

# **Report of Consultation for the Draft Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy**



**The City of Edinburgh Council**  
**August 2025**

# Contents

- 1. Executive Summary**
- 2. Online Survey Responses**
  - 2.1 Your connection to the area
  - 2.2 Princes Street's Uses, Blocks and Buildings
  - 2.3 Princes Street's Public Realm and Mobility
  - 2.4 Princes Street Gardens and Ross Bandstand
  - 2.5 Waverley Station Place Brief
- 3. Workshops, drop-ins and written feedback**
  - 3.1 Stakeholder Workshops
  - 3.2 Public Drop-in Events
  - 3.2 Written Feedback
  - 3.3 Children and Young People
  - 3.4 Related Consultations

## Appendices

1. Proposals by level of support
2. Communications evaluation
3. Demographic information
4. Feedback on the consultation activity

# 1. Executive Summary

## 1.1 Introduction

This report sets out the findings of the public consultation on the [Draft Princes Street and Waverley Valley Strategy](#), which took place in late 2024 and early 2025.

The Draft Strategy provides non-statutory, place-based guidance under [City Plan 2030](#) and supports delivery of [City Centre Transformation](#) to:

- Renew Princes Street's buildings with a mix of retail and leisure uses.
- Improve pavements and public spaces.
- Manage change to Princes Street Gardens and its facilities.
- Shape the future of Waverley Station and the area around it.

Due to its cross-service remit, the Draft Strategy was approved for public consultation by the following committees: Planning Committee – 11 September 2024; Transport and Environment Committee – 12 September 2024; and Culture and Communities Committee - 3 October 2024.

Following consultation and finalisation, the Strategy will represent a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and guide place management and investment decisions.

The finalised Strategy, informed by these consultation findings, will be reported for committee approval in late 2025.

## 1.2 Mandate

The consultation was necessary to gather insights from stakeholders and members of the public on:

- Planning guidance to support regeneration of the street, including the mix of land uses and the design approach to buildings and urban blocks within the New Town.
- Improvements to the street's footways, the creation of seating spaces and accessible links to West Princes Street Gardens, building on approved City Centre Transformation proposals.
- The street's role in relation to the strategic cycle network as set out in the agreed Future Streets framework.
- The key priorities for a new Improvement Plan for Princes Street Gardens to deliver the Thriving Greenspaces 2050 vision; and
- The Draft Waverley Station Place Brief, including Waverley Market roof terrace and the future of land at East Market Street – to guide proposals by Network Rail and other parties.

Alongside these proposals, several questions sought to understand respondents' perceptions of the street and user habits relating to the city centre.



*Public Drop-in Event, Waverley Station concourse*

### **1.3 Approach**

The consultation period ran from 19th November 2024 to 21 February 2025 (13 weeks in total to allow for public holidays over the festive period).

The online survey on the Council's Consultation Hub was the main approach for people and organisations to share their views on the Draft Strategy. The survey was split into sections, allowing for responses to selected topics or the full survey.

This was supported by:

- Three stakeholder workshops with local organisations, community groups, amenity bodies and ward councillors on: 5 November (in-person), 8 November 2024 (in-person) and 27 January 2025 (online). Around 60 people attended to gain an overview of the Strategy and take part in discussions.
- In-person, public drop-in sessions on: Wednesday 29 January 2025 at Waverley Station and Monday 3 February 2025 at the City Art Centre. Around 130 people attended, this allowed members of the public to ask questions about the proposals and for promotion of the online survey.
- Workshops and walkabouts of the gardens and street sought the views of over 100 primary and secondary school children and young people.
- Engagement with Council services involved in delivering projects, managing and maintaining the city centre, including parks staff.

## 1.4 Key Findings

Overall, 95% of the measures proposed in the Strategy were supported. 83% of respondents considered the consultation allowed them to have their say.

In terms of how people use Princes Street, most respondents said their reason for going to this part of the city centre was to travel by public transport, followed by using shops and services, visiting the gardens, for work, and finally for other leisure activities such as events.

Respondents were most satisfied with the efficiency of public transport and the quality of the gardens but least satisfied with the selection of shops and services, and the condition of streets and paved spaces.

### **Blocks, Buildings and Uses – A revitalised Princes Street**

- Most respondents feel food and drink use is adding to the street's appeal.
- A range of design principles for development were supported, alongside retaining existing links through buildings and activating rear lanes.
- Bringing upper floors into active use is supported but may affect undisturbed features of heritage value.
- 74% of respondents support use of decorative hoardings and scaffold wraps during construction.
- Pop-up uses are welcomed with 68% of respondents supportive but stakeholders advise leases and business rates can be a barrier to this approach.
- Overall, 65% of respondents considered the Strategy will help to revitalise the street.
- Drop-in visitors and Children and Young people called for a need to retain shops and services that support liveability.
- Drop-in visitors wished to see design standards raised and more use made of the Edinburgh Urban Design Panel.
- Several stakeholders feel the street's outlook is positive, with few vacant units and several major developments underway.
- Three central community councils<sup>1</sup> consider that a clearer vision is needed, to define the street's purpose within the City Centre and to enhance its heritage.

### **Public Realm and Mobility – A More Accessible and Welcoming Place**

- All of the proposal public realm improvements were supported, with resurfaced footways being the top priority. Improved pedestrian crossings and wider pavements at the east end are also strongly supported.
- New public seating areas (also referred to as 'placemaking projects') and the West Garden links were ranked as second and third priorities respectively. Central community councils wished to see garden access plans expedited.
- Stakeholders expect measures to be high quality, with consistent street furniture across the New Town and proper maintenance of improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> New Town & Broughton, Old Town and West End community councils.

- Most respondents didn't support segregated cycle lanes along the full length of Princes Street (60% against and 22 % for).
- There was an even split (39% for and 39% against) in terms of improving provision for cycle lane connections at the street's east and west ends.
- Some members of the public and stakeholders felt provision for cycling should be viewed in the context of planned cycle network on George Street and Queen Street, without trying to fit everything onto Princes Street.
- Living Streets Edinburgh Group are concerned that footways are narrow, and cycle segregation and floating bus stops would further impact on available space.
- Spokes consider that junction improvements and end-to-end cycle segregation on Princes Street are essential.
- Lothian Buses support measures to improve footways and public transport efficiency but full cycle segregation would impact services.
- Young People in particular were concerned about over-crowded areas.
- There's a need to continue to communicate the big picture of all City Centre Transformation projects.

### **Princes Street Gardens – Enhanced Green Spaces**

- People value the Gardens as a place to walk or wheel, take a route across the city centre, get fresh air and for tranquillity and relaxation.
- Improvements to / provision of public toilets, cafes and furniture, and planting for nature and climate change would encourage people to visit the Gardens, alongside organised activities on environmental matters, culture and history.
- 12% of respondents would join a Friends Group and 14% volunteering activities, with stakeholders wishing to see local businesses represented.
- Over 50% of respondents supported keeping and improving the Ross Bandstand, compared to 33% who preferred its replacement. 70% support redesign of the bandstand's amphitheatre to improve access and its usability.
- Children and Young People called for more age-appropriate spaces for play, for teenagers to socialise and for wellbeing.
- Stakeholders and member of the public valued the Gardens diverse features and care they receive from the gardeners.
- Improvements, such as those to access and facilities, must be carefully balanced to preserve the Garden's unique character.
- Some wished to see the improvement plans for the Gardens set out in detail as part of the Strategy, instead of as a subsequent phase its delivery.

### **Waverley Station Place Brief**

- The Place Brief was highly supported, in particular the need to respect the station's heritage and city views, provision for public toilets, and improvements to accessibility and interchange.
- Stakeholders and members of the public wished to see the public realm around the station improved, including wayfinding and pick up and drop-off/interchange.

- Enforcement of on-street parking and vehicle idling violations near the station and reducing short-stay parking provision, would discourage travel to the station by car.
- The improvement of the Waverley Market rooftop space received over 70% support and was viewed as a priority by several stakeholders.
- The Waverley Bridge placemaking project is welcomed as a key arrival space. It should allow for loading to the station and Waverley Market.
- Some stakeholders wish to see Waverley Bridge returned to providing public transport interchange, however some stakeholders welcomed improvement of its public realm as a key arrival space, alongside 68% of survey respondents.
- Redevelopment of land at East Market Street was supported by over 50% of respondents, with 71% wishing to see views across the valley maintained as part of this.
- The Access Panel wish to see clear segregation as part of any north-south walking, wheeling and cycling link bridge.
- Spokes wish to see increased cycle parking and quality bike access into the station, supported by a cycle hub.

## **1.5 Respondents**

There were 693 responses to the online survey, of which 97% were received from private individuals and 3% from organisations. A further 8 written responses from organisations were received by email. Feedback on this consultation survey is set out in [Appendix 4](#).

96% of respondents were from an Edinburgh postcode district. A small number of responses were returned from Falkirk, Kirkcaldy, Perth, Glasgow, Paisley, Inverness, and Borders post code districts, and the rest of the UK. 45% of respondents stated that they were male, 37% female and 18% preferred not to say or did not answer. The average age of a respondent was 52 years old, with all age groups represented. Around 18% stated they had a physical or mental health condition lasting for more than 12 months. [Appendix 3](#) provides further demographic information.

## **1.6 Publicity**

Publicity to raise awareness and encourage participation in the consultation, included use of Council social media, print/online media news releases, leafleting of local businesses and residents, email notifications and information sharing via community organisations including the Edinburgh Partnership, business and disability groups. Full details are set out in [Appendix 2](#).

## 2. Online Survey Responses

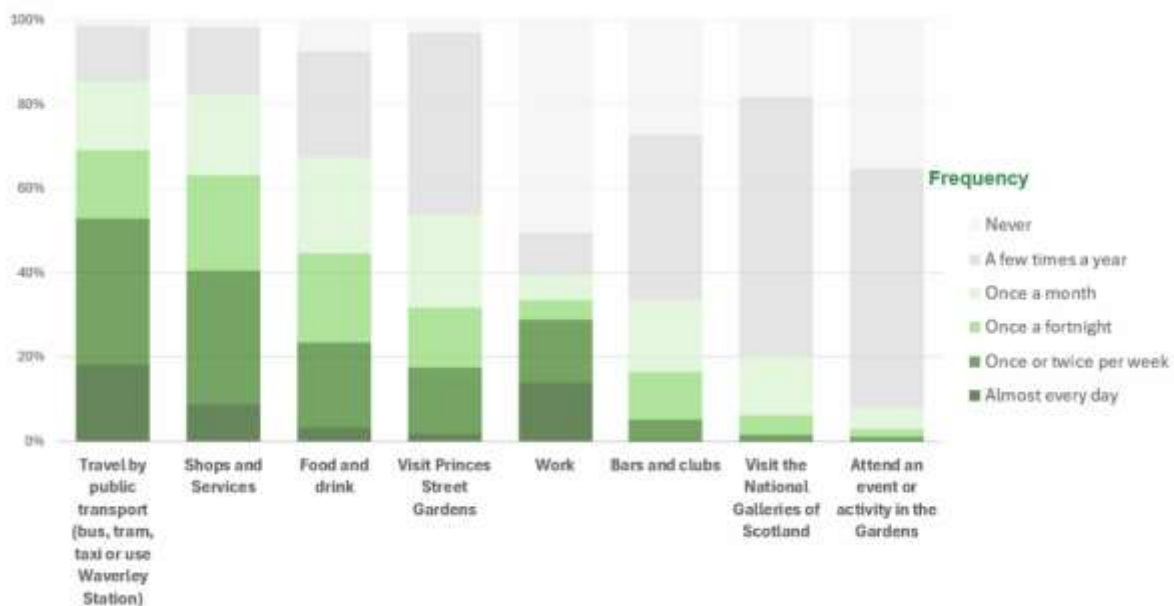
This section breaks down the survey findings for each question. ‘Open box’ comments are referred to where questions show a diverse mix of opinions. The survey featured 80 proposals for the area, of which 76 (95%) received more support than opposition. [Appendix 1](#) provides a full list of proposals ranked by level of support.

### 2.1 Your connection to the area

This section of the survey sought to understand people’s attitudes to the study area and how frequently they visit it and for what purposes.

#### How often do you visit Princes Street and the nearby area for these activities?

Figure 1: Frequency of visit

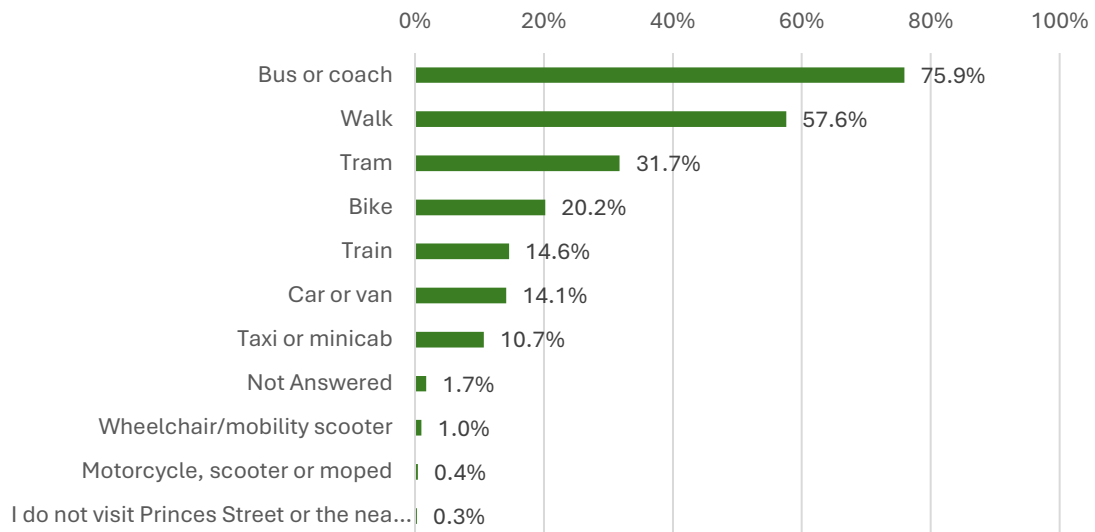


The most frequent reason to visit Princes Street on a daily or weekly basis was to travel by public transport, highlighting the street’s primary role in the transport network, followed by shops and services, for work, food and drink, to visit the gardens, and other leisure activities such as for event.

Fifty-nine comments were given as reasons not to visit the area, of which 47% related to the quality of shops and services, 25% overcrowding, 10% accessibility issues, 8% inconvenient access by car, 5% feeling unsafe and 3% inconvenient access by public transport.

## What transport do you usually use to get to Princes Street and the nearby areas?

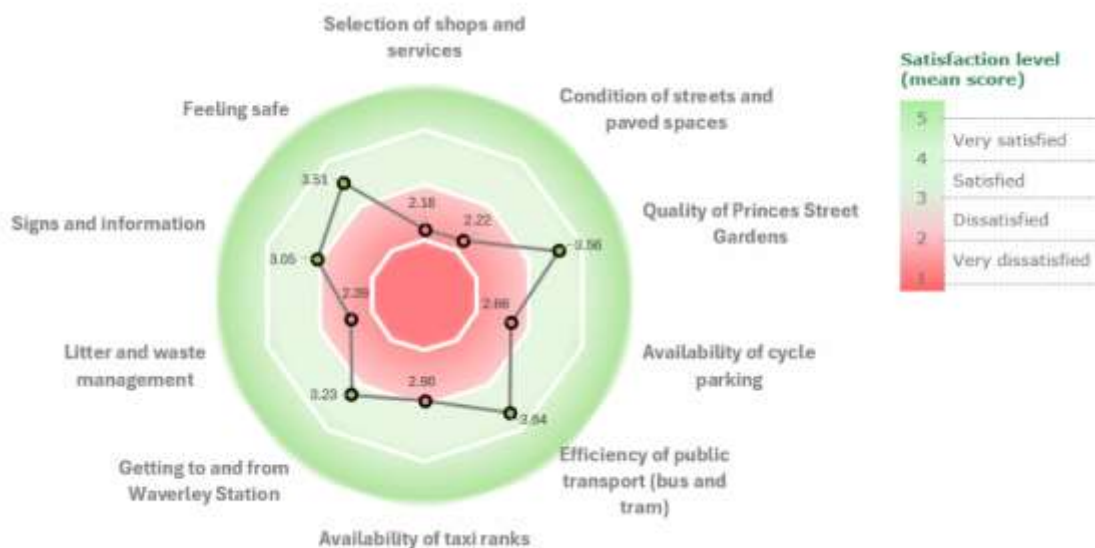
Figure 2: Percentage of respondents' transport used to get to Princes Street



Bus or coach is the most frequent mode of travel used to access the street, selected by more than 75% of respondents, followed by around 58% of respondents who walk, 32 % take the tram and around 20% go by bike. Respondents were able to select multiple options.

