

Thoughts on #Edinburgh2050

You still have time to add your voice to the City Vision 2050. It is a document which will shape the decision-making by the council and other public organisations in the capital



The City of Edinburgh Council is led by Cllr Andrew Burns. He is passionate about the idea of forming a city vision.

He said: "City visions bring people from all corners of a city together to focus on major needs, force cities to look ahead and to generate new ideas. A key lesson from all other cities is that successful vision-projects cannot be seen as the preserve of a single institution. City councils are well placed to co-ordinate and facilitate the project, but broad participation and engagement is critical if the project is to be a success.

"So, it is important that as many people as possible are part of this conversation. The key challenge will be reaching a cross-section of residents, businesses, partners and stakeholders across the city, to ensure the Edinburgh of the future is meaningful to all of us.

"One of the approaches to this is online engagement through open questions designed to capture challenges, ideas and opinions.

"So, do give your views on what you think makes Edinburgh great, what you feel could be better, and your own personal vision for #Edinburgh2050 on social media or at **edinburgh.org/2050**."

Councillor Lesley Hinds has been a councillor for over three decades. She has made lots of changes to the city during that time.

In May 2017, when I step down from the City of Edinburgh Council, I will have worked as a councillor for 33 years. During this time I have stood and been elected in eight local council elections, serving under several different administrations and holding a variety of roles, from Leader of the Council to Lord Provost.

Times have changed a great deal since I was first elected to the Telford ward in 1984 – both in Edinburgh and further afield. Back then, the capital's population was in decline, several gap sites were in real need of development and countrywide unemployment was at a record high.

Since then, we have seen a rise in affordable homes, investment in the regeneration of some of Edinburgh's most deprived areas, not to mention top-quality developments and an increasingly talented workforce alongside an integrated transport system and world-class cultural offering.



Convener of Transport & Environment – Lesley Hinds

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So just think what could change over the next 33 years. As I prepare to retire from service, I look forward to the next generation of change-makers taking over and helping to shape the city's future, with the help of residents.



Marketing Edinburgh Chief Executive John Donnelly tells us what Edinburgh needs to do in the future to compete on the global stage...

"I adore Edinburgh, from its rich culture and festivals to its stunning architecture and history. It's a city you can easily walk around, enjoy its green open spaces and sample some of Scotland's best food and drink. It's a world class centre of learning, research and technology. All these things make my job, promoting Edinburgh as one of the best places in the world to live, work, invest, study and visit, very easy.

"Or at least that is what I get told.

"Edinburgh doesn't need to be promoted, because it 'sells itself'. The reality is very different. Edinburgh operates on a global stage and competes for business against many other successful UK, European and worldwide cities. This fierce environment demands that we have to continually improve if we even want to maintain our current position in this marketplace. The world isn't sitting waiting to see what Edinburgh is going to do.



Last September the #Edinburgh2050 conversation was launched at the Edinburgh offices of Cortex. The Cortex Founder and Managing Director Peter Proud names Bill Gates as one of his former employers and friends. Cortex is a digital solutions company, and their system has been developed in partnership with Microsoft.

Here he tells us why Edinburgh needs to remain innovative – and encourage young people to embrace change – to ensure it is still a successful city in 2050.

"For centuries, Scotland and particularly Edinburgh has been home to some of the most innovative inventions of the modern world. From advances in technology to accounting practices, our Judiciary systems and democratic constitutions, Scotland has had and continues to make ripples around the world as a nation of thought leaders.

"I think we should be celebrating the success of breakthrough works by the likes of Peter Higgs to show off the contribution Scotland is still making to the world, and to inspire future generations to follow suit.

"My vision for the Edinburgh of 2050 is for every child in the Capital, as part of their education, to realise that although Scotland is a small nation with regards to population and land mass, its contribution to the modern world has been pivotal to how everyone in the western (and increasingly all of) the modern world live their lives.



Hugh Rutherford tells us about the Edinburgh Business Forum's involvement in creating a vision for the city...

Mr Rutherford is Chair of Edinburgh Business Forum which aims to support the council in delivering its Strategy for Jobs, the five year plan launched in 2012. Under this scheme the goals are to encourage inward investment into the capital and to help the unemployed into work or learning.

The Edinburgh Business Forum, in conjunction with The City of Edinburgh Council, hosted a conversation with Edinburgh's key business sectors to ascertain their ideas and thoughts on the proposed new City Vision-2050. This conversation is but one of a series of such events being carried out to engage with residents, businesses and the institutions of the city, allowing everyone to have a say on what Edinburgh's City Vision should include.

Mr Rutherford explained: "A number of important points emerged from discussions, and it is hoped that more detailed discussions and outcomes will emerge as the business communities respond to the Council's excellent initiative.

"Successful City Visions have benefitted from having cross-party support at all levels, including political level, as

well as drawing on broad long term themes which can be adjusted over time and continue to develop and evolve to meet a city's needs in a highly competitive global world. The City Vision should have deliverable outcomes and requires a binding mechanism to drive real changes, with most City Visions often being orphaned at the point at publication.

“Our City Vision needs to lead change in the city, where often plans tend to reflect, rather than drive real change.



Julia Amour Director of Festivals Edinburgh told us:

“This year will see the Edinburgh Festivals celebrate our 70th anniversary, a remarkable achievement in a world where cultural trends seem to have an increasingly short shelf life. What has sustained the Festivals is an entrepreneurial spirit that sees them re-invented each year with a vast array of premieres, commissions and performances that are the envy of cities around the globe.

“So looking ahead to 2050 – which will come three years after our 100th anniversary – what would we hope to see in our festival city of the future?

