

# 2

## The Case for Change



“ We want everyone to share in Edinburgh’s success. Reimagining our city centre and its purpose will help make this happen. Our innovative and inclusive approach highlights the powerful ambitions our residents have for Edinburgh. ”

*Cllr Adam McVey, Council Leader*





## 2.1 The Context for Change

Edinburgh is commonly ranked as one of the most liveable cities in the world, putting it ahead of competitors such as London, Singapore and Frankfurt. Its citizens benefit from higher well-being levels on average than people living in other major UK cities. It also has high rates of employment, a highly educated workforce, strong levels of economic growth and low crime rates. The centre of the city is home to a resident population of around 26,000 people, Scotland's Parliament, universities and colleges and global institutions. It attracts almost 5 million tourism visits each year, with visitors coming for its World Heritage Status, cultural offer and distinctive urban form.

The city contributes significantly to the Scottish economy, particularly through the financial and insurance services sector and the information and communications sector, which together employ about 50,000 people. Edinburgh attracted more digital technology investment in 2016 than any other UK city outside London. This, alongside the investment available through the City Region Deal and the strength of the knowledge economy, supports Edinburgh's ambition to become the data capital of Europe. It is also a top performer across Europe in its ability to attract foreign direct investment and is a gateway to Scotland for all sectors of the economy, including for tourism.

To ensure that Edinburgh remains competitive, retaining its appeal as a great city for investment, talent retention and innovation, the city must match and exceed best practice globally. The quality of the urban environment is a vital factor for this. However, currently the city's outstanding built and natural environment is not matched by the quality of its public realm. This is where people meet, spend time, collaborate and enjoy themselves. An increasingly mobile investment community and workforce will gravitate to cities offering a high quality of life, with excellent public realm and mobility opportunities. For instance:

- Princes Street and George Street must become attractive places for people to spend time if they are to survive and thrive as retail and leisure destinations.
- Lothian Road requires an environment to rival the great cultural and business destinations of Europe if it is to fulfil its potential as a cultural hub and business district.
- The corridor between Bristo Square, Lauriston Place and on to Fountainbridge, which includes the Quartermile redevelopment and University of Edinburgh, presents a placemaking opportunity to cluster technology and creative sector investment, delivering high-quality job growth and attracting talent to the city.



## 2.2

## Transforming Edinburgh for the Future









Similar to other global cities, Edinburgh faces a number of challenges which need to be addressed to deliver a sustainable future:

- A changing climate requires us to decarbonise, adapt and build resilience into the city's built environment and ensure that future development in Edinburgh is sustainable as well as economically viable and socially just.
- The speed of population growth and demographic change: greater pressure on all aspects of the city's resources, if not managed, will limit the potential of the city.
- The pressure for space for people walking in the city centre: many people find visiting or using parts of the city centre a less than enjoyable experience, and some find it stressful and difficult to move around. Alongside car dominance on key streets and increasing visitor numbers, safety issues are at a critical level at certain times of the year.
- Rising health concerns resulting from poor air quality and physical inactivity cannot be addressed if private and commercial vehicle usage remains prioritised within the city centre.

Strong leadership, collaboration between the public and private sector and transparency are key factors in maintaining Edinburgh's future. At present, the operation and management of the city is complex and, at times, unwieldy. Going forward, Edinburgh must strengthen relationships between key agents responsible for operating in the city centre, with greater recognition of defined roles and responsibilities. There are tremendous opportunities to share data and work collaboratively on a common and lasting vision.

Making the city work better for everyone, providing a high-quality environment with places people want to be in and providing transport networks which enable safe movement in a sustainable way will help the city centre to remain the beating heart of a vibrant local and national economy – one in which it is desirable to live, work and visit.