## Thinking about your last visit to Princes Street and the nearby area, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following:

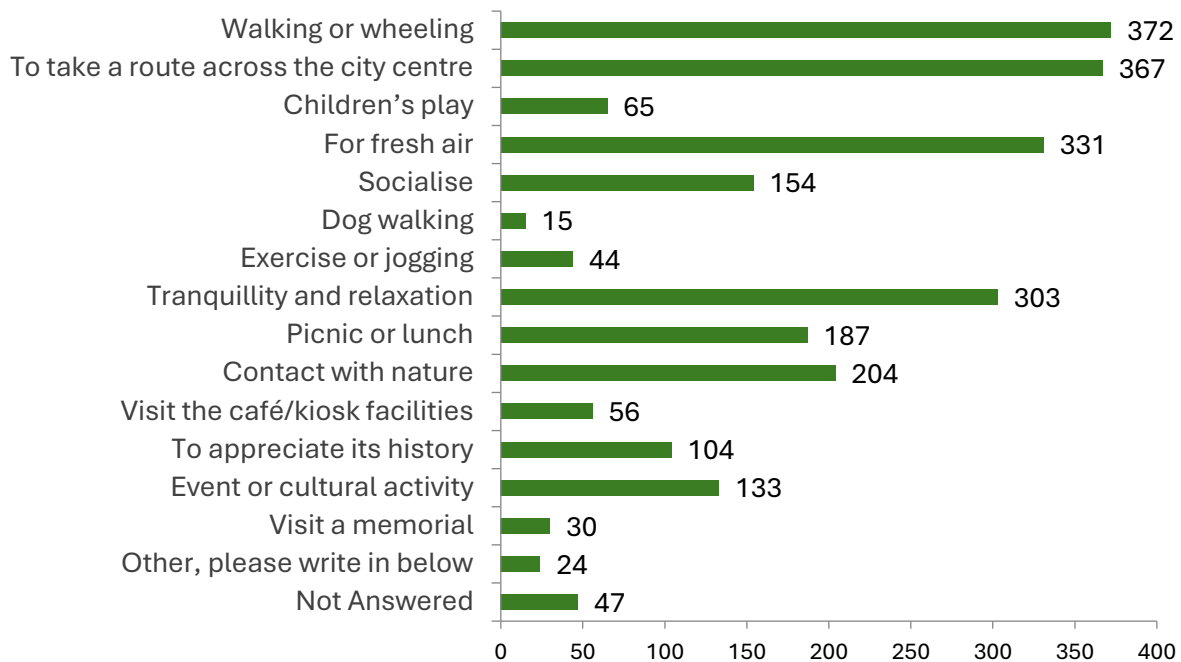
Figure 3: Satisfaction score for different aspects of the street



Respondents were most satisfied with the efficiency of public transport and the quality of Princes Street Gardens. Respondents were least satisfied with the selection of shops and services, and the condition of streets and paved spaces.

## If you visit Princes Street Gardens, what are your main reasons for going there?

Figure 4: Main reasons for visiting the Gardens (by number of responses)



People most commonly visit the Gardens to walk or wheel, take a route across the city centre, get fresh air and for tranquillity and relaxation.

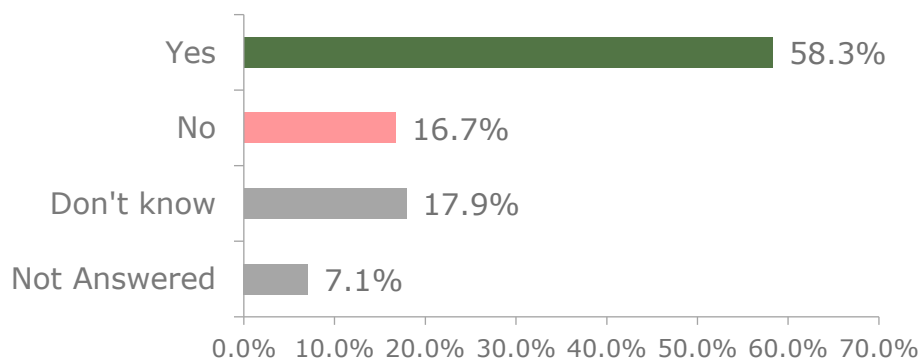
### 2.3 Princes Street's Uses, Blocks and Buildings

The section of the survey sought people's views on the Council's draft Planning guidance to support regeneration of the street.

#### Fitting development in the historic New Town

Respondents were asked if the Draft Strategy's principles for 'fitting development in the historic New Town' covered the key issues, with 58% of respondents in agreement, and 17% disagreeing, and 25% were undecided or did not answer.

Figure 5: Do you think the Strategy covers the key ways in which development can be expected to fit with the New Town's historic design?

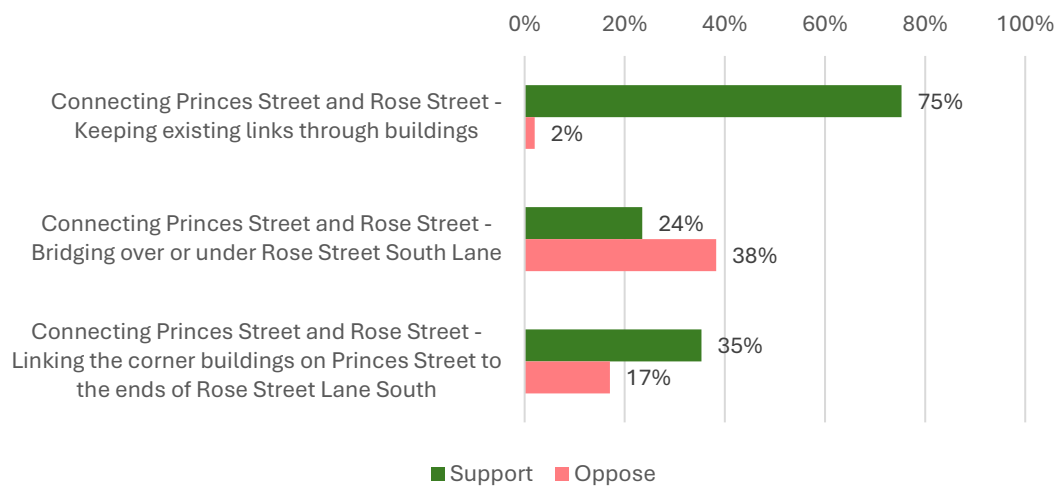


\*Note percentages shown in the following section are limited to those that state strong support, support, oppose or strong opposition to the proposals, and exclude 'don't know' or 'neither/nor' responses. Average scores are shown in appendix 1.

### Connecting Princes Street and Rose Street

Respondents were most supportive of keeping existing links through buildings and least supportive of bridging over or under Rose Street Lane South.

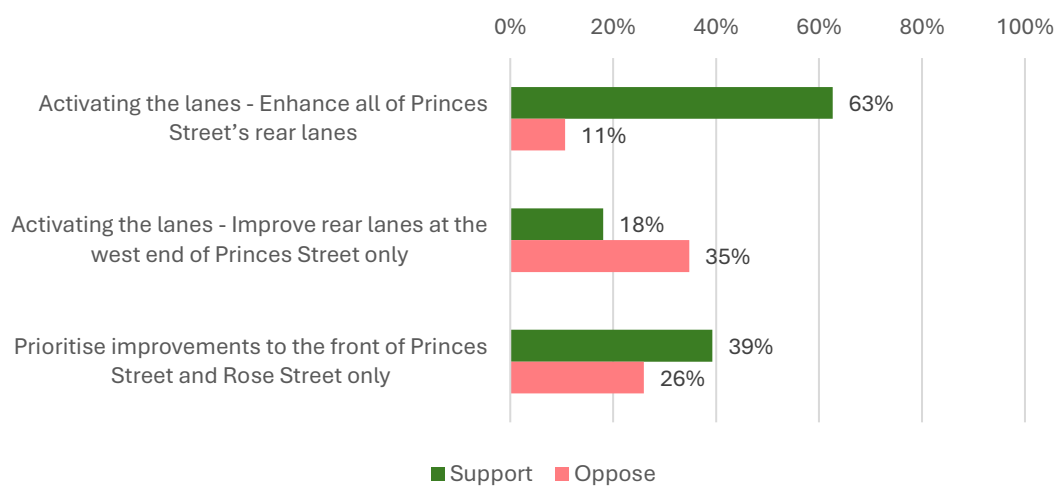
Figure 6: Connecting Princes Street and Rose Street



### Activating the lanes

Respondents supported enhancing all of Princes Street's rear lanes and there were several comments relating to the need to improve Rose Street throughout.

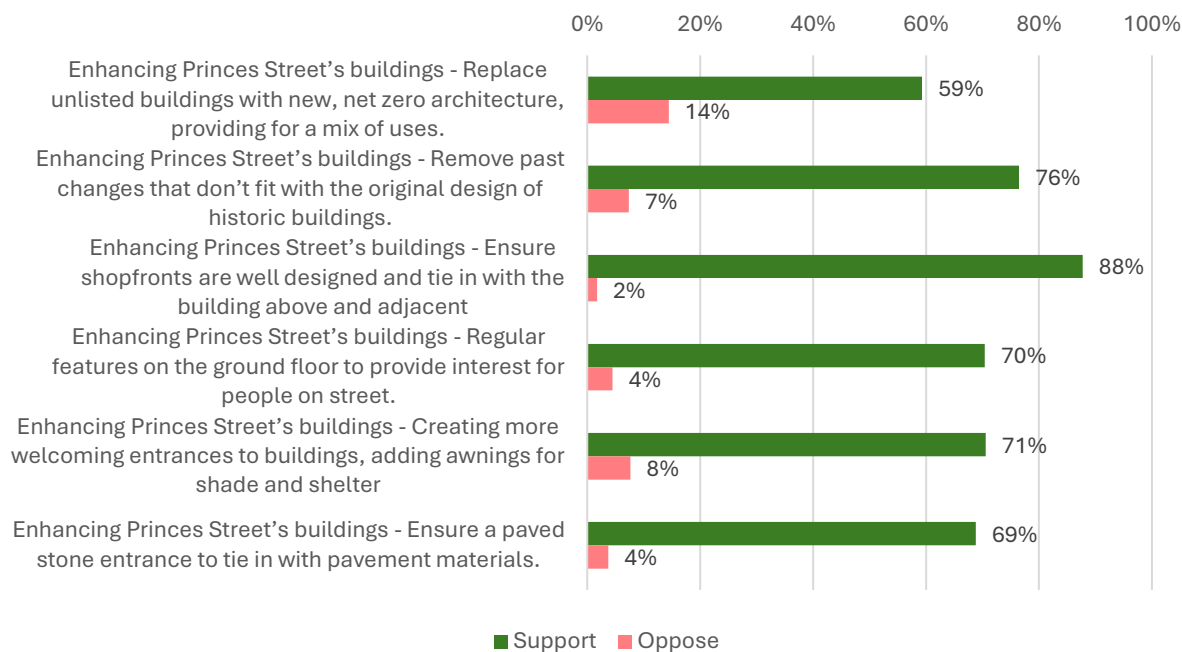
Figure 7: Activating the lanes



## Enhancing Princes Street's buildings

Respondents were supportive of all the proposals to enhance buildings on Princes Street, in particular to ensure that shopfronts are well designed and tie in with the building above and adjacent.

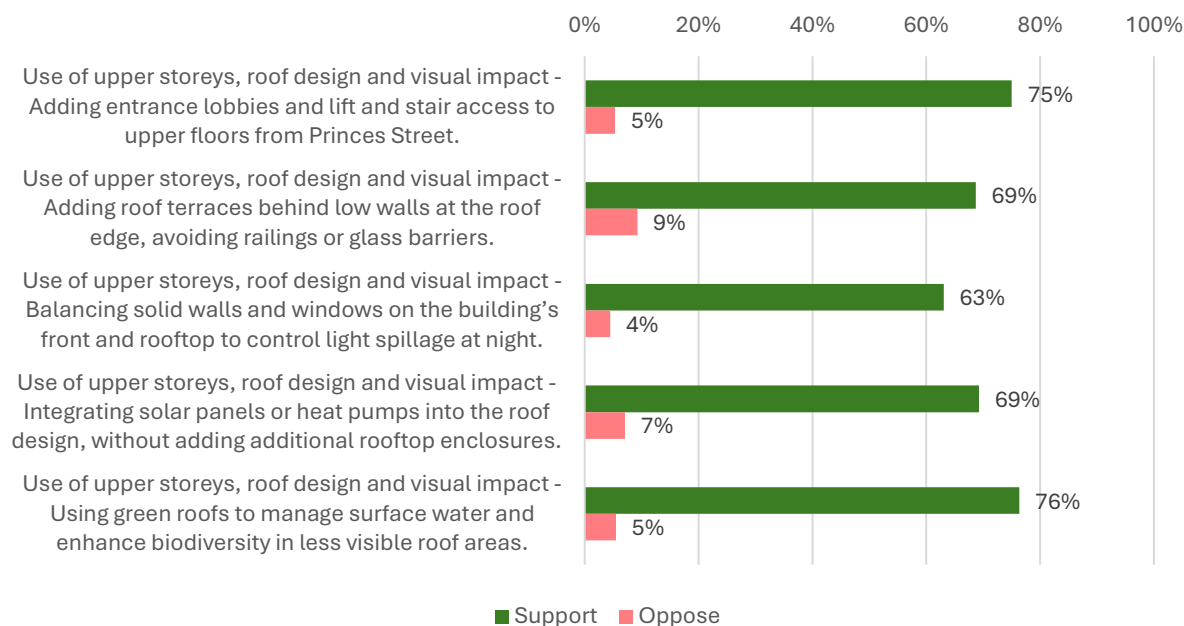
Figure 8: Enhancing Princes Street's buildings



## Use of upper storeys, roof design and visual impact

All measures suggested to make better use of the upper storeys of buildings had more than 60% support and less than 10% opposition.

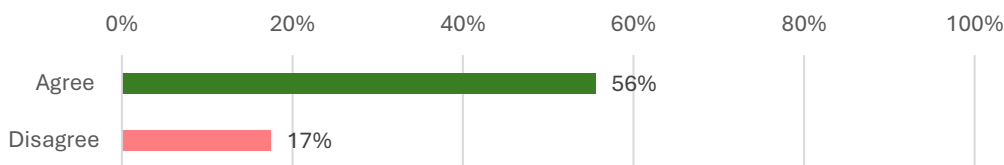
Figure 9: Use of upper storeys, roof design and visual impact



## A vibrant mix of uses

More than 55% of respondents agreed that ground floor food and drink use is improving the experience of visiting Princes Street and less than 20% disagreed.

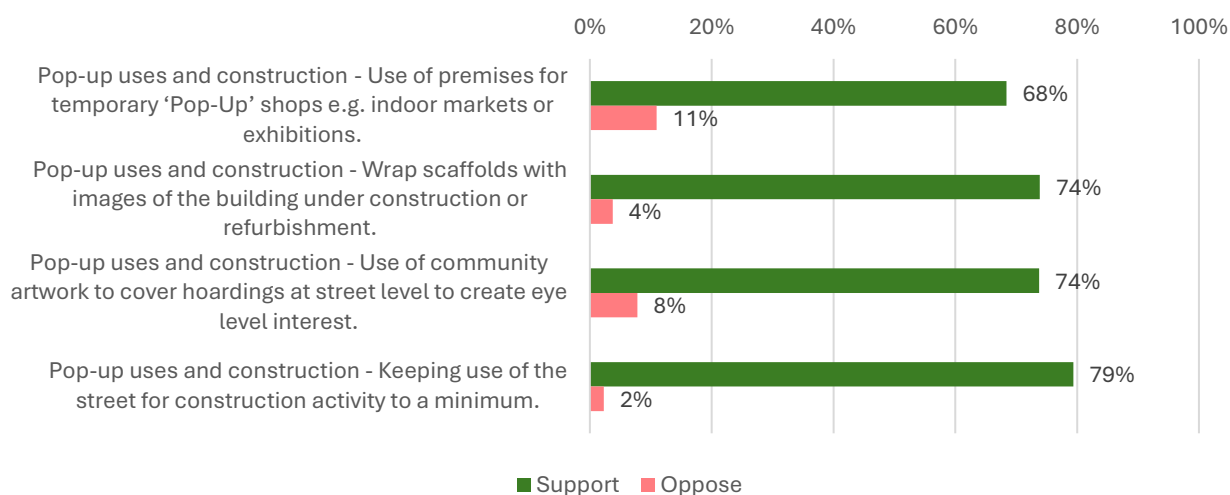
Figure 10: A vibrant mix of uses - Ground floor food and drink use is improving the experience of visiting Princes Street?



## Pop-up uses and construction

Enabling 'Pop-Up' uses was supported by 68% respondents and almost 80% of respondents wished to see occupation of the street during redevelopment kept to a minimum. Almost three quarters of respondents support use of decorative scaffold wraps and hoardings.

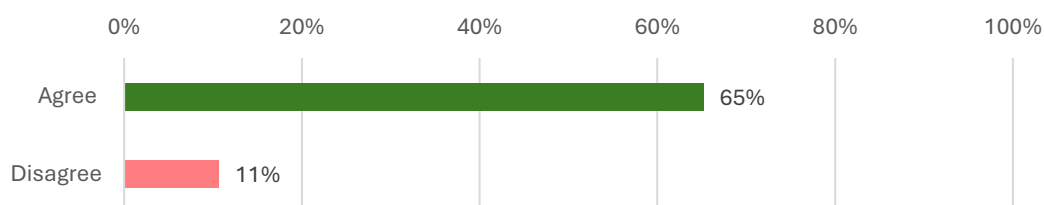
Figure 11: Pop-up uses and construction



## A revitalised Princes Street

Sixty-five percent of respondents expect that the Strategy will help to deliver a revitalised Princes Street, with 11% disagreeing.

Figure 12: A revitalised Princes Street - The Draft Strategy will help to deliver a revitalised Princes Street.

