

Draft Festival City Vision To 2030

[August 2021]

The view from 2020

Edinburgh's international festivals are committed to developing Scotland's capital as a beacon of creative and intellectual excellence for the new future that societies worldwide must create. Our festivals will do this by connecting local with global as we bring together people and ideas to nurture the human spirit. To realise a truly sustainable future, all those who can lead change need to join forces and help address the key challenges – securing Edinburgh's world leading festival city for the generations to come.

Our past, present and future

Facing the global challenges of our time, people are more interdependent than ever before - and culture goes to the heart of what connects us.

The ability of the Edinburgh Festivals to connect people and ideas at local, national and international levels is a rare asset that thrives on constant reimagination. Edinburgh, Scotland and the UK are rightly proud of our city's festivals heritage – generations of citizens have taken part in inspiring new experiences, and the festivals in turn have shown us as pioneers in contemporary creativity on a citywide and national scale.

We all know that the world is changing faster than ever - even before the global pandemic crisis of 2020 - and that yet deeper challenges to wellbeing, livelihoods, intercultural understanding and the health of our planet will face us in the years to come. The way people are now being drawn to culture to find meaning, joy and balance in their lives echoes the founding spirit of the festivals after World War Two. Now is the time to map out how Edinburgh needs to future proof our world-leading festival city so we can be at the forefront of leading positive change.

There is no returning to the status quo: rather a transition to a new future is needed, with solidarity and sustainability as guiding values. Success means achieving a balance of cultural, social, economic and environmental sustainability. For a thriving future, the festivals want to be able to do even more to support people's quality of life and social bonds.

At the same time Edinburgh's Festivals have a vital role to play in helping to restore a healthy economy across the city and wider region, to offer rewarding work and share the opportunities and benefits widely. Sustaining Edinburgh's place as host to a reimagined world-class festivals cluster will also deliver nationwide benefits for wellbeing and creative work, and help to rebuild the global standing of our city and nation through a new internationalism.

Thanks to world-leading collaboration across festivals and partners, we have a unique opportunity to address many complex challenges shared by cultural capitals worldwide. By nurturing distinctive, inclusive, sustainable and outward-looking festivals, we will bring people together to champion the human connections that can help people navigate the unknown in our disrupted and potentially destructive age.

Key development principles for 2030

This draft Vision comprises eight development principles, reflecting different dimensions of excellence in how a world-leading sustainable festival city could look and feel by the year 2030. The draft vision aims to function as a statement of shared ambitions to assist collaborative thinking and action, recognising that many players have responsibility for different dimensions of development and decisions of course lie with the properly mandated authorities. Should resources be secured to

move towards this vision, the principles identify the headlines of a programme of innovation, future proofing and leadership across sectors and agencies, to address key needs and serve as a model for the vital role culture will play in sustainable city futures.

This draft Vision is both rooted in the festivals' own sense of their role and purpose, and seeks to take account of common ground with public policy and the plans and interests of stakeholders at all levels of the festivals' work - most centrally at the time of writing:

- The City of Edinburgh's 2050 City Vision principles of a Welcoming, Thriving, Fair and Pioneering City; its economic strategy of enabling good growth through inclusion and innovation and supporting Edinburgh's transition to a low carbon economy; and the post-Covid Adaptation and Renewal Programme priorities of addressing sustainability, wellbeing and poverty in line with the findings of the Poverty Commission
- The three ambitions in the Culture Strategy for Scotland of strengthening culture as a diverse, positive force in society/ transforming Scotland's wellbeing and cultural, social, economic and environmental prosperity through culture/ empowering through culture as part of every community; and Scotland's strategy of responsible tourism for a sustainable future
- Reserved UK Government policies in areas including international relations, cultural exports, industrial strategy innovations and infrastructure developments
- International shared values and commitments such as the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

The draft principles below provide an agenda for partnership working between the festivals and city and national partners to influence the positive changes identified as crucial to the future success of our city and Scotland's cultural capital. New models of alternative investment and support will be needed if we are to rise to this challenge. The outcomes and enablers set out here form the next phase of collaborative leadership across Edinburgh's Festivals, the City of Edinburgh Council and Festivals Forum stakeholders to unlock these opportunities.



Next Steps

This draft Vision statement, and its associated 'principles', will now form the basis of a series of discussions with representatives bodies - including the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils, Creative Edinburgh and the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce - with the resulting plan replacing Thundering Hooves 2.0, the earlier strategy written in 2015.

If, in advance of any such discussions, you would like to send us any comments on the draft Vision please email us on info@festivalsedinburgh.com - and we will ensure that all such comments are fed in to the process.