Climate Impact Projections for Edinburgh, 2050. Low Carbon Resilient Cities, 2015, Jacobs

		Summary of Climatic Impact Projection for EDINBURGH	Change by 2050's
Climate Impact Category	 Sea level rise	Increase in extreme tide levels	↑ 0.24m
	 Fluvial flooding	Increase in severity of 1:100 annual chance flood event	↑ 1:200 severity
	 Pluvial flooding	Increase in severity of 1:100 annual chance flood event	↑ 1:220 severity
	 Drought	Reduction in hydrological water availability (low vulnerability)	↓ 20%
	 Storms and High winds	Potential increase in severity of 1:20 annual chance extreme gust (Projections less well understood)	↑ 1:50 severity
	 Heat wave	Potential increase in the chance of a heatwave in any one year from almost negligible at present to	↑ 1 in 10
	 Extreme cold spell	Reduction in number of frost days per year Reduction in number of heating degree days per year	↓ 32 ↓ 50
	 Tourist/growing season	Increase in summer growing (tourist) season days. Reduction in winter period days	↑ 40 ↓ 30-50

■ Significant Negative Impact    
 ■ Noticeable Negative Impact    
 ■ Some Positive Impacts

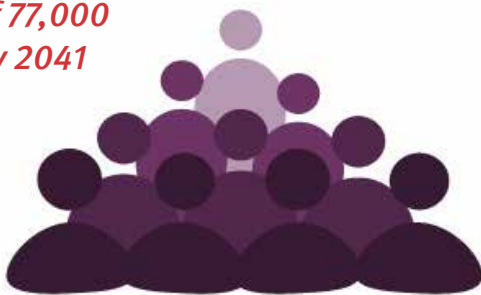
## 2.3 The Need for Change

Overall, Edinburgh has high levels of well-being but it has a number of challenges.

### A growing and ageing population

Having grown 13% in the ten years to 2017, future forecasts for Edinburgh’s population points to a 5% increase by 2021 and 15% increase by 2041. Demand for certain types of services will change with the growing proportion of population aged 65+ which is due to increase by 5% by 2041.

**Increase of 77,000 by 2041**



### A growing tourism economy

Edinburgh has seen significant growth in tourism numbers in recent years, with overall growth between 2013 and 2017 of 28%. Visitor expenditure in 2016 was £1.5billion. Given Edinburgh has exceeded its own tourism projection set in 2012, it can be expected that tourism numbers and expenditure will continue to grow.



### Edinburgh at a glance

**513,000**  
people live in Edinburgh

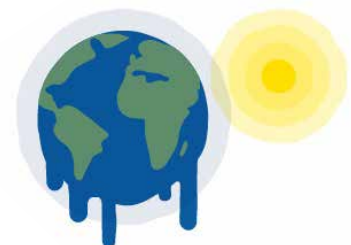
**26,000**  
people live in the centre of the city

**77%**  
highest employment rate in Scotland

### A changing climate

By 2050 in Edinburgh, there will be a rise in sea level; an increase in severity of floods, storms and high winds; and an increased chance of drought and heatwave in any given year.

These changes will carry real economic costs in terms of risk to life and overall well-being, alongside direct loss in city revenues, for instance from the cancellation of events like Hogmanay.





### Air pollution problems

Road transport is responsible for the illegally high levels of air pollution in the city centre and across the region. It is damaging to resident and visitor health. The city centre is the worst area for air quality in Edinburgh with the five highest concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub>.



## Local Challenges

### Community inclusion

People who live in the city centre recognise it as a good place to live. However, there is a low sense of community belonging amongst residents when compared to the rest of Edinburgh or other areas of urban Scotland.



### A reliance on cars

**Almost 70% of commuters** from other local authorities travel by car, and of the people living and working in Edinburgh **63,500 (33%) drive to work.**



### Safety

Data shows that the city centre has disproportionately higher accident rates involving pedestrians and cyclists than Edinburgh as a whole.

**29% of accidents in the city centre involve cyclists compared to 21% for Edinburgh as a whole.**





## 2.4 The Appetite for Change

The need for change that has been set out in this Strategy so far has been validated by extensive consultation exercises undertaken in 2018 and 2019, taking in the views from a wide range of stakeholders. The 2018 consultation established the willingness of Edinburgh’s citizens to embrace the scale of change that has now been developed by this strategy. The 2019 consultation then sought views on the strategy’s detailed proposals.