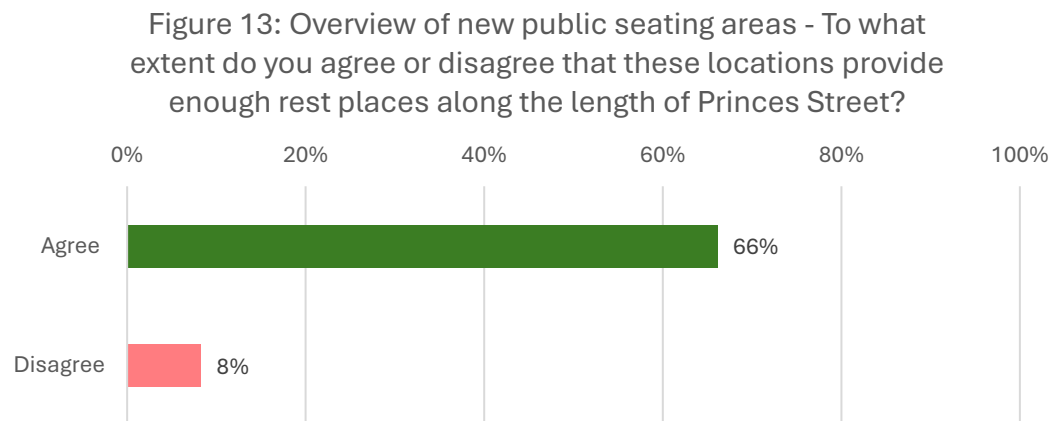


## 2.4 Princes Street's public realm and mobility

The section of the survey sought people's views on proposals to improve the street's public realm and sustainable mobility.

### Overview of new public seating areas

Sixty-six percent of respondents agreed that the installation of seating at the five proposed placemaking locations would provide sufficient rest places along Princes Street.

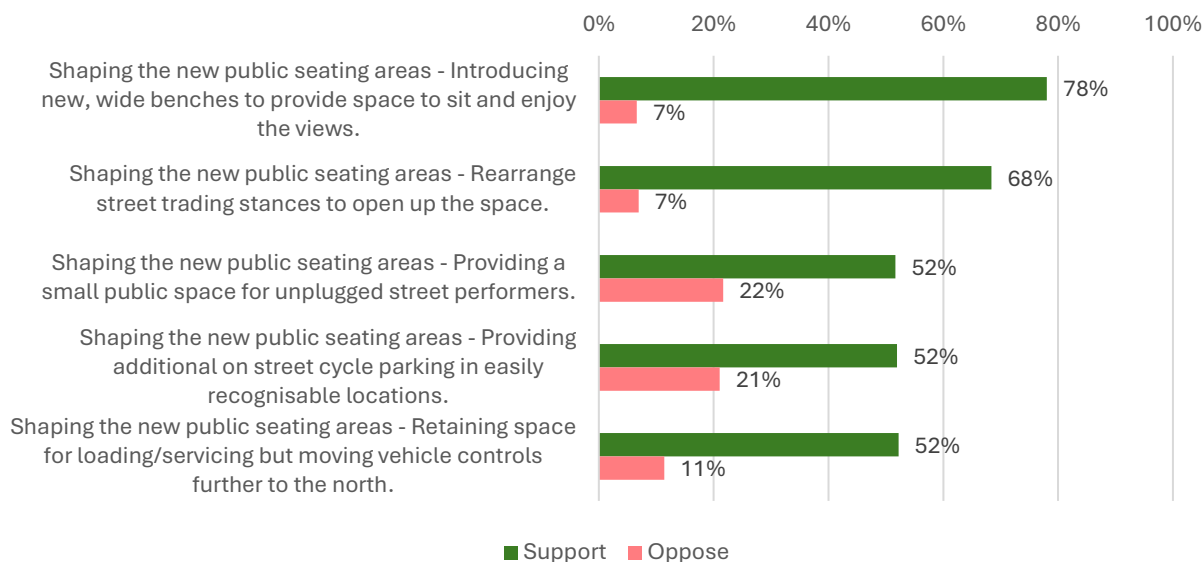


Responses to the individual placemaking proposals at Castle Street, The Mound precinct, Waverley Bridge and outside General Register House are set out below. The seating area at the west end is within the scope of the Lothian Road project and was not subject to a question.

## New public seating areas – Castle Street

Respondents were supportive of all suggested interventions, with a higher level of support for new wide benches and rearranging street trading stances.

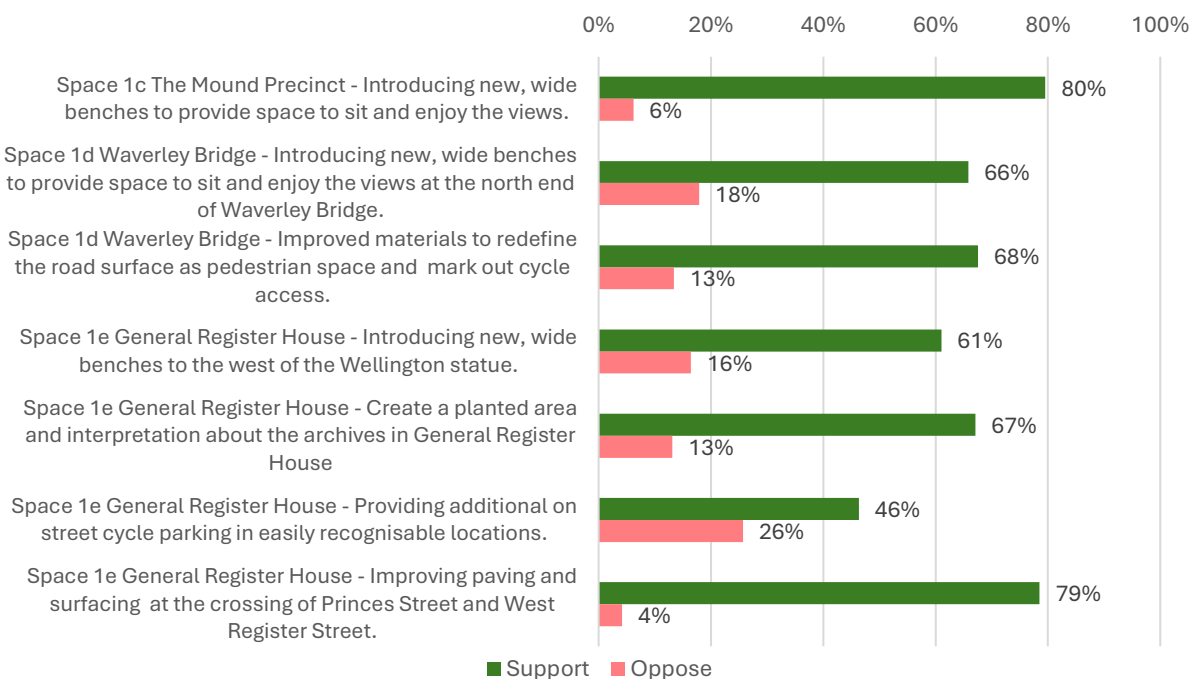
Figure 14: New public seating areas - Castle Street



## New public seating areas - 1c The Mound Precinct, 1d Waverley Bridge and 1e General Register House

Proposals for seating at The Mound received the highest level of support, followed by Castle Street, Waverley Bridge and the footway at General Register House - where paving improvements were also highly supported.

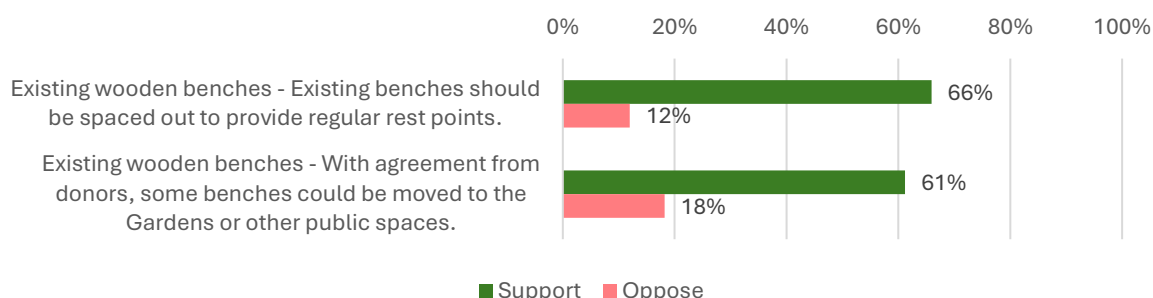
Figure 15: The Mound Precinct, Waverley Bridge and General Register House



## Existing wooden benches

More than 60% of respondents supported and less than 20% opposed spacing out and moving benches with agreement from donors.

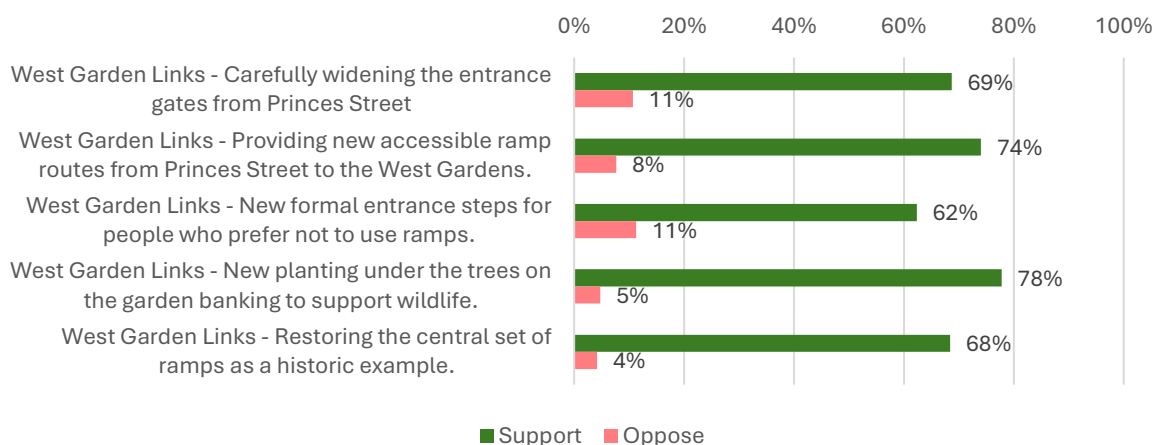
Figure 16: Existing wooden benches



## West Garden Links

All proposals in the West Gardens are supported with more than 60% support in each instance.

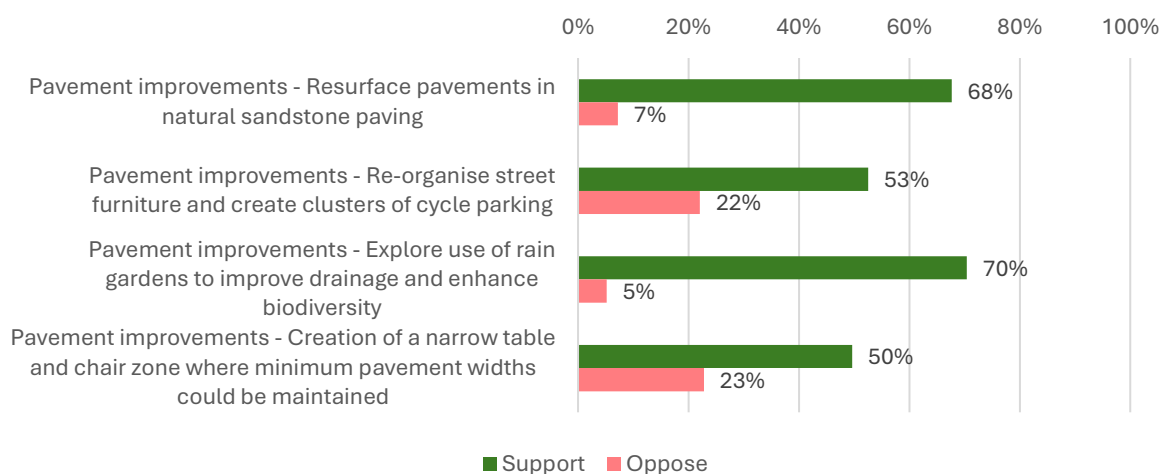
Figure 17: West Garden Links



## Pavement improvements

Respondents were most supportive of exploring the use of rain gardens and resurfacing pavements in natural sandstone paving.

Figure 18: Pavement improvements

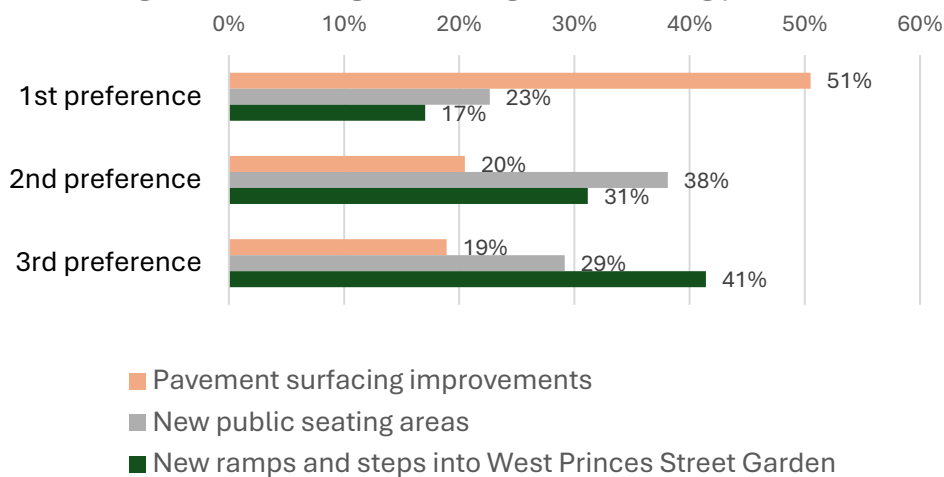


Around 50% of respondents also supported the reorganisation of street furniture, creating clusters of cycle parking and a narrow table and chair zone, compared to 20% in opposition.

### Walking and wheeling priorities

Pavement surfacing improvements received the most first preference votes (51%), new public seating had the most second preference votes, and new ramps and steps into the West Gardens was ranked as the third priority.

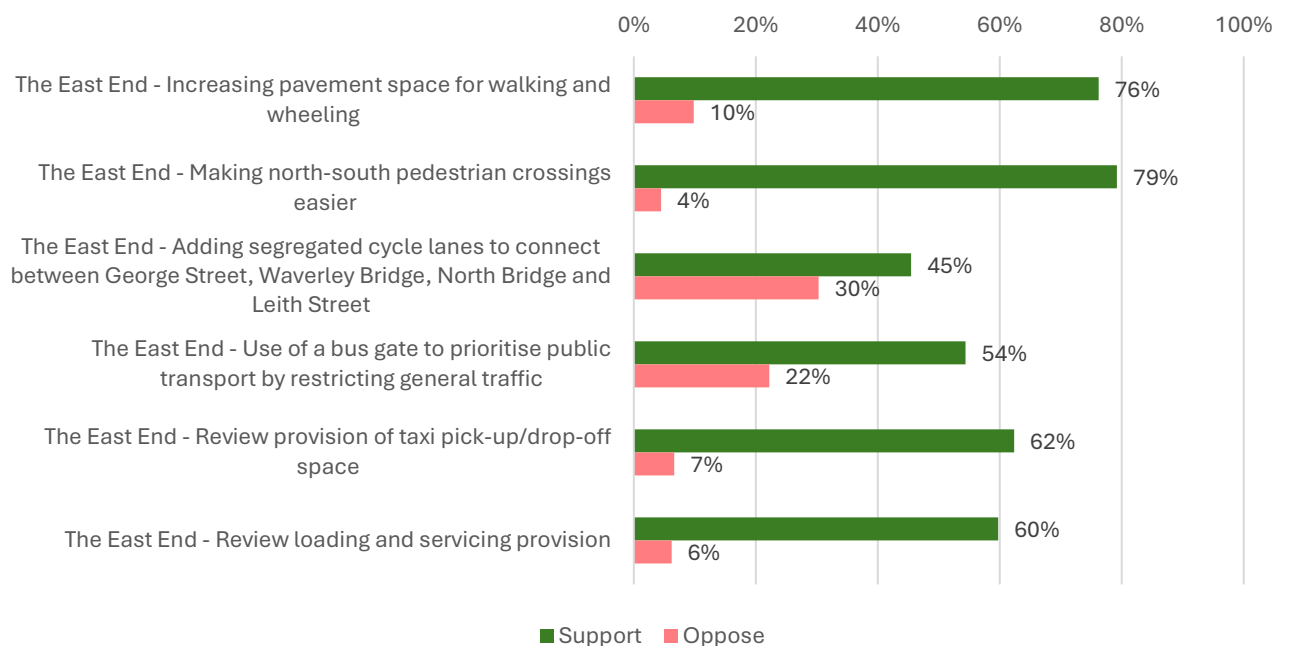
Figure 19: Ranking of 'Walking and Wheeling priorities'



### The East End

Clear priorities for the east end of Princes Street were making north-south pedestrian crossings easier (79%) and increasing pavement space (76%). Around 60% supported review of provision for taxis, loading and servicing. Use of a bus gate received 54% support and 22% opposition. Cycle lane connections to and from George Street received 45% support and 30% opposition.

