


Action on the Royal Mile



Final plans to trial some action in the Royal Mile are being recommended to the council's planning committee next week, addressing issues relating to tourists and residents alike.

The council really want residents and visitors to enjoy a better experience in a safer and cleaner environment, making it a better place to live and shop. The council want the shops to voluntarily tidy up the fronts of their shops, and if necessary will introduce a by-law to improve the appearance of all shops on the historic street. Music from shops is also to be limited in an effort to improve the standard of retail offering on Edinburgh's iconic street. Councillor Ian Perry admitted that the shops which were not owned by the council are more difficult to control, but he is adamant that there will be an improvement.

 In January 2012 the council ran a charrette (a workshop with interested parties) to find out what was needed to improve the historic thoroughfare. One of the results of this discussion was the annual Royal Mile Spring Clean when council employees as well as local residents devote some time to getting rid of graffiti and generally tidying the area up.

In April 2012 a Royal Mile Manager was appointed to help establish a Royal Mile Business Association to allow all of the businesses in the street to collaborate on future plans with the council.

One of the council's stated aims is to drive tourists to the Royal Mile, and in order to do that workshops, exhibitions and community engagement days have been conducted, involving around 250 people in total.

The Edinburgh Reporter asked the planning convenor if that was

representative enough, and he conceded that it does not seem many but that the council is working towards better engagement on these issues using social media and the council website.

✘ Some of the measures which have been suggested involve traffic calming and limiting at Lawnmarket and Canongate, with reviews of the main junctions on the street notably at Castlehill and St Mary's Street. Some areas of the street will be temporarily restricted to some forms of traffic, in the same way as the area outside the City Chambers has been made into a shared space where pedestrians and motorised traffic effectively mingle.

This will be trialled for a year from a date to be confirmed in the New Year. Traffic will be modelled and monitored closely to check that all of this works, but it is clear that in the long term the council want more people to use public transport.

The disposal of trade waste is to be more strictly controlled and more discussion will take place on this before the end of the year to establish how this will work.

A plan is being hatched to bring tourists to the street in the wintertime too, to cover all of the street and not just specific areas, and the Hidden Gems project is aimed at encouraging people to go into the closes behind the High Street with advertising boards directing them there.

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