely to result in significant environmental effects, either positive or negative? If yes, it is likely that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be required and the impacts identified in the IIA should be included in this. See section 2.10 in the Guidance for further information.**

Having consulted with Historic Environment Scotland, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and NatureScot, the City of Edinburgh Council has determined that the Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects in relation to the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 Act and therefore, Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

12. Additional Information and Evidence Required

If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered. If appropriate, mark this report as interim and submit updated final report once further evidence has been gathered.

- Some evidence of origin and destination was gathered via the online survey for visitors to the city centre and Princes Street Gardens. People counter and user survey data will be expanded upon during preparation of the Princes Street Gardens Improvement Plan and collected in future from those attending events and activities at the Ross Bandstand.
- 13. Specific to this IIA only, what recommended actions have been, or will be, undertaken and by when? (these should be drawn from 7 – 11 above) Please complete:**

Specific actions (as a result of the IIA which may include financial implications, mitigating actions and risks of cumulative impacts)	Who will take them forward (name and job title)	Deadline for progressing	Review date
Ensure the consultation takes into account the needs of all people with protected characteristics.	Andrew Smith, Senior Planning Officer	End of consultation period.	Complete
Relocation of benches on south footway to be balanced with the need for rest points as confirmed by finalised Strategy	Ruth White, Placemaking & Mobility Strategy & Development Manager	Finalisation of Strategy	Complete
Redevelopment may affect locations used by people experiencing homelessness. Dialogue required with relevant Council services and third sector organisations.	Ruth White – linking with relevant services	Prior to works commencing on footways	In advance of footway renewal commencing
Consider effect of existing and proposed restrictions within the city centre upon people who rely on a vehicle e.g. to certain transport mobility aids, as part of progressing the City Centre Implementation/Operations Plan work.	Ruth White	Review as part of the City Centre Implementation Plan	Informed by programme for City Centre Implementation /Operations Plan work, once agreed
Acceptability of table and chairs permits in absence of increased footway capacity	Table and Chairs Permit team	Ongoing	Ongoing

14. Are there any negative impacts in section 8 for which there are no identified mitigating actions?

Yes, replacement of the streetscape materials will involve some embodied carbon. This will be subject to the Council's procurement processes and meeting with materials approved for use within the historic environment. Re-use of materials and recording, as well as a conservation led approach will minimise impacts of adapting ramps between Princes Street and West Princes Street Gardens.

15. How will you monitor how this proposal affects different groups, including people with protected characteristics?

The IIA will be subject to review at each stage of delivery by the lead services responsible for each action.

16. Sign off by Head of Service

Name David Givan, Chief Planning Officer and Head of Building Standards

Date David Givan – 1 October 2025

17. Publication

Completed and signed IIAs should be sent to:

integratedimpactassessments@edinburgh.gov.uk to be published on the Council website www.edinburgh.gov.uk/impactassessments

Edinburgh Integration Joint Board/Health and Social Care

sarah.bryson@edinburgh.gov.uk to be published at

www.edinburghhsc.scot/the-ijb/integrated-impact-assessments/