Figure 20: The East End



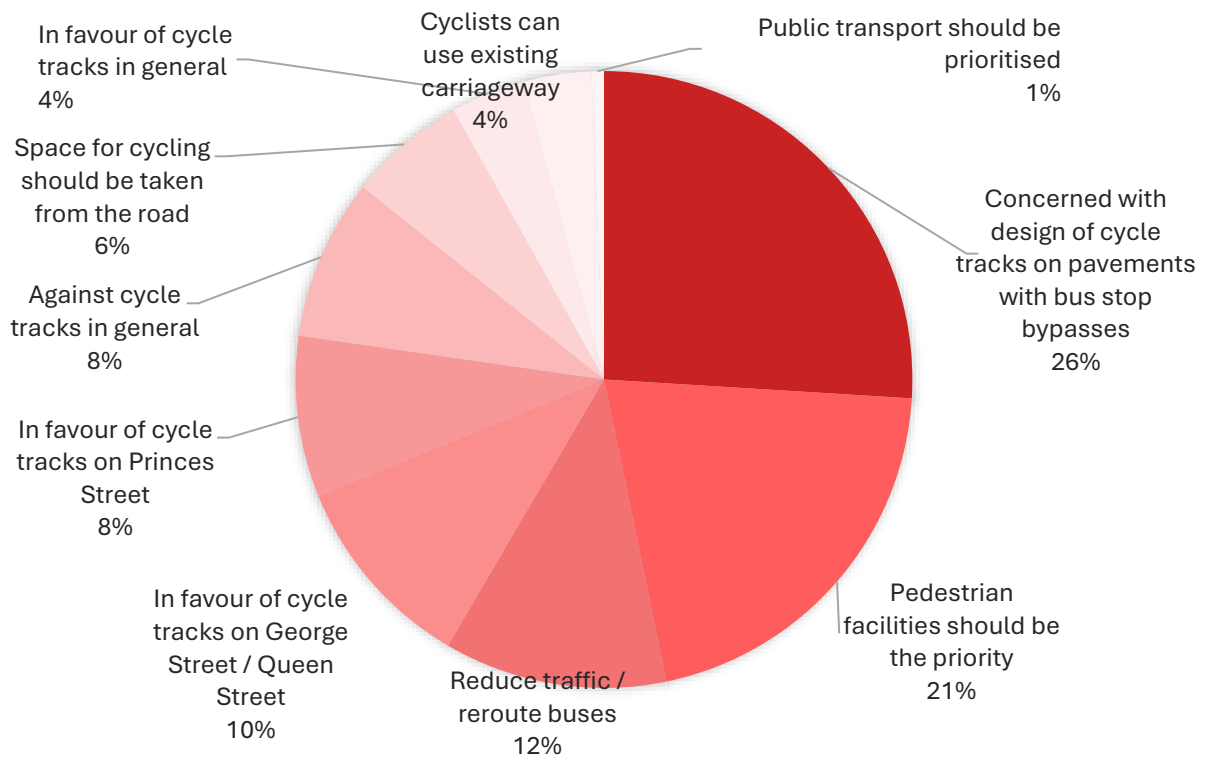
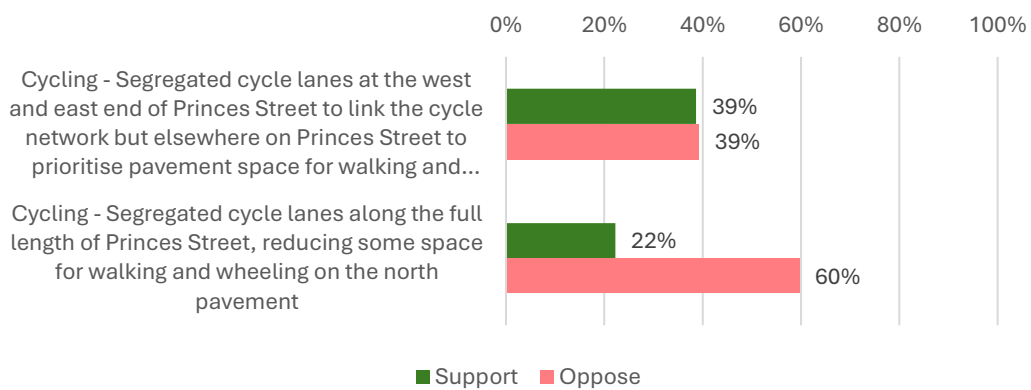
## Cycling

Two strategic options were put forward in the consultation to better connect the city centre cycle network via Princes Street.

Providing cycle connections at the east and west ends of Princes Street (as set out by [Future Streets](#) in 2024) while prioritising pavement space for walking and wheeling elsewhere, had an even split of 39% of respondents showing support and 39% of respondents showing opposition.

Providing segregated cycle lanes along the full length of Princes Street received 22% support and was opposed by 60% of respondents.

Figure 21: Cycling



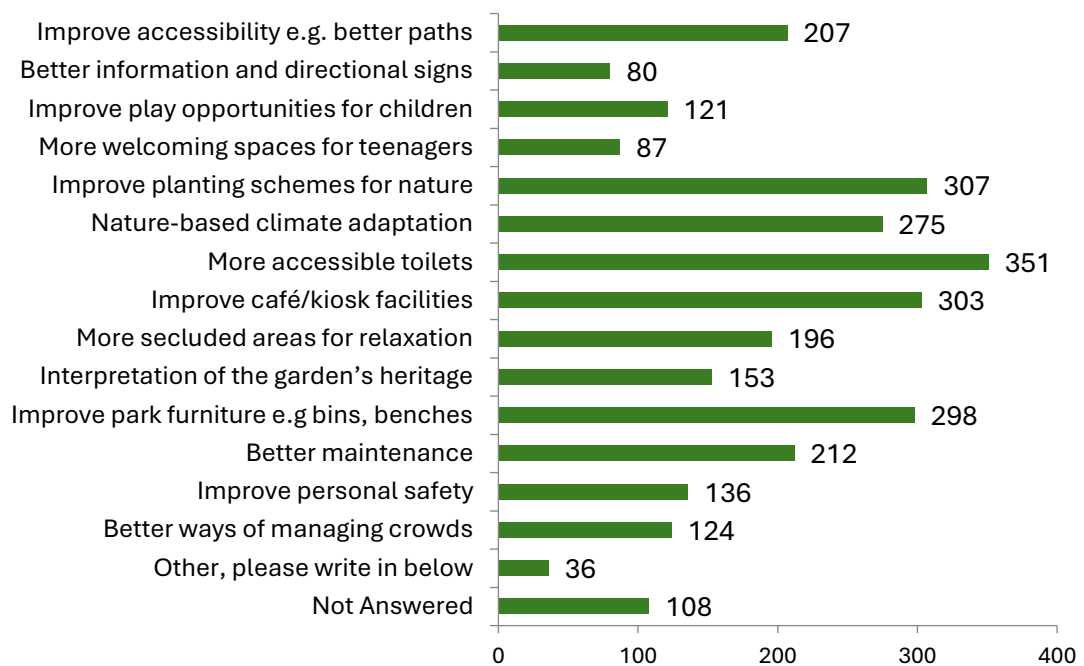
Analysis of 308 'open-box' comments revealed that 26% of respondents were concerned about the design of cycle lanes on pavements and floating bus-stops and 21% felt that pedestrian facilities should be prioritised.

## 2.5 Princes Street Gardens and Ross Bandstand

### What would add to your enjoyment of the Gardens and encourage you to visit them more often?

The top five most supported interventions that would add to people’s enjoyment of the Gardens were: more accessible toilets, improving planting schemes for nature, improving café / kiosk facilities, improving park furniture and more nature-based solutions to adapt to climate change.

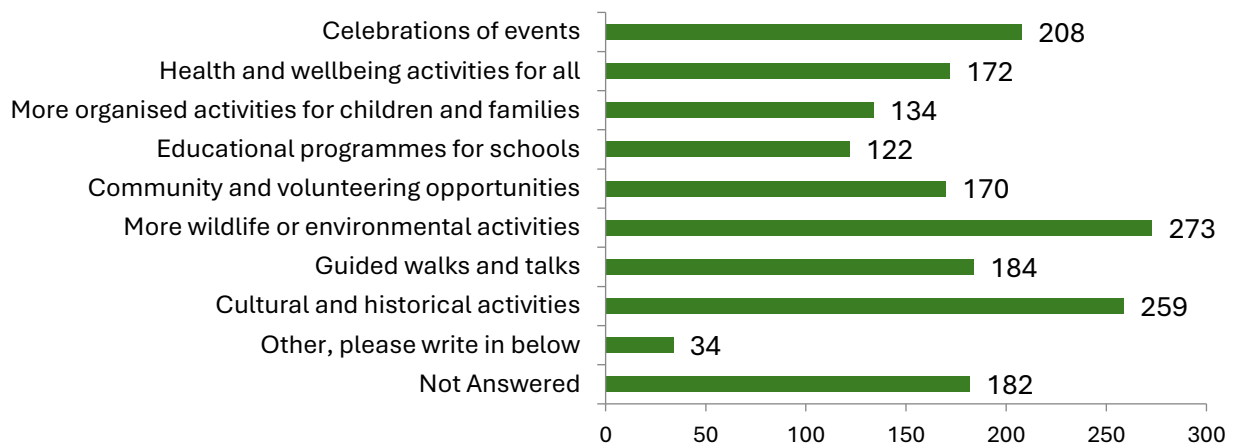
Figure 22: What facilities would encourage you to visit the Gardens more often?



### What activities would add to your enjoyment of the Gardens more and encourage you to visit them more often?

More wildlife / environmental activities, cultural and historical activities were the top things that would encourage respondents to visit the Gardens more often.

Figure 23: What activities would encourage you to visit the Gardens more often?



## Keeping you informed

People were asked in relation to Princes Street Gardens, whether they would like to be kept involved by email, be part of a Friends Group or take part in volunteering activities. There were 304 responses to this question.

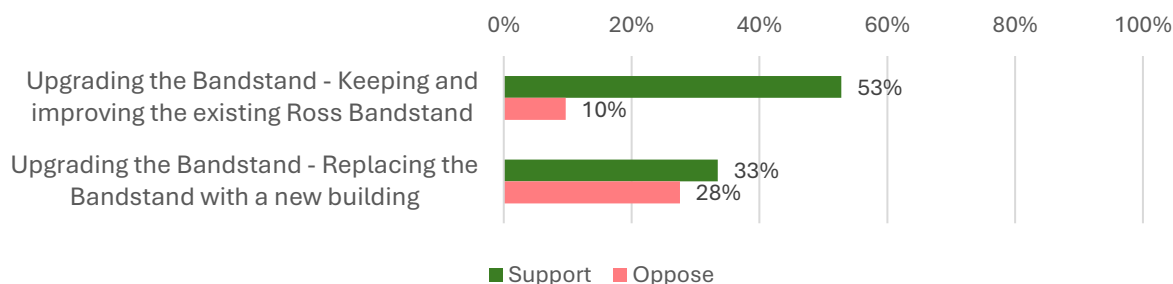
Figure 24: Being involved in Princes Street Gardens



## Upgrading the Bandstand

More than 50% of respondents were supportive of keeping and improving the bandstand, compared to 33% of respondents that were supportive of replacing the bandstand entirely.

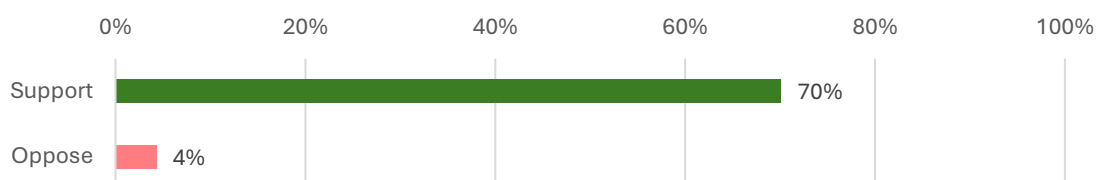
Figure 25: Upgrading the Bandstand



## Rethinking the Amphitheatre

70% of respondents were supportive of reconfiguring the amphitheatre to improve access and make the space usable outside of events.

Figure 26: Rethinking the Amphitheatre - Reconfiguring the amphitheatre to improve access and make the space usable outside of events.

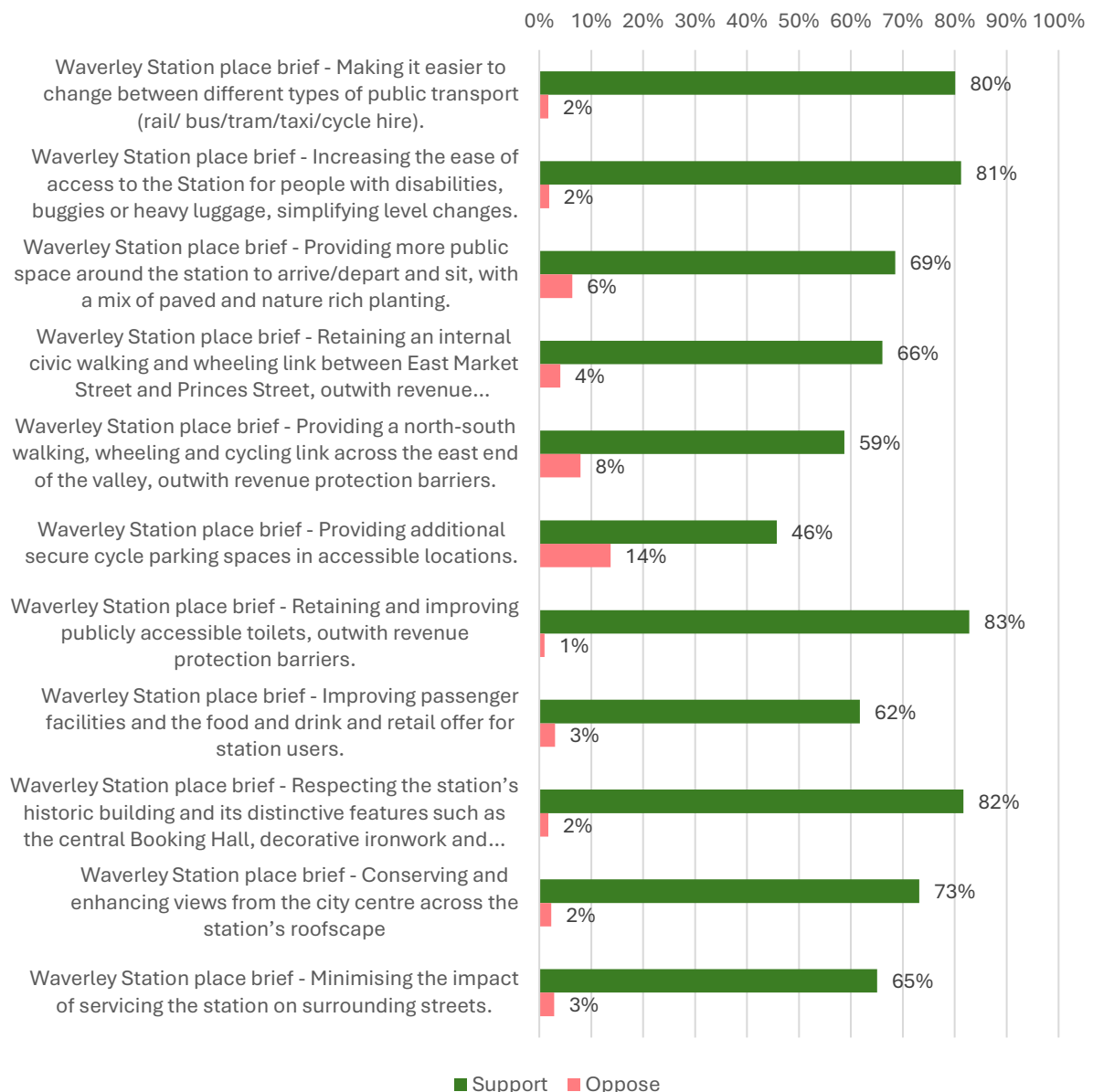


## 2.6 Waverley Station, Waverley Market and East Market Street

### Waverley Station place brief

All of the Waverley Station proposals received varying degrees of support. The five most supported measures included: respecting the station's historic setting and heritage features, public toilet provision, improving accessibility and interchange, and conserving city views.

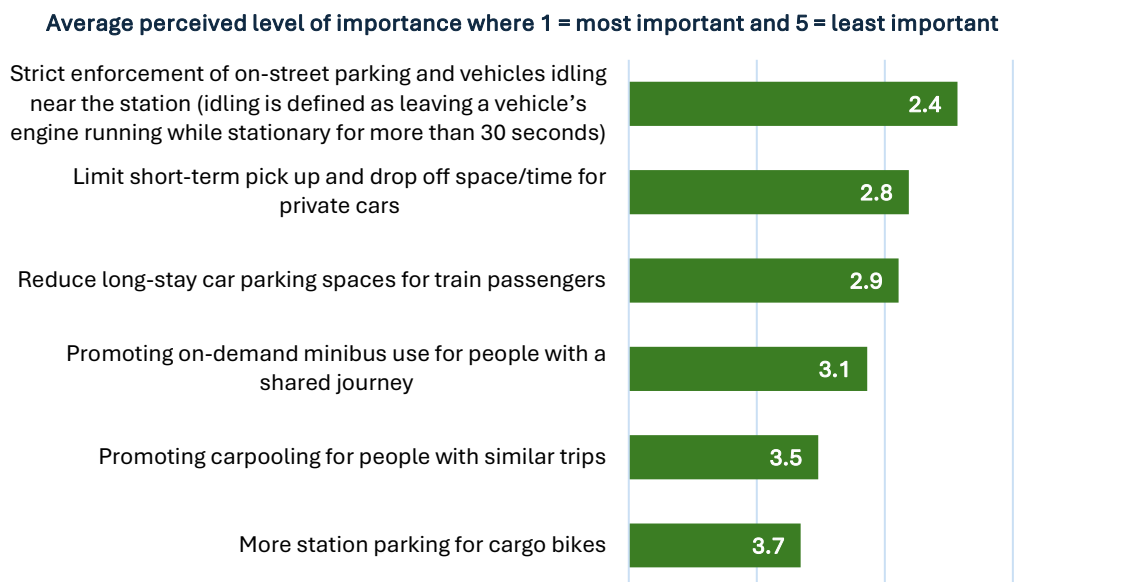
Figure 27: Waverley Station Place Brief



## Making it easier to get to the Station without a car

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of measures to support sustainable travel to the station without a car. The enforcement of on-street parking and vehicles idling near the station was rated as the most important measure, followed by limiting short-term pick up and drop space / time for private cars.

