

# Meadows to George Street

## Streets for People



### Stage 1 Engagement Summary, Summer 2018

The Meadows to George Street project aims to transform the quality of walking, cycling, accessibility for all and public spaces on some of Edinburgh's busiest streets: Hanover Street, the Mound, Bank Street, George IV Bridge, Forrest Road, Bristo Place and Teviot Place.

These streets, which link the Meadows to George Street, play an important role in the lives of the many who use them for work, leisure and for everyday journeys.

The project will build upon the Council's Active Travel Action plan, the emerging City Centre Transformation Project and integrates with the George Street and First New Town project at Hanover Street. Meadows to George Street is one of the winners of Sustrans Scotland's 2017 Community Links PLUS design competition funded by the Scottish Government.

The project team is led by City of Edinburgh Council, together with input from Sustrans and project consultants, AECOM and OPEN.

#### **Stage 1 Engagement – Listening and Discussing**

The first stage of this project ran from June 2018 until 21 September 2018. During this stage, the project team gathered the views and perspectives of the public who live around and travel on these streets as well as organisations and businesses on-route, and organisations in the City who interact with the route.



### What did organisations with an interest in the route tell us?

The status of these streets within the **World Heritage Site must be an important consideration** in this project. **Access for all must also guide the project proposals**, with some disabled people currently feeling excluded from parts of Edinburgh's Old Town due to the built environment. The streets are busy with multiple transport uses, and are **well-used by taxis and buses**. **Better provision for pedestrians and people on bikes** is desired by local campaign groups. The needs of older people should also be a key consideration in the project.

### What did businesses and organisations on-route tell us?

There is a range of businesses and organisations along the route, of varying sizes and function. The streets are of **substantial value to Edinburgh's tourism business and provide access to many venues** across Edinburgh's Festivals as well as **some of Scotland's biggest visitor attractions**. Some of these attractions continue to develop and expand, such as the Scottish National Gallery, and visitors are forecast to increase in future years. The University of Edinburgh also aspires to more **staff and students travelling by bike in the future**. Many of the smaller businesses along the route depend on **loading access directly from the streets** in this project, whilst some of the organisations are serviced from streets off the Cowgate and Victoria Street. Many expressed concerns over the rising volumes of people on footways, and are concerned about road safety issues.

### What did visitors tell us?

Visitors expressed **admiration for the streets** in the project area, with many commenting on the historic nature of the area. Many noted **how busy the streets were, particularly with road traffic**, and commented on the **lack of cycling infrastructure**. The **lack of space and clutter on the pavements** was mentioned frequently.

### Initial project objectives

A set of objectives for the project have been developed in Stage 1 which take account of the Community Links Plus programme and what people have told us. These may be further adapted in Stage 2 of the project.

- A place for people - enlarge and improve the pedestrian space, creating a safe, vibrant place for people to live in and for all to enjoy
- Strengthen the qualities of these streets for people, in ways which respect and enrich the World Heritage Site
- Sustainable and inclusive transport - prioritise dedicated space for walking and cycling, access for people with a disability or impairment, and retain public transport access
- Resilient and adaptable space - a street design that can accommodate the changing needs of these streets by season, time of day and future years' requirements
- A thriving economy - enhance the streets as places where visitor destinations and businesses of all sizes can prosper

### Next steps

The next stage of the Meadows to George Street: Streets for People project is Stage 2: Optioneering. In this stage, concepts will be developed that respond to the objectives of the project and the Community Links Plus programme, and further consultation work will take place.