Overall, it is clear that there is a real appetite for change in the city centre and that the proposals put forward by this strategy are supported by the public. The strategy has been refined to account for the detailed feedback and suggestions received through the 2019 consultation, and it is also clear that the public are keen to be kept updated on progress as the strategy is implemented in the coming years.

The top priorities for consultees were:

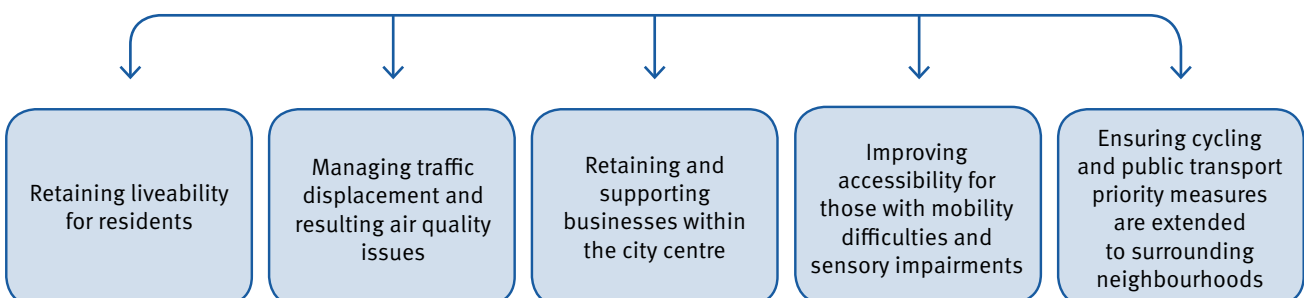
- 1. The creation of a walkable, accessible city centre**
- 2. Creating a more active city, with public spaces where people enjoy spending time**
- 3. Ensuring that cycling and public transport improvements in the city centre are extended to surrounding neighbourhoods**

The Strategy will be delivered with respect for the views and rights of children and young people at its the heart; and embedded within all further consultation and design processes.

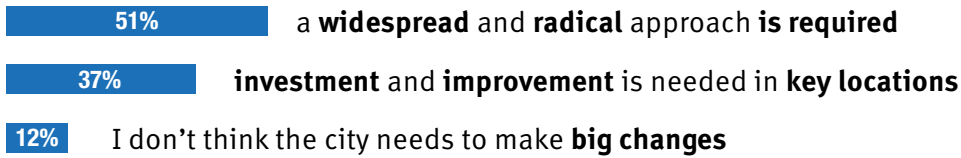
The consultation also identified a number of important considerations on how transformation of the city centre should occur, and how its impacts can be managed, which are addressed in detail in this strategy.



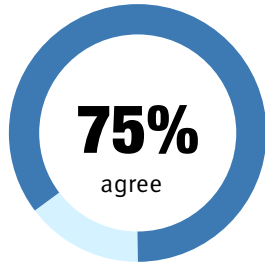
### Important Considerations



How ambitious do you think Edinburgh needs to be to deliver a CITY that works for you?

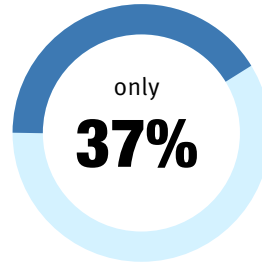


Safe and attractive walking - cycling routes



of survey respondents **agree** that by creating a **safe, attractive, accessible** and connected **network of walking and cycling routes**, more people would choose to walk or cycle

Quality Central Public Spaces



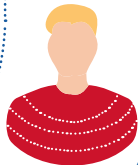
of survey respondents **are satisfied** with the quality of **central public spaces**

2018



This strategy is designed to be transformational. Do you believe it is?