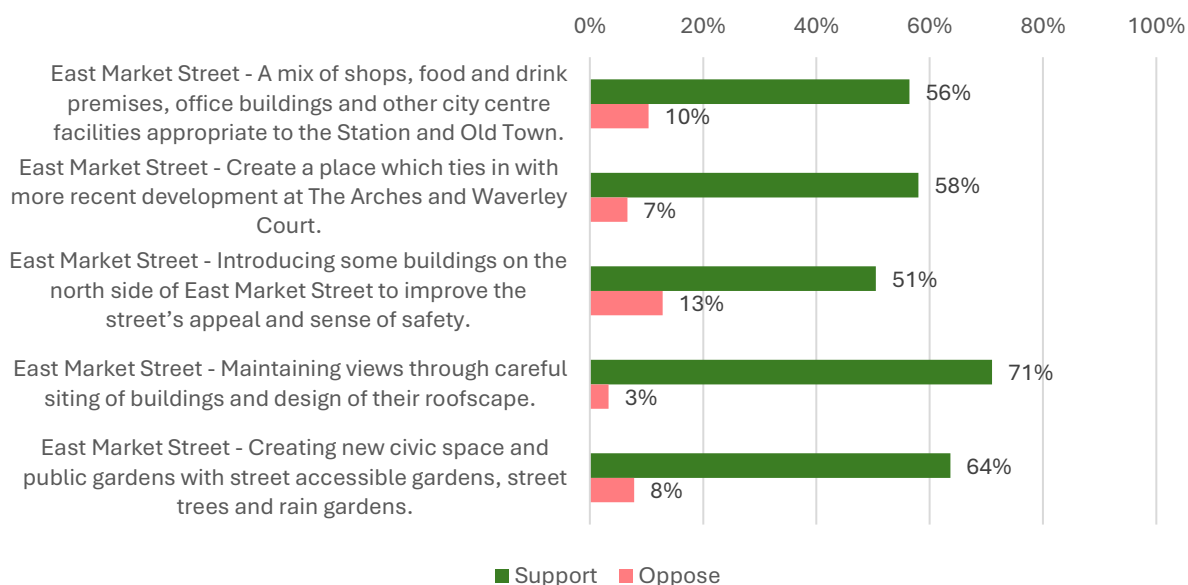
Figure 28: Level of importance for station access without a car proposals



## East Market Street

Proposals for East Market Street received high levels of support, particularly maintaining views through careful siting of buildings and roofscape design. 51% of respondents supported the introduction of some buildings to the north of the street.

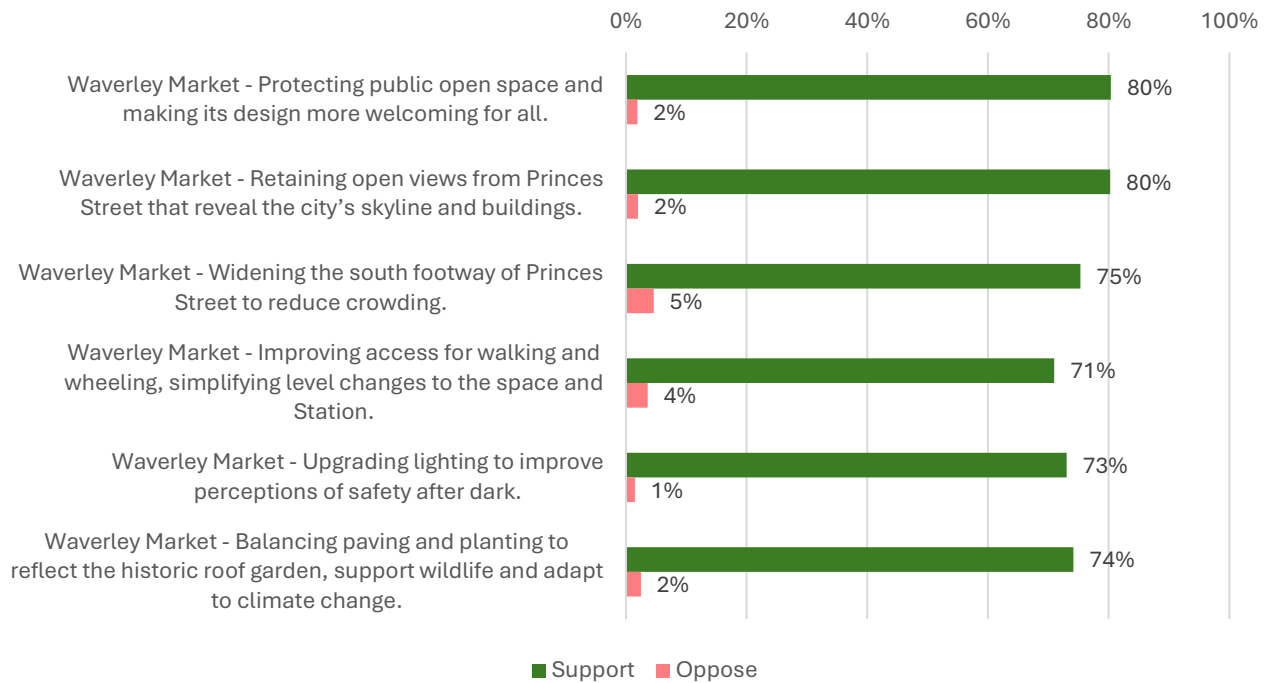
Figure 29: East Market Street



## Waverley Market

There were high levels support for all proposals (more than 70% support) to influence change around Waverley Market including its rooftop, footway widening, lighting improvements and planting while retaining open views.

Figure 30: Waverley Market



### 3. Workshops, drop-ins and written feedback



*Stakeholder Workshop, Edinburgh City Chambers*

#### 3.1. Stakeholder Workshops

Stakeholder workshops were held on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 at City Chambers and included a presentation on the key sections of the Draft Strategy and facilitated group discussion. Participants were able to join round table discussions themed around ‘Uses, Blocks and Buildings – A revitalised Princes Street, Public Realm and Mobility – a more accessible and welcoming place, and The Gardens and Bandstand – enhanced greenspaces.’ There was no workshop table for Waverley Station, however, a representative of Network Rail attended to support mobility discussions and answer queries about the station’s masterplan.

The workshop agenda was repeated as an online meeting on 25 January 2025 to capture the views of those unable to attend the in-person sessions. A summary of the key points of stakeholder feedback recorded is set out below.

#### **Blocks, Buildings and Uses – A revitalised Princes Street**

Feedback on the street’s blocks, buildings and uses focussed on the changing nature of the street and the need to ensure change respects the character of the First New Town and the street’s historic architecture, and meeting the needs of residents and visitors, making efficient use of the upper storeys, improving night-time activity and supporting the function of the city centre. To unlock the potential of rear lanes, a strategic approach to servicing is required.

- Stakeholders recognised that the use of the street is changing but from a strong position relative to other cities, with few empty units. Anchor retail remains but the street's west end appears to struggle.
- Some felt the modern role of the street and how it will look in future lacks clarity, the outcome of change is uncertain, and market led. The street is complex in terms of its tenure and the ability to sustainably adapt large buildings for new uses.
- Stakeholders generally felt it was important not to look at Princes Street in isolation and consider its relationship to the wider city centre.
- There should be a greater understanding of the historic importance of existing buildings, many first-generation Georgian buildings remain but their condition isn't well understood.
- Hotels may impact the availability of commercial space. Upper floors should be surveyed and more use made of these for their outward views but access to upper levels needs to be resolved. There could be potential for housing to address the housing crisis. Cafés appeal but anchor developments and key destinations are still needed in each block.
- Overall, there is a sense of too many tourist stores and not enough useful shops for residents and the reason for visiting the street is unclear. Scope exists for more start-up/innovation space with Waverley Market providing more opportunities for small/independent businesses.
- There continues to be a lack nighttime activity, but hotels and cafes could help change this, however, some felt hotel foyers can create dead frontage. The street's economy benefits from its public transport role.
- Servicing needs a strategic approach, and the back lanes are a wasted opportunity which could be better used by controlling delivery windows and vehicle sizes through traffic orders.
- The more domestic scale of Rose Street is important. The lanes behind Princes Street are smaller in scale and more suited to a café culture and covered areas/shelter from the elements.
- There is a need to elevate the quality of the street's buildings and uses. Some stakeholders considered there are too many chrome and glass buildings, and that there should be more pastiche architecture that blends in.

### **Public Realm & Mobility - A more accessible and welcoming place**

Feedback on Public Realm and Mobility focussed on the need to prioritise improvements to the walking and wheeling experience. This should be achieved through a high-quality public realm, supported by seating and rest points, accessible routes to the garden, whilst enabling safer cycling, adequate cycle parking and public transport efficiency and interchange.

Delivery should link up public realm upgrades and maintain these to a high standard going forward. Cycle provision should be viewed in the context of planned provision on George Street and Queen Street but the West End junction remains a priority. The East End improvements and bus gate were supported.

- Stakeholders felt that maintenance and cleansing is poor for a World Heritage Site and that improved standards would enhance the city centre experience.

- The existing concrete paving looks terrible and is in poor condition, inadequate drainage impacts on pedestrian flows and is dirty. Utility companies need to make good excavations and litter is a problem.
- Seating is welcomed and should be well oriented. The Mound precinct is an important location for seating, however, locate benches outwith market/event spaces or make them moveable, and avoid conflicts with loading.
- Seating should also be integrated around the station, bus stops and proposed tram stop, include cycle parking. Avoid creating clutter and learn lessons from Spaces for People.
- The design of seating in a heritage location is important and should not be concrete blocks.
- The Waverley Bridge placemaking project is welcomed as a key arrival space. It should allow for loading to the station and Waverley Market.
- Some stakeholders wish to see Waverley Bridge returned to providing public transport interchange with concern around displaced airport, tour buses, and coaches for visiting school groups etc.
- Links from Princes Street to West Princes Street Gardens are welcomed and accessibility needs to be improved. The current ramps are steep and uneven. Entrances lack recognition from street level.
- Learn lessons from the Scottish Gallery Project and consider the space needed to form ramps to avoid an engineered look. Ensure Wayfinding explains the different access points. Better links would take pressure off the street.
- The priority amongst stakeholders is to fix or upgrade the footways to benefit safety and user experience, then add seating, whilst avoiding conflicts with other construction. The Garden links should also follow footway upgrades.
- The wider streetscape needs to be treated with a uniform design language. Once implemented, newly improved surfaces must be properly maintained.
- Some wished to see wider city centre improvements e.g. the condition of Rose and George Street and other areas that don't work well for pedestrians e.g. South Charlotte Street, top of Leith Street, foot of The Mound/Hanover Street, Market Street.
- Stakeholders considered pedestrians and public transport need to be prioritised. Pedestrian movement is impeded by long-wait times at junctions e.g. South St David St and safety is an issue at pinch points e.g. Waverley Steps and bus stops on south footway. Signal times should be re-examined.
- Introducing table and chairs for cafes on Princes Street would cause movement conflicts. The Gardens are often used as a route by people to avoid Princes Street.
- Many felt it was disappointing that alongside improved surfacing, footways are generally not able to be widened. Space needs to be prioritised for high footfall. The Waverley Market roof terrace is poor quality and could be used to improve circulation space and user experience. Loosing footway space to create cycle lanes was not supported.
- The volume of busses impacts on street's character and connectivity between the north footway and the Gardens, but busses are part of the street's economy and network interchange, services need to be reliable, less

congested and stop/start. Free bus travel makes the city centre accessible to young people.

- Congestion outside Waverley Steps is not a good experience for anyone and bus routes via The Mound are quicker. The east end has become more congested, and people are less dispersed.
- It would be good to understand how transit times have improved through measures already taken and what could be further improved by means of a bus-gate at the east end, which is supported. Would the network look differently if planned from scratch?
- The role of north-south tram should be understood and whether any busses will be displaced from Princes Street. Tram has made an enormous difference to travel and is easy for visitors to follow and not get lost. Waverley Bridge and West Princes Street are key interchanges that need to be improved. Railings could be used to separate people from the tram.
- If restricting through-centre bus travel, consider displacement impacts on surrounding residential areas or greenspaces. North-south movement across the city centre is just as important.
- Relationship of the transport network to public toilets is important.
- People want to cycle on Princes Street, but it is difficult, and safety remains a concern. Even if the street is not a preferred cycle route, its surfacing should be improved, and the West End junction need urgent attention.
- Edinburgh is a city of students, where cycling and public transport are important and there is a need for more cycle parking.
- The George Street and Queen Street cycle infrastructure need to be in place to provide a safer alternative to Princes Street. It's unclear why a cycle network would be on all three parallel streets?
- Deliver improvements in one cohesive roll out. Look to other cities like Barcelona or London for delivery. Make use of developer contributions and the visitor levy. Current improvements are not joined up e.g. Castle Street and one block of Rose Street.

### **The Gardens & Bandstand – Enhanced Green Spaces**

Feedback on Princes Gardens reflected their value to the city as a peaceful and well-maintained central greenspace for residents, visitors and workers. There is a need to improve accessibility and future-proof links, upgrade facilities – including toilets and the refreshment offer, ensure community representation, address climate and nature emergencies and better celebrate their heritage, including views.

- The gardens are cherished by a range of users, including office workers, tourists and locals, catering for relaxation and events.
- Their diversity is valued, including the formal gardens, trees, play, wild areas, memorials, fountain and floral clock.
- The new playground is a highlight for families and the gardens provide an 'oasis' and uplifting walk in the otherwise busy city centre.
- The gardens offer unique views to the Castle, form part of views across the valley and from Princes Street's buildings, as well as from the trains arriving in Edinburgh.

- The natural topography protects the gardens and maintains an expansive green space between the Old and New Towns, partly formal and informal, offering a sense of enclosure from within.
- Improvements and new infrastructure need to be carefully balanced to preserve the garden's character. Creating more accessible ramps could affect existing lawn areas.
- The railway bridge and views of trains has been a popular attraction for children, with the tracks dividing the formal garden and informal Castle Banks.
- The gardeners put in exceptional work which is highly valued by the community and should be consulted on the proposed changes. The location of the depot should be considered to manage conflicts with vehicles.
- Rethink how the gardens connect to other spaces and improve access to and within the garden due to steep slopes. Improve walking flow between East and West Gardens, East Gardens and Waverley Station, and consider a linkage below The Mound. The West Gardens provide a useful link between the city centre and Lothian Road and the East Gardens, provide east-west walkways away from heavy footfall on Princes Street and around the Station.
- Wayfinding could be improved at entrances, to guide navigation around the paths, locate toilets and connect back to Princes Street but should not be excessive. The St Cuthbert's churchyard route is less well known.
- Some wondered whether cycling was permitted in the gardens and whether there was space for it in the future? Cycle parking close to entrances is needed e.g. for families to cycle to the play park.
- Recent changes in the East Gardens as part of the Scottish Gallery Project have altered their character due to tree removal and the ramp layout. The lower lawn is a bit lost and less well used.
- Access and connections to the south of the railway line, including The Mound, Castle Esplanade and King's Stables Road need to be reopened and rockfall risk addressed.
- Provide greater historic interpretation of the Gardens place in history to enhance visitor experience, including the Nor' Loch and its connection to witch trials. Apart from floral clock, public information is limited.
- There could be more biodiversity and green initiatives with information for visitors, including plants for pollinators, herbaceous plants and raingardens. This could be linked to greenspaces across the city or green roofs e.g. on bus stops. There could be wider public space improvements and greening of top level of Castle Terrace car park.
- The underused shelters could become food and drink kiosks to benefit visitor experience with better refreshment opportunities also by the playground. Waverley West signal box could become a feature or café. Prices should be affordable.
- Toilets are well maintained but need improving for families and the visitor levy could be used to improve these. More seating is needed throughout the gardens, particularly in summer.
- The Gardens close at dusk, which is supported to protect them from anti-social behaviour. Any access after dark would need to be managed safely but some support extending evening use in summer.

- Involve local business representation in any Friends of Park Group e.g. in New York this has provided sponsorship for improvements.
- The Christmas market is poor and similar to the offer in many cities. The winter festival causes disruption to access and the landscaped grounds and should be dispersed to reduce pressure on the gardens and benefit other parts of the city centre.
- There could be more activities such as pop-up markets in the red blaes area and scope for an informal performance space in the lower part of the East Gardens.
- The improvement plan for the Gardens should be published before the Strategy is finalised.

Feedback on the Ross Bandstand reflected the need to balance major and community events and activities, provide clear communications and address barriers to community use. Most stakeholders wished to see the bandstand retained, improving its appearance, function and access, including redesign of the amphitheatre seating.

