

Community council heavily criticises council's plans for Princes Street

The New Town and Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) responded to the council consultation on the future of Princes Street with some choice words.

The council published its plans to “conserve and revitalise one of Scotland’s most iconic streets and the wider Waverley Valley”. (The term Waverley Valley is relatively new and not one in normal usage). [The consultation](#) is now closed, but if NTBCC has its way the council will be well-advised to tear up the plan and start again.

The local body did not mince its words and told the council the plans do not add up to much.

In the letter NTBCC said Princes Street has long been a neglected area and “The Street has become an embarrassment for residents and visitors alike”.

Following considerable discussion among their members NTBCC say the priority should be to regenerate and protect Princes Street – but that the draft strategy falls short of doing that. The statutory body goes on to say that the draft strategy “contains no vision and hence fails to qualify as a strategy”.

And then at the end of the submission the community council

leaves little to chance as they criticise the council roundly for lack of progress with its “grand plans”. They do not specify which they refer to but the plans for George Street have been years in being drawn up with nothing yet to show for a great deal of work by council officers and their design sub contractors.

Their missive also says: “The Draft Strategy lacks any ambition for Princes Street to restore its prestige, build on its heritage and pursue developments that embody the highest standards of urban design. We need a serious consideration of what Princes Street could be, rather than what is needed to fit it into other existing citywide plans, especially when these invariably involve lower standards.”

“In summary we believe that the strategy needs to be re-thought, starting with a coherent vision for Princes Street, After that parts of the “Waverley Valley” including the gardens, Waverley Station and the overall city centre transport system can be added to create a coherent model of the city centre that the public will be enthusiastic in supporting.

“Finally some operational changes to the city centre, such as the entrances to West Princes Street Gardens should go forward as soon as possible subject to appropriate consultations, and not be destroyed by being caught up in some grand , but vague, strategic master plan that advances at the pace of a poor endangered snail in Princes Street Gardens.”

Next steps

The council says that once the strategy is approved, it will:

- become non-statutory Planning Guidance, forming a material consideration for the Council, as Planning Authority, in the determination of planning

applications.

- provide an approved Place Brief to make sure we provide clarity on the city's requirements for the renewal of Waverley Station.
- inform the future management of the Waverley Valley, including a new improvement plan for Princes Street Gardens and Ross Bandstand
- Support funding bids to deliver Council-led public realm and Waverley Valley improvements and, where appropriate, provide a basis for securing developer contributions.

Community council elections are being held at the moment.

To become a community councillor nominations must be made by 27 February. [More information here.](#)



Princes Street Gardens 22/3/2024 Picture Alan Simpson