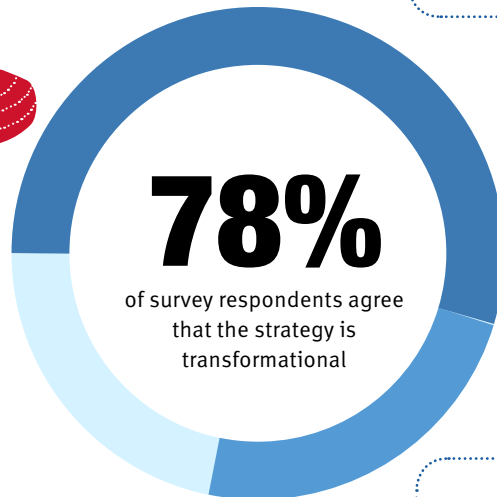
"For the strategy to be truly successful further changes should be made outside of the city centre"



...and **this is a start** but you need to go further and quicker to make the difference needed



"It's an important and overdue step to improve the liveability or Edinburgh and improve the environment. It's not an option to do nothing"



"This gives me hope that an urban centre can become a pleasant place to be."



"As a great European city Edinburgh needs to be at the **heart of transformative placemaking** that gives back streets and spaces to people"



"You must address **pollution and climate breakdown...**"



"Unlikely to transform because integration will, on past performance, not happen"



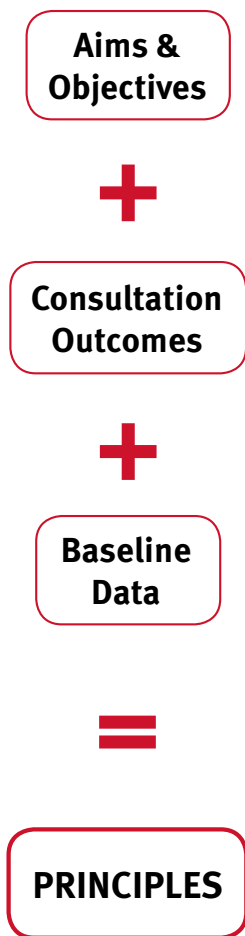

"Physical changes are good but they absolutely must be accompanied by a **visible and effective enforcement strategy**"

2019

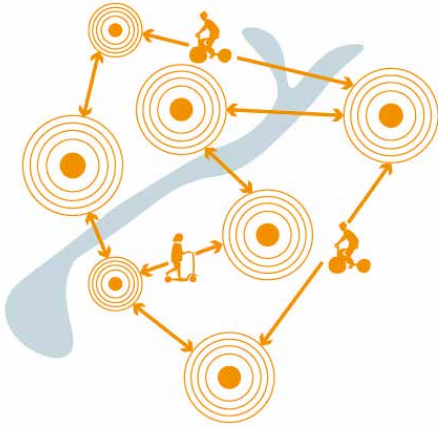


## 2.5 The Principles of Change


This Strategy will deliver the aims and objectives of the Edinburgh 2050 Vision through the six Principles shown here which respond to the Need for Change described so far.


### People First



“ Priority will be given to people travelling on foot, by bicycle and by public transport, providing enhanced connectivity and permeability, whilst minimising negative impacts of traffic displacement ”



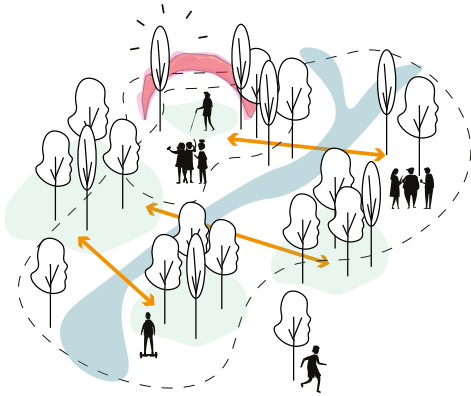
### Unique Character & Identity



“ The unique character of Edinburgh’s built and natural environment will be celebrated and enhanced ”



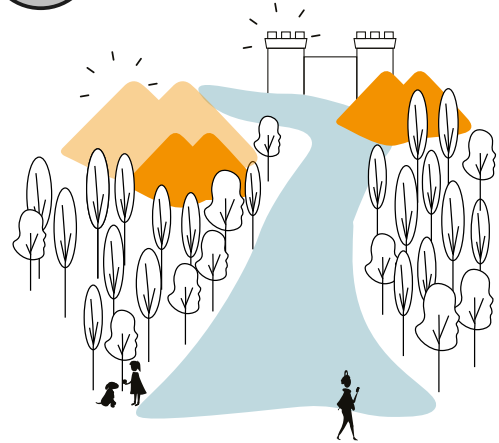
### Inclusive & Accessible



**“** *Inclusive design and management of our streets and places will be embedded across all actions affecting our city centre* **”**