- The vintage character of the existing bandstand is appreciated; it offers a spectacular venue with an iconic backdrop. Build on its features to provide upgraded and improved facilities, including toilets.
- A balance is needed between major events and smaller to medium, free, community events during summer to animate the space with minimal impact on the Gardens. The intensification of commercial events should be resisted.
- Provide a clear usage policy and calendar of events to manage expectations around access and noise e.g. nearby hotels. Screening of events with fencing on Princes Street is not considered acceptable.
- The amphitheatre creates a concrete scar and east-west barrier. It could be opened up to allow recreational use outwith events and resolve accessibility of the steep paths.
- Restricted access for events causes logistical challenges with setup and take-down for event's organisers. A power supply would reduce the need for diesel generators. A lack of equipment and hire costs deters community use.

### **Waverley Station**

Feedback on Waverley station reflected the need to enhance the public realm around the Station incl. Waverley Market, and improve interchange, wayfinding and pick up and drop off.

- Waverley Market is not just an important public space and viewpoint but an accessible route between Princes Street and the station. Tackle congested spaces, particularly Waverley Steps, to improve the arrival experience.
- Some concern at loss of Waverley Bridge for interchange but also support for carefully design seating/public realm. The temporary closure has been successful but needs to offer something.
- Improve conditions for pick up/drop-off, incl. land at East Market Street and access for private hire vehicles should be clearly understood.
- Prevent misuse of loading bays at east end of Princes Street.
- Improve wayfinding to and through the station.

## 3.2 Public Drop-In Events



*Public Drop-In Event, City Arts Centre*

### **Blocks, Buildings and Uses – A revitalised Princes Street**

Comments on the street's blocks, buildings and uses received at the public drop-in events at Waverley Station and the City Arts Centre focussed on the need for the Strategy's vision and outcome to be more clearly set out, to improve building design and ensure needs of city centre residents are supported.

- Consider resilience for residents of Rose Street and First New Town in terms of the facilities needed for local living – groceries, health centres, alongside the impact of new developments on servicing and infrastructure incl. drainage.
- Defined role of the street is vague – what is the reason to go there? How does the street fit in with the wider visitor offer?
- There is more scope for creative industries and workshops.
- Better quality architecture and design detailing to reflect First New Town. Heritage should be the starting point, including internal features. Rooflines are not following guidance.
- All proposals for Princes Street go before the Edinburgh Urban Design Panel to raise quality of design. The Johnnie Walker Experience is a good example of high-quality design.
- Emergence of cafes a good thing e.g. by station.
- The LDP preparation process has a long timeframe, the strategy needs to be more agile and responsive to change on ground.

## **Public Realm & Mobility - A More Accessible and Welcoming Place**

Comments received at the drop-in events with regard to public realm and mobility reflected the need to better communicate the overall City Centre Transformation (CCT) approach, prioritise the walking and wheeling experience, supported by rest points and to improve public transport efficiency. Views were mixed on the need for full cycle segregation, with some supporting this measure and others seeking better connections at the east and west ends of the street. The design quality of all measures proposed was considered to be important given the city centre's historic context.

- There is a need to improve communications around wider CCT projects and how they come together.
- A need to improve public realm and the specific locations identified were supported, in particular east end.
- Improve efficiency of bus network and relieve footway congestion, seating welcomed and cleanliness to be addressed.
- Temporary infrastructure e.g. cycle bollards affect the look of street.
- There was a mix of views on the need for cycle segregation along the full length of Princes Street, the need to connect the cycle network at the east and west ends and simply improving the existing situation.

## **The Gardens & Bandstand – Enhanced Green Spaces**

Comments received at the drop-in events with regard to Princes Street Gardens focussed on the need to improve accessibility, retain historic character and views, keep the Gardens tranquil, well maintained and avoid commercialisation. Restoration of the Ross Bandstand was favoured, balancing major and community events and activities and improving accessibility.

- Improve all access points, incl. King's Stables Road
- Ramps welcomed and retaining historic example/re-use materials.
- Address cleanliness and avoid commercialisation.
- The focus of the West Gardens should be on tranquillity.
- The gardens have become heavily treed and lost some open lawn and views.
- Improve shelters.
- Restore Ross Bandstand and scale back large events.
- The amphitheatre should be opened up for seating use/picnics at other times.

## **Waverley Station**

Comments on Waverley Station received at the public drop-in events focused on the need to improve public spaces around the Station, including Waverley Market roof terrace, the need to reduce footway congestion and improve interchange. Pick up and drop off need improvement – in particular for those with caring responsibilities, with scope for some redevelopment of the car park but retaining some parking.

- Enhance public realm around Station incl. Waverley Market Waverley Market – a missed opportunity for a European style outdoor market.

- Resolve footway congestion at entrances, improve interchange and pick-up/drop off, including realistic arrangements for people with caring responsibilities.
- Provide greater clarity on East Market Street proposals, the new bridge, and loss of parking if developed? Some buildings would improve safety/overlooking.

### 3.3 Written Feedback

Written feedback was received from the organisations listed below:

Edinburgh World Heritage	Living Streets (via survey)
Historic Environment Scotland	Spokes
Essential Edinburgh	InfraSisters (via survey)
Federation of Small Businesses	Sustrans
Chamber of Commerce (via survey)	Cockburn Association
Edinburgh Urban Design Panel	New Town and Broughton Community Council (on behalf of Old Town and West End CCs)
Edinburgh Access Panel	National Galleries of Scotland (via survey)
Lothian Buses	

#### Edinburgh World Heritage

Edinburgh World Heritage support the Council's ambition to revitalise and improve accessibility of the historic city centre. A summary of comments is set out below.

Blocks, Buildings and Uses:

- Ensure a balance of uses for a sustainable future for the First New Town, managing market forces. The street's destination role for citizens is vital to preserve. Ground floor leisure activities are supported.
- Use of upper floors for residential and affordable housing, with retail and leisure below will support the World Heritage Site's authenticity and residential community.
- Upgrading facades as part of development could be achieved by restoring original plot widths, architectural rhythms and fenestration patterns.
- Investment and renewal of the public realm to an agreed palette of high-quality natural materials within the World Heritage Site is welcomed.
- Placemaking proposals could appear ad hoc if not embedded in the shared vision for the New Town.
- A Statement of Heritage Significance should be used to guide the regeneration of the Street, manage the landscape of the Waverley Valley, establish a vision for its public realm, inform the design process and improve the heritage outcomes.
- The Council are encouraged to hold a wider debate and discussion on the development of a vision with city partners and residents. An architectural competition could attract ideas from world class designers.
- New development should make a positive contribution to the World Heritage Site through high-quality design and materials. Roofscape is an important character of OUV, and additional storeys should be resisted, maintaining protected views. Sky bars shouldn't become a standard feature.
- Agree with the need to manage light pollution from buildings and additionally recommend that a lighting strategy for the built heritage and parks is commissioned by the WHS Management Partners.
- Increased permeability with Rose Street is likely to harm OUV and present a risk to listed buildings and heritage fabric.

- Support repair and improvement of the lanes as part of the New Town street hierarchy, including vehicle controls, presentation of trade waste, restoring footways and setted carriageways, graffiti removal, cleansing, heritage lanterns for safety, alongside appearance of rear access doors etc.
- The lane strategy should focus on improving Rose Street's character. The intended character of service lanes should be preserved (retail frontage would be inappropriate) maintaining front/back relationships.
- Strongly support the Council's proposals to review the operational requirements of businesses in this area.
- Refurbishment and regeneration of existing buildings should be promoted, avoiding unsustainable demolition and the detrimental effect of gap sites.
- Reversal of undesirable alterations or restoration of lost features such as original shopfronts may be desirable for heritage value, assessed against a Heritage Statement.
- EWH supports the restoration of traditional shopfronts in the World Heritage Site, where evidence of the original design exists to support an authentic approach.
- New or redeveloped building façades should be of high architectural merit and high-quality materials, relating to their context, and the remaining historic facades, and reading as a cohesive building with an integral shopfront.
- Use of awnings, consistent with the historic design, would be supported and contributes to combating climate change but visible branding should be avoided.
- Historic thresholds should be retained but it is not clear whether a standard approach to every threshold is desirable or authentic.
- Removing redundant roof plant is supported. Solar panels and air source heat pumps are unlikely to be suitable for the roofscape due to visual prominence.
- Green roofs would not be appropriate, even where not visible. Materials should reflect the historic roofscape and blend in.
- To provide access to upper stories, any new entrances from Princes Street will require sensitive design, internal lobbies should also be considered.
- Pop-up uses should reflect the quality of the World Heritage Site e.g. use by cultural, educational and similar organisations for engagement is suggested.
- Support 1:1 advert free scaffold wraps. Hoardings with community artwork though suitable elsewhere may cause visual clutter or congestion on narrowed footways.
- Empty shops could display historic photos and heritage interpretation about Princes Street/New Town as successfully used elsewhere.
- Hoardings should be painted a prescribed colour e.g. sandstone, dark green, or traffic grey for a uniform and easily maintained appearance.

#### Public Realm:

- Renewal of the public realm to a high standard is welcomed. To avoid harm and enhance the OUV, a minimalist approach is essential based on a cohesive design for the whole area.

- Continuity of design and technical detailing across City Centre Transformation projects is essential incl. materials, street furniture, stone benching, surfaces, barriers, signage, planters, road-markings, lighting, and other elements.
- Inclusion of seating areas in proposed locations is generally supported, with designs consistent across the New Town, and incorporating HVM reinforcements to reduce the need for bollards.
- Low-cost or movable seating units would not be suitable and bicycle racks should be sensitively sited to a consistent design across the WHS.
- Planting within seating units should be consistent with those to be used elsewhere in the WHS. Trees are generally only suitable for use in the gardens.
- As the setting of two architectural masterpieces, a permanent design would be preferred at The Mound precinct.
- Materials, street furniture and loading/servicing should tie in with the George Street project. Castle Street should be resurfaced to match George Street. Not an appropriate location for street entertainers.
- Waverley Bridge is a very wide street and benches will need to be of sufficient scale to create a welcoming seating space. Consider views from Cockburn Street and the Old Town and terminating the street with public art.
- General Register House – simple seating without planting is supported but must avoid impact on the setting of the Listed Building. Support a raised table in traditional setts to West Register Street rather than a continuous footway.
- Rationalisation and relocation of timber benches is supported, which should be retained and reused for their cultural heritage value.
- Support the West Garden Links proposal including new planting, alongside the retention of the original central ramps, retaining and reusing paving and with sensitive alteration of railings.
- Strongly support use of Scoutmoor (or approved equivalent) sandstone paving throughout Princes Street/First New Town, laid to consistent pattern and dimensions.
- Additional planting or raingardens on street is not appropriate and the Gardens should be used to improve drainage and biodiversity.
- Certain locations could benefit from a limited table and chair zone but is generally not appropriate along the length of the street.
- Prioritise improvement of pavement surfacing, followed by access ramps to the Gardens.
- The protection of public space and views at Waverley Market is supported, particularly referencing the historic Waverley Market rooftop. The space should be free of kiosks and commercial activity, with lighting tied to the overall concept for the valley. Widening the footway into the carriageway could affect historic street proportions, whereas widening level access on the roof terrace would not.
- The pavement width on the north side of the street should be maximised. Proposals for segregated cycling should reflect the historic character of the street and keep a uniform kerb line as a key characteristic of this street.

### Princes Street Gardens:

- Any changes should be informed by the Conservation Management Plan and Heritage Statement. Keep signage to a minimum to avoid clutter. Interpretation should be considered across the WHS by the management partners.
- Opening of the Gardens after dusk with lighting would change the appearance of the WHS and should only be considered as part of a wider lighting strategy.
- Support formation of Friends Groups for historic green spaces. Organised activities should be kept to a minimum to respect the value of the gardens as a tranquil space.
- Support conservation and refurbishment of the historic bandstand.
- Development proposals affecting nationally important Gardens and Designed Landscapes should protect, preserve or enhance their cultural significance, character and integrity.
- Support rethinking the amphitheatre, informed by a heritage statement and the Conservation Management Plan for the Gardens. Visual barriers during events are not supported.

### Waverley Station:

- Support simplifying access and interchange at Waverley Station, which must include access for large numbers of taxis without clogging adjacent streets.
- The arrival experience has significant cultural value and should be retained or maximized in any redesign.
- Waverley Bridge should be pedestrian focussed and clutter free, readable as a bridge. Planters may be appropriate as well as seating for a rest point or meeting place.
- Support the retention of the internal high-level walkway across the station from East Market Street to Princes Street.
- Do not support a new north-south bridge for walking and cycling, New Street provides a similar route. Consider restoring the historic bridge.
- Secure cycle parking should be maximised to avoid street clutter.
- Support provision of new public toilets with 24 hour access.
- Rather than providing additional shops, food and drink facilities in the Station, recommend incorporating Waverley Market into the Station.
- It is crucial to respect and restore the Station's unique historical elements and features including the Booking Hall, columns and glazed roof, to retain the character and experience of this unique building, whilst also removing inauthentic elements.
- Historic sandstone boundary walls require vegetation removal, repair with natural stone and repointed in lime mortar to a high conservation standard.
- Servicing should be carried out from Calton Road and restricted to specified hours to avoid congestion in adjacent streets.
- Development of land at East Market Street to be informed by a Heritage Statement, station expansion may be supported but a continuous street front altering views may not be appropriate. The area could feature a flat roof at

street level to provide public realm and a station entrance or low-level buildings for cultural uses.

## **Historic Environment Scotland**

- Use of upper floors is welcomed; however Building Regulations require stair access for fire escape, which can be complex due to the internal layout or the mix of uses.
- In terms of the redevelopment opportunities identified, emphasis should be placed on re-use rather than demolition.
- The Abbey Business Centre is unlisted but linked to the category A Listed New Club, tying in with its horizontal design emphasis and walkway.
- More information could be added on the Princes Street Panel and remaining buildings, of which two are Listed.
- In achieving interest at shop front level, ensure the shopfronts reference the building above and not simply the historic feu pattern.
- Welcome emphasis on improving shopfronts, including re-instating traditional forms.
- The condition of existing structures may require propping, which is not permitted due to trams and bus stops on Princes Street, thereby adding to construction complexities and pressure on Rose Street.
- Maintain and enhance the placemaking potential of mews streets with high quality streetscape, particularly towards the west end where historic building forms remain.
- Where the historic building form and scale survives, this should be protected. The canyon-effect which already exists at the east end should be avoided.
- The Strategy focusses on the south edge of the New Town, however, Rose Street North Lanes are outwith the study area but would benefit from similar treatment.
- Welcome heritage focus to public realm improvements in terms of materials and re-use of historic paving.
- Placemaking furniture should be bespoke and from a limited palette tied in with the wider New Town.
- Welcome retention and re-use of honoured paving as an edge trim.
- Extent of placemaking project at West End unclear. Consider access to Rose Street when developing layout for Castle Street.
- Welcome preparation of a Heritage Statement.
- Welcome the principle to reuse and retain the 1935 Ross Bandstand and to increase access to it.
- Welcome climate resilience measures in the gardens, to reduce ponding and flooding.
- In the Waverley Station Place Brief, provide a link to the listed building record and ensure the carriageway ramps are referred to.
- Welcome development principles for 'Land at East Market Street', including the response to the valley landform and views across it. Additionally, development here should be sensitively designed and subordinate in scale and form to nearby Listed Buildings.
- Expand on the description of 95 Princes Street in Appendix A.

## **Edinburgh Urban Design Panel - 31 October 2024**

- Set out Strategy's position in hierarchy of plans.
- Clarifications should be made with regard to the spatial structure and feu pattern to highlight the mews lanes and changing urban grain over time.
- Be clear what policy and guidance can control in terms of the mix of uses and what this means in practice. There could be an over dominance of hotels.
- Adaptation of historic buildings for a mix of uses may present challenges in terms of complying with Building Standards for escape and fire prevention.
- Some of the upper floors, abandoned in the past, retain some of the greatest heritage value, therefore there is a tension with re-use of this space.
- Consider community space or small business space to encourage residents to visit/interact with the street.
- A lighting strategy should be encouraged to consider the appearance and qualities of the street and entire valley during hours of darkness.
- Note the importance of well-designed, high quality and maintained public realm, with a delivery sequence to avoid construction damage from redevelopment.
- Street clutter should be reduced, and new seating must avoid adding to this problem. It should follow a bespoke design consistent with other furniture in the New Town.
- Segregated cycle lanes along the length of Princes Street were not supported due to the loss of pedestrian space and duplication with the planned network on George and Queen St.
- Support accessibility improvements to the gardens but will need to be carefully balanced and designed to avoid an over engineered appearance.
- The Gardens are an important designed landscape of national importance which needs to be improved, alongside important issues of access, climate and nature emergency.
- The retention of a pair of ramps and horonised paving as a historic feature is welcomed.
- There should be a horticultural review of planting to bring coherence to the different eras of planting and management.
- The amount of information on the history of Waverley Station needs to be increased and should include or refer to the statement of special interest.
- If the carriageway ramps are removed as part of the Waverley station masterplan, the new design should embrace the idea of a processional arrival space to the city.

## **Edinburgh Access Panel - 7 November 2024**

- Street not looking its best, but the strategy will improve the situation, even if shop operators can't be influenced.
- Issues with goods being presented on street.
- Existing wooden benches and footway very narrow. Footway widening should be considered. Especially narrow by East Princes Street Gardens.
- Blue badge parking at the galleries on The Mound is very important to maintain.

