Council leading the way on Edinburgh's recovery plan

After months of talk about over-tourism, too many visitors and the effects of the festivals and holidaymakers on the capital, the reverse is now the case.

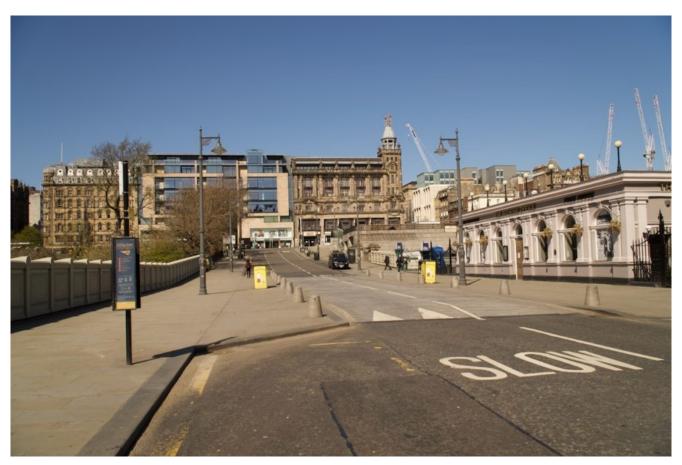**The city has different problems to tackle in future.**

The council, under the leadership of Council Leader Adam McVey, 'sat down' with tourism representatives this week to discuss ways in which the city will recover.

Cllr McVey chaired a meeting with members of Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (ETAG), Edinburgh Airport, Festivals Edinburgh, Visit Scotland, Essential Edinburgh and the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce.

During the tourism oversight group's first meeting, the participants:

- Reaffirmed their commitment to the aims of Edinburgh's new [Tourism Strategy](#) — a 10 year plan which focuses on managing tourism and balancing the needs of local residents, businesses and visitors.
- Discussed initial ideas for economic recovery in the sector, including options for recovering local footfall and business tourism once lockdown measures have been eased.
- Agreed to carry out urgent work in a number of priority areas, which will be reviewed when the group meets again in three weeks' time.

A citywide recovery plan will be drafted involving senior councillors and council officers along with industry leaders in the city. Earlier in the month we are informed that the Housing Convener, Kate Campbell chaired a meeting of Edinburgh's Economic Advisory Panel gathering views from business leaders and major employers.

An empty Waverley Bridge where tour buses and visitors would normally mingle 18 April 2020 PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

Cllr McVey, said: "There is a real willingness from all sides and sectors to use our city's strengths as a platform for working together over the coming months so that we can recover from this global emergency. It is so important to the future of our capital that we remain committed to sustainable and responsible tourism when businesses open again and keep our focus on the priorities we agreed last November — to put our people, place and environment at the heart of our plans.

"We entered this outbreak with Edinburgh's key sectors and local businesses in good health. I believe this will stand us

in good stead as our City and economy recovers. Our contribution to the world, whether it's the arts or academia, has been enormous and we know it's left a strong impression on so many people's experience of our Capital.

"The road to recovery may be long, but tourism is an important engine for Edinburgh's economy. We'll need to work together to share the benefits of tourism across Edinburgh, and our new tourism strategy is central to achieving this."

Donald Emslie, Chair of the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (ETAG), said: "This week's meeting was extremely welcome, as it demonstrated the Council's recognition of the huge challenges that the tourism sector is facing and the need for a positive and proactive response. ETAG will be playing a leading role in this and engaging with the tourism industry and key stakeholders to ensure that we work together as "Team Edinburgh" to support the development and delivery of the recovery plan."

Depute Leader Cammy Day added: "Tourism has been an important topic of conversation in our city for a long time and residents' feedback over the last 12 months helped us to shape Edinburgh's new Tourism Strategy. This feedback and the ambitions of this 10 year plan need to remain central to our efforts and those of everyone in the sector, as we seek to help Edinburgh recover economically.

"We've always been proud to be a small city which made it big on the world stage – a place which is recognised as an enviable city to live in and visit. When these difficult times are behind us, we look forward to being able to come together once again to sample all that makes Edinburgh the inspiring place it is.

"Managing this will involve a range of measures to support the sector and workers, and we're committed to working together to put a strong recovery plan in place."