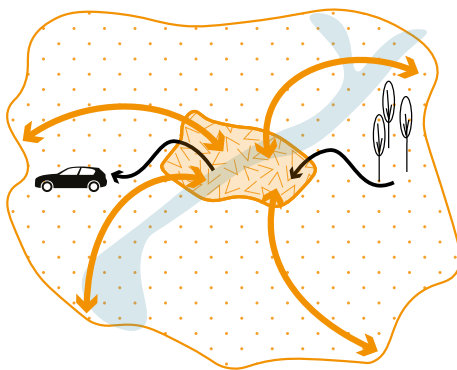
### Enhanced Open Spaces



**“** *Green areas, open spaces and street networks will be linked to make the most of these spaces for communities* **”**



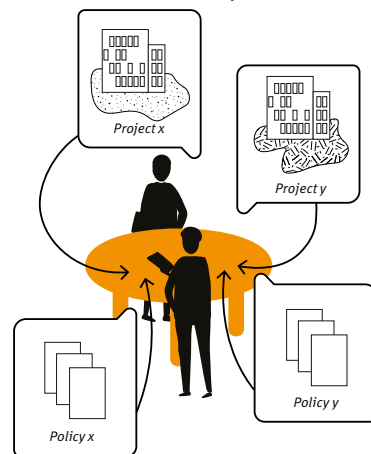
### Liveable



**“** *A better environment will be created for city centre residents by enhancing local centres and reducing traffic within the city centre, improving air quality.* **”**



### Integrated Policies & Projects



**“** *Policy objectives and project delivery will be integrated, creating a consistent and coordinated approach to city centre planning and management* **”**

## 2.6 The Value of Change

The benefits of this Strategy are largely drawn from how a transformed city centre can improve the health and wellbeing of Edinburgh's residents and visitors and add to their quality of life. This map provides a summary of these benefits with the next page providing more detail on the value of change.

### Increased Accessibility

People of all abilities will be able to move freely around Edinburgh's city centre, which benefits society as well as the individual. This will be made possible through a range of interventions set out in this strategy, such as lifts, improved crossing opportunities, shop mobility, wayfinding and improved access routes.

### Accident Prevention

Walking and cycling around the city centre will be safer and less stressful, leading to greater enjoyment of the city centre and a reduction in accidents.

### Increase in Economic Activity

More people will be able to enjoy Edinburgh's city centre as more space is given back to people (such as wider footways, cycle lanes, and pedestrianised areas). This increased footfall in the city centre will generate extra economic activity.







### Active Travel Increase

Improved infrastructure and less vehicle traffic will encourage more people to walk and cycle to and around the city centre. This will provide health benefits and improve the quality of people's journeys.



### Quality of Public Spaces Improvement

Removing traffic from streets, widening footways and improving the quality of public spaces (benches, bus stops, lighting) will allow people to dwell and enjoy Edinburgh rather than rushing down a busy street to escape crowds and traffic.



### Air Pollution Reduction

The Strategy will lead to less traffic in the city centre which currently has some of the worst air pollution in the city. This decrease in traffic will directly lead to cleaner air and less noise. This will have multiple benefits including health, well-being, and increased amenity value.



This page presents more detail on the different type of benefits and the value that the Strategy will add to the city. Over a 25-year period the Strategy will create approximately £420m in quantifiable benefits plus other benefits that are harder to value, but are still very important to consider.

The value of change associated with this Strategy is shown through different types of benefits. Quantifiable benefits, divided into economic and well-being benefits, have been estimated using best-practice professional modelling of expected change, The figure below outlines the different benefits and their size over the 25-year period.

Quantifiable benefits represent a significant value of change (approximately £420m) but other benefits that are harder to monetise are described below as additional, qualitative benefits. The Strategy will also benefit the outcomes of directly related projects such as the CMP and LEZ as well indirectly benefiting some prospective developments.