- Suggest looking at crossing opportunities to the railway. The existing accessible route from The Mound to the Bandstand is a long route. Additionally existing temporary closures at The Mound and King's Stables Road means the approach to Castle Banks needs thought.
- Bandstand – issue of accessibility to the stage for performers with disabilities needs to be addressed.
- Panel previously commented on Network Rail proposals, in particular the need for segregation between walking, wheeling and cycling on the new north-south bridge.
- Concern also with regard to taxi and public transport access on Market Street surrounding the Meadows to George Street scheme bus-gate.
- Clarify that new ramps will be of suitable gradient and include rest points/landings as 1:12 still quite steep. Quaich proposed a lift but issue of ongoing maintenance/access if fault develops.
- Cycle option on Princes Street could be dangerous in an already congested space, could people access Princes Street by dropping down from George Street?

### **Essential Edinburgh (email / meeting comments)**

- Positive outlook with major redevelopments underway, future being high quality mixed use.
- Keen for paving to be improved but deliver upgrades after major redevelopments are complete.
- Planning changes have greatly helped regenerate Princes Street. Lowest vacancy rate for shops in the city centre for many years. Hotels will foster high quality retail.
- Don't forget Rose Street; the street's public realm needs replaced with deliverable traffic measures in place.
- The masterplan for Waverley Station is considered a priority.
- Urgent need for the entrances/exits from Waverley Station to be addressed at pressure points e.g. top of Waverley Steps and car/taxi access elsewhere.
- Very supportive of a major refurbishment of the Ross Bandstand for both larger and community events. Improved access to the Gardens very important.
- Improved seating and dwelling space would be welcome – Castle Street would need thought as currently an event space.
- Not supportive of branding Princes Street, it will become a market-led high-quality mixed-use street.

### **Federation of Small Businesses (email comments)**

- Consultation pretty well pitched. Future of town/city centres lies in diversification beyond retail to create places where people want to spend time.
- The street is headed in the right direction with the next steps crucial to its prosperity and its public transport connections expand its potential to markets outside the city.

- The street does not seem to have reached its commercial potential, and its views could be made more of.
- The Council should promote its regeneration but it must also be guided by the market.
- Princes Street will become more of a hospitality and leisure destination, anchored at either end by St James and Johnnie Walker, a gateway to Edinburgh, rather than the flagship retail destination of years gone by.

### **Chamber of Commerce (survey response)**

- Overall, support the strategy, vision, and ambition to revitalise what could be one of the best and most iconic city centres in the world.
- Work collaboratively with businesses and residents to improve and sustain the mix of use, upgrade public realm, and support the economy.
- Support the design principles but consider the New Town holistically to align plans for George Street, Princes Street and Rose Street.
- Rose Street is a destination and place of business for residents and visitors. There is scope for greater focus on Rose Street and the upgrades that it needs.
- Appreciate the benefit of enhancing the rear lanes in collaboration with local businesses but emphasise their importance for servicing premises.
- Strongly support use of upper floors for housing, hotels, and/or serviced apartments to make best use of space and activate Princes Street in the evening.
- Alongside the issue of light spillage, consider noise impacts from rooftop bars for nearby residents and hotels.
- The 2020 changes to planning guidance seem to be working well, with a better mix of use currently on Princes Street, and more planned.
- Scope for greater hospitality and leisure to create a resilient and vibrant destination, including tables and chairs where space permits.
- Coordinate proposals to reduce disruption to businesses, visitors and residents, and protect public realm throughout any development works.
- Strengthen content on net zero and climate adaptation infrastructure – e.g. heat networks, measures to tackle flooding, overheating, and strong winds etc.
- Prioritise a safe and welcoming environment and address increasing criminal and anti-social behaviour, shoplifting, graffiti, and behaviour at bus stops.
- The East End requires priority action to resolve anti-social behaviour, poor quality public realm and congestion.
- Alongside the East End, outside General Register House is a priority for placemaking, given its prominence, historic value and congested footways.
- Improve provision for taxis and private hire (PHC) across the city centre, not only at the east end. Loading and servicing needs to be protected.
- Strongly support improved access to the Gardens. Better, permanent infrastructure will make events more resilient and sustainable e.g. avoiding the need for generators.

- Events are vital to the city's vibrancy and our cultural offering but don't have to be all larger scale and can include community and smaller scale events.
- Upgrading Waverley Station should be a priority and to improve the experience of arriving in the city and first impressions of Princes Street and East Market Street.
- Work with Waverley Market to find a sustainable and long-term solution for the roof terrace, to create a place to spend time during the day and into the evening.
- Overall, this is a strong strategy. Princes Street is definitely moving in the right direction with a lot of development to come that will improve the area's offering.

### **Lothian Buses**

- Pleased to see strategy for the area. Relationship with other active travel/public realm projects to be indicated.
- Welcome footway improvements to remove clutter and benefit all public transport users at start and end of journeys.
- East End needs a co-ordinated design in conjunction with north/south tram.
- Quick wins at east end include a sustainable transport gate (bus, taxi, cycle and tram) to filter unnecessary traffic. Taxi drop-off/pick-up and loading and servicing need review.
- Support additional footway space at east end but challenging to meet the needs of all modes.
- Adding a cycle link in advance of tram will be complex. Proposals for the Street to Waverley Bridge cycle link will affect the public transport network.
- Cycle parking should be located away from footways, where space is at a premium to avoid people stepping onto the carriageway.
- Segregated cycling on Princes Street would impact conditions for walking, wheeling and efficiency of public transport. George Street will provide a less congested alternative.
- Adding infrastructure to Waverley Bridge will limit network resilience.

### **Living Streets Edinburgh Group**

- Need effective enforcement of acoustic street performers. Amplified music should be banned.
- Do not understand "a city centre hopper bus, to improve operational efficiency and create a more balanced pedestrian environment" and would oppose such proposals.
- Addressing narrow pavements should be a top priority, especially on the south side.
- Signals at Waverley Bridge need to be reconfigured to not unnecessarily delay public transport.
- Cycle parking and tables and chairs must not impede pedestrian movement.
- Segregated cycleways and floating bus stops should not be installed as they will impact negatively on pedestrians and bus passengers.

- Use more safety cameras, especially at key junctions, to deter dangerous vehicle movements and improve safety cyclists and pedestrians.

### **Spokes**

- Support public realm proposals throughout. Include additional cycle parking.
- Investigate informal cycle access from Princes Street to Castle Street.
- Safety improvements must be made at junctions (including the West End per the Major Junctions Review and at The Mound) to avoid conflicts with tram. Early release lights, advisory signage and Tram safety guidance are of limited success due to compliance issues.
- Support pedestrianisation of Waverley Bridge and additional public realm. Recommend clear priority for the Waverley Bridge cycle link to avoid obstructions.
- Support cycle segregation at East End to resolve unpleasant and dangerous gap in the network and welcome re-introduction of a properly enforced bus gate. Support footway widening next to Waverley Market.
- Strongly support provision of segregated cycle lanes along full street, welcome opportunities to discuss options, such as the removal of some public service vehicles.
- Waverley Station Place Brief must increase cycle parking and quality bike access right into station. Include a 'Bike Hub' with secure parking, servicing, retail, information and bike hire etc.

### **InfraSisters**

- Follow Transport Scotland's updated Cycling by Design guidance and prioritise safe and comfortable on-road cycle infrastructure, which provides night-time cycling that's safe and comfortable for women and girls.
- For any changes to public space, the perspective of women and girls should be considered, as well as of other marginalised groups who experience public spaces differently.

### **Sustrans**

- Strategy generally looks pretty good. Would not support reduction in footway space to fit in cycle infrastructure. Happy with the plans overall and that it aligns to wider transport strategies and plans.

### **The Cockburn Association**

The Cockburn Association supports the Strategy for its coherent vision but urges decisive action to address the key challenges and ensure Edinburgh's historic core thrives.

Key concerns are retail decline – especially at the west end, a lack of unity to the New Town's architectural coherence, over-use of Princes Street Gardens for events and the need to align Council policies and departments whilst recognising the role of market forces.

The Association – recommend a range of short, medium and long-term actions.

Short-term actions could include:

- Western End Pilot (0-2 Years): Incentivise diverse retail/cultural uses by mid-2026 to reverse decline, countering hotel dominance with rates relief/grants.
- Station Plaza (2-5 Years): Transform Princes Mall into a civic-commercial hub by 2030, enhancing Waverley Station's gateway role.
- PSG Limits (0-2 Years): Cap major events at four annually by late 2025, prioritising ecological integrity.
- Heritage Focus (5-10 Years): Pilot recladding of a 1960s/70s infill site (e.g., former BHS) by 2035, with a PSWVS policy presumption for retaining Georgian upper-floor features.
- First New Town Strategy: Develop a destination framework to adapt to market shifts, balancing profit with public good via regulations and partnerships.
- Short-term actions would be followed by medium and long-term actions to implement climate resilience, deliver a pedestrian focussed streetscape with public transport only, and drive upper floor occupancy, alongside a First New Town destination strategy. This would be informed by an accessibility audit and additional analysis of upper floor uses and existing heritage features.
- Propose a Q3 2025 workshop to refine the vision.
- International examples are cited including Bruges (retail evolution), Amsterdam (pedestrian enhancement), Salzburg (civic space management) and Ljubljana (heritage restoration).
- Inclusion of the Waverley Station Masterplan would have enriched the consultation dialogue.
- Focus streetscape planning on the pedestrian experience, using uniform surfacing, and designs that reflect the New Town's neoclassical proportions, street furniture could disrupt pedestrian flow without tackling underlying issues.
- Cycling provision is welcome, however, its necessity is questioned given the CCWEL, a heritage compatibility assessment is advised.
- Prioritise Princes Street Garden's greenspace role, cap major events at four annually based on ecological capacity assessments. Support Ross Bandstand refurbishment but oppose increased event scale. Issue guidelines to protect its tranquillity.
- Integrate native planting and sustainable drainage into PSG and streetscapes, aligning with the 2030 Climate Strategy while respecting historical authenticity.
- Advocate additional research, existing Heritage Framework is a useful tool but lacks analysis of upper floors. Many retain Georgian features from the first-generation buildings which should be retained and restored.

## **New Town and Broughton Community Council (on behalf of Old Town and West End CCs)**

- Princes Street is urgently in need of a plan for regeneration and restoration and has become an embarrassment for residents and visitors.
- Priority should be regeneration and protection of Princes Street, better anticipating its likely commercial future while providing a clearer vision of what it should look like in the future.
- The Draft Strategy contains no vision and hence fails to qualify as a strategy. A strategy should lay out a developed and coherent idea of what Princes Street could look like in the future, grounded by its purpose in the City Centre.
- There needs to be consideration of what different involved parties want to see in the future — detailed analysis of what may inhibit, and what may facilitate change. Change will not be under exclusive control of the city council, so look at the other factors shaping the street's future.
- There is a need to consider what is happening in comparable cities to inform the vision and for a better grasp on the street's likely commercial future.
- The Draft Strategy lacks ambition and contains generic urban planning measures and should be more specific to Princes Street and its requirements.
- There is no prioritisation between the demands of retail and hotels, heritage and development, vibrancy and the natural environment, transport and tourism, pedestrian and cycling space, through traffic and destination traffic, buses and trams.
- The vision should be informed by a competition to reclaim the street's place as one of the world's great thoroughfares.
- The Draft Strategy lacks priorities and timescales. A new version is needed that gives priority to preserving, protecting and enhancing the built heritage.
- The Strategy needs re-thought, starting with a coherent vision for Princes Street, then adding the gardens, Waverley Station and city centre transport system to create a coherent city centre.
- Simple operational changes, such as the entrances to West Princes Street Gardens, should go forward as soon as possible.

## **National Galleries of Scotland**

- The outlined principles effectively support the historic integrity of the New Town. However, development must ensure continued access for essential cultural operations, including artwork transportation and deliveries.

### 3.4 Children and Young People



*Illustrations and mapping from engagement activities with children and young people*

#### Background

Engagement with Children and Young People involved a mix of approaches including games, quizzes and drawings for Primary pupils and group walkabouts and workshops for Secondary pupils. A specific session to consider the view of teenage girls was included to embed equity in place design and management. The following schools and year groups participated in these activities.

School	Year Group	Number of pupils
St Mary's RC Primary School	P2/P3	22
	P6/P7	23
Tollcross Primary School	P3	19
	P6/P7	21
Drummond High School	S1/S2	9
Leith Academy	S1/S2/S3	9
St Thomas of Aquins RC High School	S1/S2/S3	5
	S4/S5	7
Trinity Academy	S2/S3	4
Total Number of Students:		119

## Summary findings

There were many creative suggestions and interesting observations made by the children and young people. A summary of the key findings includes:

- **Buildings & Shops:** All groups wanted fewer tourist shops and more useful and diverse shops, directed to the local population. Empty buildings were a concern.
- **Public Spaces:** Supported public realm interventions, such as seating, greenery, and pedestrian-friendly design.
- **Mobility & Accessibility:** All groups agreed pavements need fixing, ramps should be improved, and pedestrian movement should be easier.
- **Gardens & Nature:** Valued Princes Street Gardens as a green space but wanted more amenities and activities for different age groups.
- **Safety & Comfort:** Secondary students were particularly concerned about safety linked to crowded areas.
- **Events & Attractions:** All groups suggested new attractions, including a hub for teenagers to socialise, community activities, cultural events, and recreational spaces.

### 3.5 Related Consultations

The following consultations are highlighted due to their relevance to the study area.

#### **Ross Bandstand – events and activities (5 Nov 2024 – 20 Dec 2024)**

Public consultation was carried out in November and December 2024 seeking feedback on future proposals for the operational use of the Ross Bandstand. Nearly 700 responses were received with the recommendation that the Council adopts a revised schedule for major events from 2026 onwards and continues to support a programme of ‘low-impact events’ taking place within the Ross Bandstand as part of the Summer Festivals in July and August.

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/ross-bandstand/>

#### **Waverley Bridge – Travelling Safely – City Centre Area ETRO/21/26A**

The results of the advertisement of the ETRO for the Travelling Safely City Centre schemes (including Waverley Bridge) were considered by the [Traffic Regulation Orders Sub-Committee on 12 May 2025](#). The measures on Waverley Bridge are proposed to be made into a permanent order for the purpose of reason (f) “for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs”.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Proposals ranked by level of support

An average score for each proposal was assigned for each response from 1 to 5; from strongly opposed to strongly supported. This gives an indication of which proposals overall have the highest level of support. 76/80 proposals were supported more than opposed. The table below shows the ranking and mean score for each of the proposed measures.

Rank	Proposal	Mean score
1	Waverley Station place brief - Respecting the station's historic building and its distinctive features such as the central Booking Hall, decorative ironwork and glazed roof.	4.58
2	Waverley Market - Retaining open views from Princes Street that reveal the city's skyline and buildings.	4.49
3	Enhancing Princes Street's buildings - Ensure shopfronts are well designed and tie in with the building above and adjacent	4.48
4	Waverley Station place brief - Retaining and improving publicly accessible toilets, outwith revenue protection barriers.	4.48
5	Waverley Market - Protecting public open space and making its design more welcoming for all.	4.47
6	Waverley Station place brief - Increasing the ease of access to the Station for people with disabilities, buggies or heavy luggage, simplifying level changes.	4.46
7	Waverley Station place brief - Making it easier to change between different types of public transport (rail/ bus/tram/taxi/cycle hire).	4.44
8	Waverley Market - Widening the south footway of Princes Street to reduce crowding.	4.39
9	Pop-up uses and construction - Keeping use of the street for construction activity to a minimum.	4.30
10	The East End - Making north-south pedestrian crossings easier	4.29
11	West Garden Links - New planting under the trees on the garden banking to support wildlife.	4.27
12	Space 1e General Register House - Improving paving and surfacing at the crossing of Princes Street and West Register Street.	4.26
13	Waverley Station place brief - Conserving and enhancing views from the city centre across the station's roofscape	4.32
14	Waverley Market - Balancing paving and planting to reflect the historic roof garden, support wildlife and adapt to climate change.	4.33
15	Waverley Market - Upgrading lighting to improve perceptions of safety after dark.	4.28
16	Space 1c The Mound Precinct - Introducing new, wide benches to provide space to sit and enjoy the views.	4.25
17	Waverley Market - Improving access for walking and wheeling, simplifying level changes to the space and Station.	4.24
18	Connecting Princes Street and Rose Street - Keeping existing links through buildings	4.23

19	East Market Street - Maintaining views through careful siting of buildings and design of their roofscape.	4.23
20	Use of upper storeys, roof design and visual impact - Using green roofs to manage surface water and enhance biodiversity in less visible roof areas.	4.22
21	Shaping the new public seating areas - Introducing new, wide benches to provide space to sit and enjoy the views.	4.19
22	Rethinking the Amphitheatre - Reconfiguring the amphitheatre to improve access and make the space usable outside of events.	4.18
23	The East End - Increasing pavement space for walking and wheeling	4.17
24	Waverley Station place brief - Retaining an internal civic walking and wheeling link between East Market Street and Princes Street, outwith revenue protection barriers	4.16
25	Enhancing Princes Street's buildings - Remove past changes that don't fit with the original design of historic buildings.	4.15
26	Pavement improvements - Explore use of rain gardens to improve drainage and enhance biodiversity	4.14
27	Waverley Station place brief - Providing more public space around the station to arrive/depart and sit, with a mix of paved and nature rich planting.	4.13
28	Use of upper storeys, roof design and visual impact - Adding entrance lobbies and lift and stair access to upper floors from Princes Street.	4.11
29	Waverley Station place brief - Minimising the impact of servicing the station on surrounding streets.	4.08
30	Enhancing Princes Street's buildings - Regular features on the ground floor to provide interest for people on street.	4.08
31	Pavement improvements - Resurface pavements in natural sandstone paving	4.08
32	Pop-up uses and construction - Wrap scaffolds with images of the building under construction or refurbishment.	4.08
33	Enhancing Princes Street's buildings - Ensure a paved stone entrance to tie in with pavement materials.	4.06
34	Pop-up uses and construction - Use of community artwork to cover hoardings at street level to create eye level interest.	4.06
35	West Garden Links - Providing new accessible ramp routes from Princes Street to the West Gardens.	4.05
36	West Garden Links - Restoring the central set of ramps as a historic example.	4.04
37	Enhancing Princes Street's buildings - Creating more welcoming entrances to buildings, adding awnings for shade and shelter	4.03
38	East Market Street - Creating new civic space and public gardens with street accessible gardens, street trees and rain gardens.	4.02
39	Use of upper storeys, roof design and visual impact - Integrating solar panels or heat pumps into the roof design, without adding additional rooftop enclosures.	4.02
40	Shaping the new public seating areas - rearrange street trading stances to open up the space.	3.98

