

What do you think of plans for West Princes Street Gardens?

You have a couple of weeks to comment on the council consultation about West Princes Street Gardens.

Following a proposal that the Ross Bandstand is replaced with a new building, and that it will be run by an arms length external organisation or ALEO, the council wants to make sure that the public not only back the idea, but that they know what it involves.

Amid press speculation earlier in the year that the gardens are about to be sold off to a commercial entity, this proposal makes it clear that the council will retain control, although a partner will be involved. The Ross Development Trust was set up with an initial donation of £5 million made available by businessman Norman Springford. Some of that money has been used to promote an international design competition and some has been used to refurbish the fountain.

Now further funding has to be raised and those who might donate will require assurance that the new building and the gardens around it will be maintained in good condition in the future.

We spoke to David Ellis of Ross Development Trust about the project [earlier this year.](#)

Since then there have been a couple of drop in events at which people could see the proposals for themselves and question council officers about the plans.

Culture and Communities Convener Donald Wilson has urged anyone with an interest in the project to make sure they have

their say.

Councillor Wilson commented: “There are now just two weeks left to have your say on the Council’s plans to work with the Ross Development Trust.



The Ross Fountain in West Princes Street Gardens was reopened in 2018 after a £2million refit. The cost was funded by public donations.

“Already, we’ve seen the Trust successfully restore the Ross Fountain but the wider proposal is to replace the Ross Bandstand and enhance the surrounding Gardens. We need to decide now how this future venue will be run, so that the Trust’s fundraising campaign can grow.

“One idea has been to set up a new charity. One which – under a carefully drawn up agreement with the Council – would operate the West Gardens day-to-day. It is important to note that under this proposal, the area would remain in public ownership and under Council control, with events like the

Festival Fireworks Concert and Edinburgh's Hogmanay still able to take place. Let's be clear: this Council is not proposing to and never would consider 'selling off' any part of the gardens. They are an important public asset and always should be.

"We recognise, however, that as a valued green space in the heart of the city there are many views to be considered, not least regarding the number of other events that could take place in the Gardens. That is why it is crucial we hear from everyone with an interest in the project. This is your chance to have your say."

[The public consultation](#) closes on 14 September 2018. The council says that all feedback will be carefully evaluated and a report will be brought forward later this year detailing the results before any decisions are taken.