“Edinburgh is a small city but its festivals put it onto the world stage. The journey to 2050 is about capitalising on that reputation and advantage. Some of this requires investment, some of it is about enhanced ambition but mostly it is about attitudinal shifts. To do this we must step up and look outwards, confident and bold in the ambition to take our city forward by putting culture at the heart of our success.



June Peebles

June Peebles is Chief Executive of Edinburgh Leisure which is the arms' length organisation which runs the council's leisure

facilities. Here she offers her view on what Edinburgh might be like by 2050.

“As someone born and bred in the city, I truly believe Edinburgh is a fantastic place to live. It is a beautiful city that has so much to offer its residents and those that visit. I never tire of Edinburgh’s stunning and varied architecture and the richness of the outdoor spaces we have on our doorstep. How many other cities can make claim to being the Festival City and yet offer easy access to the great outdoors? I like that Edinburgh is such a compact city, which is relatively easy to navigate (if you ignore the roadworks); it means you can pack a lot into your day.

“I try to start my day with a spot of physical activity. I love moving; it makes me feel good, it does me good and it also keeps me close to Edinburgh Leisure customers and employees. And, having visited sport and leisure facilities all over the UK, I know that we are fortunate in Edinburgh to have such a great range of facilities offering a vast array of activities for people of all ages and stages.



Jamie Coleman, Managing Director of CodeBase, gives us his insights into the impact developing technology will have on Edinburgh’s future in the latest in our series of posts from thought leaders on the #Edinburgh2050 City Vision.

The world is currently undergoing massive changes due to technology. We will reach a point over the next few years where everyone in the world will be connected via mobile phones to the internet, and ever-cheaper technology means that everything that can be connected will be. This means that software is now at the heart of practically every aspect of life. The opportunity to transform the world in a positive way by giving young, digital businesses the chance to grow is what CodeBase is all about.

If we are successful, by 2050 Edinburgh will be one of the world's most successful, progressive and entrepreneurial cities again – as we were in days gone by. This shift in technology will allow more people to be their own boss, and the days of working for faceless corporations may be a thing of the past. These new jobs will look as different to us as our jobs today would look to a farmer from 100 years ago. Machines are getting better and better at production-based tasks, and we see even highly skilled jobs increasingly being done by computers. Whilst computers may be better at jobs involving production, humans are better at creativity. So the Edinburgh of 2050 will not be about the traditional factory model of innovation, trying to make widgets for half a pence cheaper. Instead, success will come from brain power, good ideas and creativity. This will be in every sector of life – from medicine and engineering to travel and energy.

Nick Stewart, manager of the Sneaky Pete's music venue and campaigner for Music Is Audible.

My vision of Edinburgh in 2050 is a place full of music, arts and culture, that is affordable to live in and supportive of its own. The Festival is a cause for celebration, but we need a better year round arts scene.

Edinburgh is in danger of pricing out the next generation of entrepreneurs and artists. It's not right to have a situation where the arts and business are both run by those with the wealth, often inherited, to do so.

We need cheap retail, artistic and music space for independent businesses. Let's instil a culture of entrepreneurship in Edinburgh, where the businesses of the city are individual, independent, and special.



Ella Simpson, Chief Executive Officer of [Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council](#), shares her insight into the future of

how Edinburgh's people and communities must come together to solve problems and overcome inequality.

My Dad was a shepherd – that might not seem relevant when considering a City Vision for 2050, but what he taught me was that you have to live and deal in the immediate while planning for the future. So with that in mind, what kind of city should we be planning for our grandchildren and great grandchildren?

It's hardly surprising that as a Third Sector in Edinburgh we start everything by thinking about people – and in 2050 the city will first and foremost be a collection of people. No matter how amazing the buildings are or the physical space is, the city has to live and breathe, and that's about how people feel – a sense of belonging, caring and connecting. As a Sector that is our gift to the city: we connect people, we believe in people and we care about people.

In 2050 what will help people to feel connected to each other, their community and their city?

We have to design our city to enable people to make connections in the very heart of our communities. Our challenge is to support and stimulate our communities – not areas within administrative boundaries but where people call “home”. Our mental health and wellbeing is directly impacted by our environment; a safe warm home and access to green spaces are vital.



David Gaffney from Charlotte Street Partners tells us about his hopes for the city in 2050 and beyond...

I consider myself one of Edinburgh's biggest fans. Born and raised here, I've barely experienced life anywhere else, if you discount four hazy years spent at university in Stirling

and very occasional foreign holidays.

I used to find it embarrassing when I'd meet well-travelled citizens of the world passing through our great city, and they'd ask me if I'd always lived here.

"Yes", I'd admit, suddenly self-conscious about how insular and parochial that made me. "But it's a brilliant place to live..." I'd add defensively, to justify my narrow horizons, "...and, well, it's home."

And what a home. The history, the architecture, the vibrancy, the quality of life, and just the sheer aesthetic beauty of the place – that exhilarating combination of hills, rooftops, and sea in one vista.

Edinburgh does so much so well that it feels churlish to criticise and demand more. But, as in sport and business, successful teams only remain at the peak of their powers through constant self-improvement. So it's refreshing that Edinburgh Council is casting a critical eye over the city as part of a concerted effort to make Auld Reekie the best it can be, not only now, or in the next 10 years, but in 2050 and beyond.

At the launch of Edinburgh's City Vision last month, we were challenged to tweet about what we thought our city should aspire to in 2050. I wrote:

I'd like a clean, ambitious, healthy, fair, and multicultural Edinburgh with the best state schools in the UK. Easy, eh?


The emerging findings were published in January 2017




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