41	Waverley Station place brief - Improving passenger facilities and the food and drink and retail offer for station users.	3.97
42	Waverley Station place brief - Providing a north-south walking, wheeling and cycling link across the east end of the valley, outwith revenue protection barriers.	3.96
43	Space 1d Waverley Bridge - Improved materials to redefine the road surface as pedestrian space and mark out cycle access.	3.96
44	Use of upper storeys, roof design and visual impact - Adding roof terraces behind low walls at the roof edge, avoiding railings or glass barriers.	3.94
45	The East End - Review provision of taxi pick-up/drop-off space	3.92
46	Use of upper storeys, roof design and visual impact - Balancing solid walls and windows on the building's front and rooftop to control light spillage at night.	3.90
47	West Garden Links - Carefully widening the entrance gates from Princes Street	3.90
48	Space 1e General Register House - Create a planted area and interpretation about the archives in General Register House	3.89
49	The East End - Review loading and servicing provision	3.88
50	Pop-up uses and construction - Use of premises for temporary 'Pop-Up' shops e.g. indoor markets or exhibitions.	3.88
51	Overview of new public seating areas - To what extent do you agree or disagree that these locations provide enough rest places along the length of Princes Street?	3.87
52	Upgrading the Bandstand - Keeping and improving the existing Ross Bandstand	3.84
53	East Market Street - Create a place which ties in with more recent development at The Arches and Waverley Court.	3.84
54	Activating the lanes - Enhance all of Princes Street's rear lanes	3.84
55	Space 1d Waverley Bridge - Introducing new, wide benches to provide space to sit and enjoy the views at the north end of Waverley Bridge.	3.82
56	West Garden Links - New formal entrance steps for people who prefer not to use ramps.	3.78
57	Existing wooden benches - Existing benches should be spaced out to provide regular rest points.	3.77
58	East Market Street - A mix of shops, food and drink premises, office buildings and other city centre facilities appropriate to the Station and Old Town.	3.75
59	Space 1e General Register House - Introducing new, wide benches to the west of the Wellington statue.	3.74
60	A revitalised Princes Street - The Draft Strategy will help to deliver a revitalised Princes Street.	3.72
61	Enhancing Princes Street's buildings - Replace unlisted buildings with new, net zero architecture, providing for a mix of uses.	3.71
62	Existing wooden benches - With agreement from donors, some benches could be moved to the Gardens or other public spaces.	3.66
63	A vibrant mix of uses - Ground floor food and drink use is improving the experience of visiting Princes Street?	3.64
64	The East End - Use of a bus gate to prioritise public transport by restricting general traffic	3.61

65	East Market Street - Introducing some buildings on the north side of East Market Street to improve the street's appeal and sense of safety.	3.61
66	Shaping the new public seating areas - Retaining space for loading/servicing but moving vehicle controls further to the north.	3.60
67	Waverley Station place brief - Providing additional secure cycle parking spaces in accessible locations.	3.56
68	Pavement improvements - re-organise street furniture and create clusters of cycle parking	3.51
69	Shaping the new public seating areas - Providing additional on street cycle parking in easily recognisable locations.	3.48
70	Shaping the new public seating areas - Providing a small public space for unplugged street performers.	3.43
71	Pavement improvements - Creation of a narrow table and chair zone where minimum pavement widths could be maintained	3.43
72	Space 1e General Register House - Providing additional on street cycle parking in easily recognisable locations.	3.34
73	The East End - Adding segregated cycle lanes to connect between George Street, Waverley Bridge, North Bridge and Leith Street	3.29
74	Prioritise improvements to the front of Princes Street and Rose Street only	3.26
75	Connecting Princes Street and Rose Street - Linking the corner buildings on Princes Street to the ends of Rose Street Lane South	3.25
76	Upgrading the Bandstand - Replacing the Bandstand with a new building	3.16
77	Cycling - Segregated cycle lanes at the west and east end of Princes Street to link the cycle network but elsewhere on Princes Street to prioritise pavement space for walking and wheeling	2.90
78	Activating the lanes - Improve rear lanes at the west end of Princes Street only	2.75
79	Connecting Princes Street and Rose Street - Bridging over or under Rose Street South Lane	2.70
80	Cycling - Segregated cycle lanes along the full length of Princes Street, reducing some space for walking and wheeling on the north pavement	2.26

## Appendix 2: Communications evaluation

### Social media

The table below lists the responses to social media posts undertaken as part of the promotion of the consultation activity and provides links to these.

#### FB 21 November

11.3k views  
7.2k reach  
67 link clicks  
52 comments  
12 positive reactions  
12 negative reactions  
5 shares (which extend the reach)

#### FB 18 February

20.3k views  
14.6k reach  
181 link clicks  
66 comments  
27 positive reactions  
10 negative reactions  
7 shares (which extend the reach)

#### X 13 January

70,800 views  
110 comments  
59 shares (which extend the reach)  
50 likes

#### FB 12 January

13.1k views  
8.3k views  
90 link clicks  
38 comments  
9 positive reactions  
17 negative reactions  
10 shares (which extend the reach)

#### X 21 November

10k views  
22 comments  
10 shares (which extend the reach)  
9 likes

#### X 18 February

2.2k views  
6 comments  
2 shares (which extend the reach)  
6 likes

### Facebook adverts

Paid for post promoting the online consultation (this gets beyond our followers on Facebook so takes it to a wider audience). Running from 22 Jan to 20 Feb this received:

- 77k reach
- 118k impressions
- 368 link clicks
- 55 reactions
- 41 comments

### Nextdoor community app

Several posts were made via this app to promote drop in events and the online consultation with approx. 11k impressions.

### News Media releases

Print and online media news releases can be viewed by the following links:

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/14060/a-bold-new-vision-for-princes-street-and-waverley-valley>

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/14110/have-your-say-on-ambitious-vision-for-edinburgh-s-city-centre>

[Deadline News on X](#)

[Deadline news](#) – 18 February, [Deadline News](#) – 13 December

[Evening News](#) – 3 September

[Scottish Construction Now](#) – 22 November

[Edinburgh Live](#) – 18 February

## **Print**

An A5 flier was distributed to around 2,400 businesses and residents within and around the project area to raise awareness of the online survey and drop-in events.

## **Key Partner / Stakeholder Organisations - Communications**

Further information sharing and promotion of the survey was carried out via Edinburgh Tourism Action Group, the Federation of Small Businesses Scotland and Edinburgh Partnership e.g.

Email to ETAG members - <https://www.etag.org.uk/about-us/etag-full-group/>.

X post - [https://x.com/ETAG\\_UK/status/1890354952641429794](https://x.com/ETAG_UK/status/1890354952641429794)

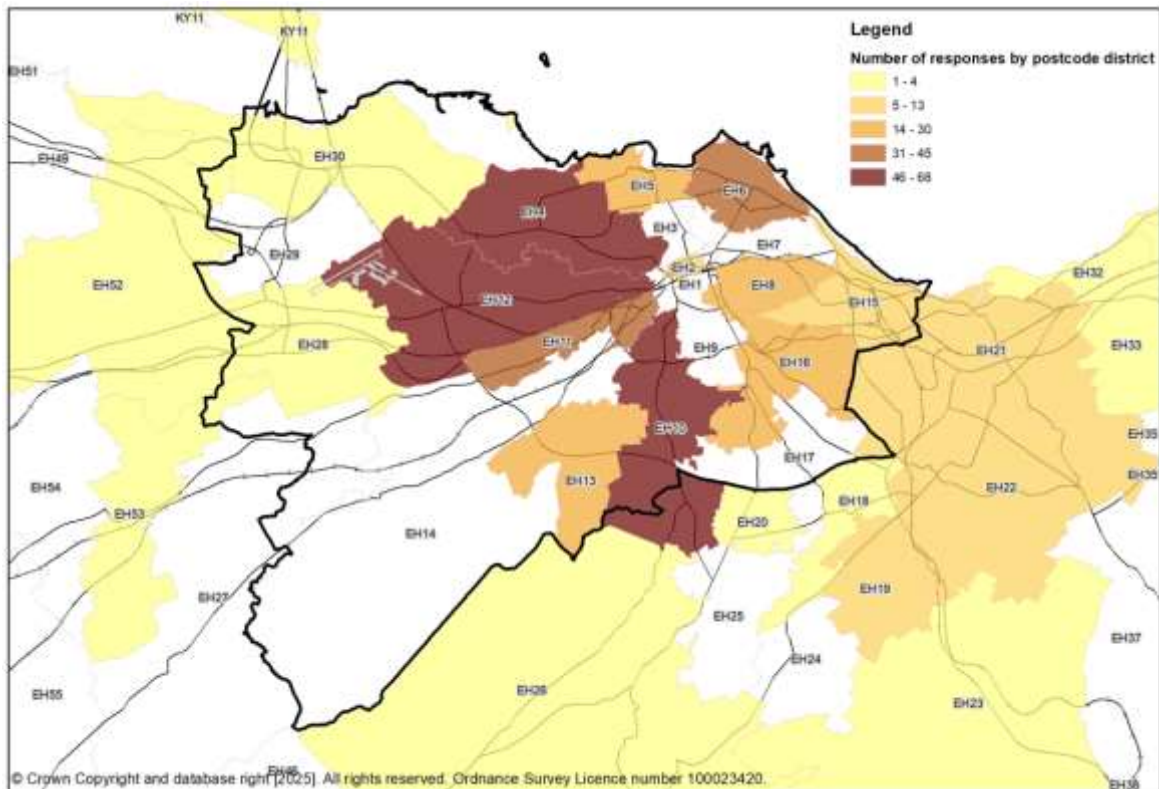
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7296122834915852289>

Website 'hero panel': <https://www.etag.org.uk/>.

## Appendix 3: Demographic information

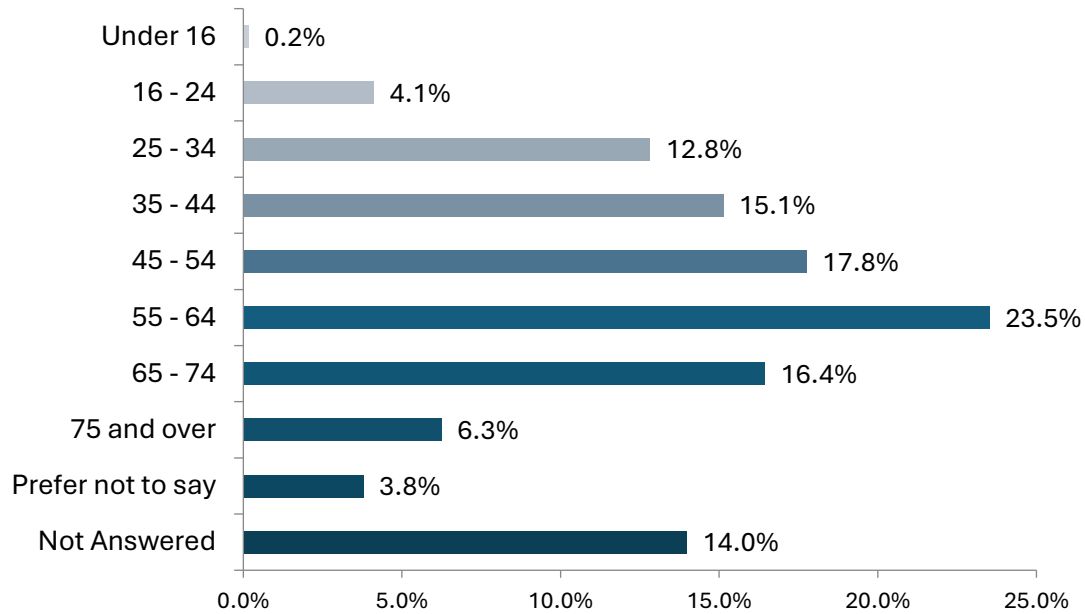
### Number of Responses by EH Postcode District

This map below illustrates the number of responses received by Edinburgh postcode district. Most responses came from the Council Area and surrounding towns. A small number of responses were received from the Falkirk, Kirkcaldy, Perth and Kinross, Glasgow, Paisley, Tweeddale, and Glasgow postcode districts as well as the rest of the UK.



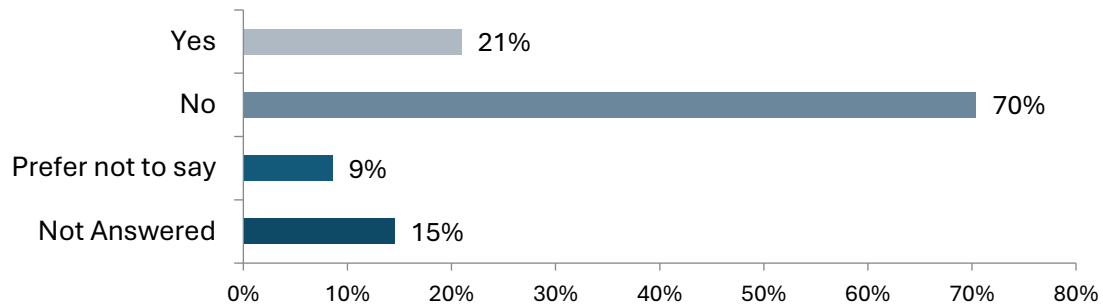
## What is your age?

There were 608 responses to this part of the question.



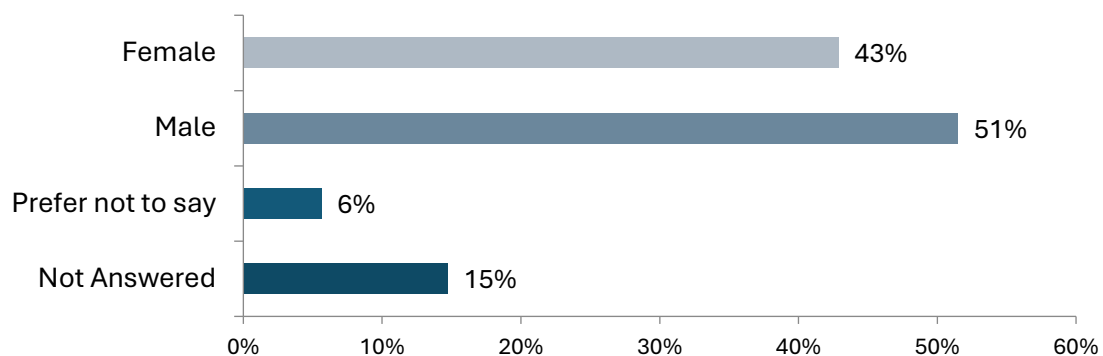
## Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

There were 605 responses to this part of the question.



## What is your sex?

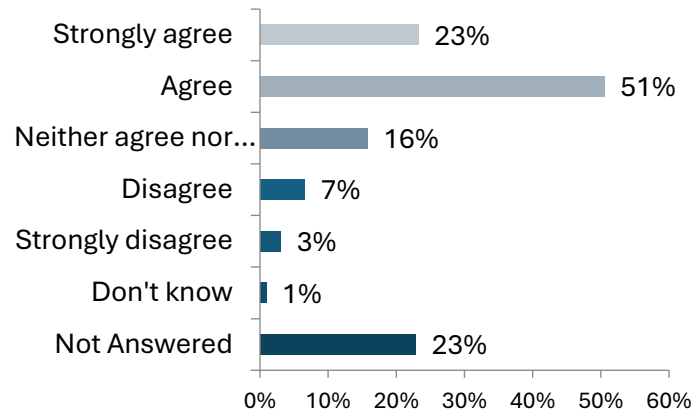
There were 604 responses to this part of the question.



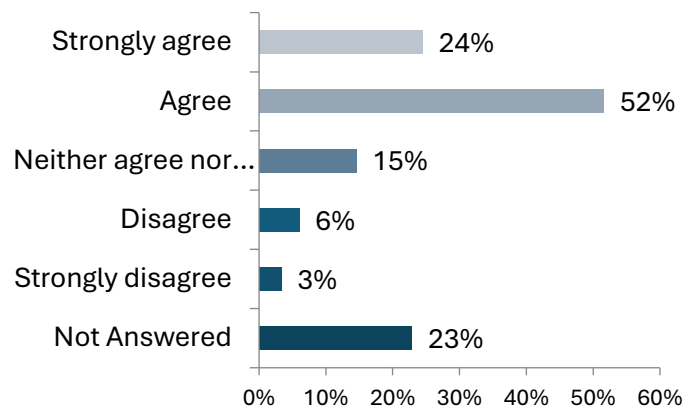
## Appendix 4: Feedback on the consultation activity

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about this consultation activity?

*I was given all the information that I needed to have my say.* There were 564 responses.



*Consultation activity was clear and easy to understand.*



*I was given the opportunity to have my say.*

