

World Heritage Site management plan to be examined



The City of Edinburgh Council has drawn up a plan detailing ways it will look after the World Heritage site, and it will be considered next week by councillors.

It is split into six main themes:

care and maintenance of buildings and streets

control and guidance


awareness of the World Heritage Site

contribution of new development

visitor management and influence and sense of control

The plan recommends improvements which could be made across the site, and specifically states that there are many buildings where more could be done to keep them in good repair. Some in the area need repairs to windows, roofs, stonework and guttering.

It is an essential part of demonstrating how the city will protect its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site that there is a plan drawn up for its management.

 One of the projects cited as a laudable past achievement is the Scotsman Steps which were cleaned up and refurbished in 2011. Previously the steps had been dirty and covered in graffiti. Sadly it appears to me that regular cleaning is not part of the care package, as any time recently I have looked in there, they don't appear very clean.

Cllr Ian Perry, Convener of the Planning Committee, said: "Our World Heritage Site is of crucial importance to the future vision and development of the city. Over the last few years the Council has gone to great lengths to ensure that development in the Site is appropriate to ensure Edinburgh is the economic driver of the city region.

"The plan highlights actions under six themes to ensure that the Site continues to be a thriving built environment balancing the needs of developers, the Site's heritage and the people living in it.

"It is very encouraging that through our consultation on the City Vision, public feedback for this longer-term planning exercise has already revealed the high value residents and businesses place on the quality of the historic built and natural environment in Edinburgh.

"We're committed to initiating a further round of consultation half way through the new plan in 2020. This will be an opportunity for us to report back on progress to the city and ask for feedback on how we are doing to benefit everyone who lives in or visits the World Heritage Site."

Adam Wilkinson, Director of Edinburgh World Heritage, commented: "The new Management Plan for the World Heritage Site describes many of the achievements of the past five years, as well as areas where we all need to do a better job. Through a very open process of consultation and partnership, we have identified a series of new programmes that we believe will make a real difference to the better conservation, management and promotion of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh. We'd love as many people as possible to read the summary of the plan and let us know what they think."

Mindful of the city's status, and perhaps some of the criticism which has been levelled at the council's planners, there is to be a further consultation beginning on 3 April

2017. This will allow the public to comment on the proposed plan.

The council is one part of the trio of organisations which manage the site along with Historic Environment Scotland and Edinburgh World Heritage. Their aim is to make sure that they can protect what we have while making sure that the city can also develop into a great 21st century city.

The council is leading the new Edinburgh 2050 discussion at the same time, which aims to find a vision for the city in the future. The plan for the World Heritage Site will be part of the building blocks for that vision.