



West Princes Street Gardens

Cockburn comments on outcome of public consultation

The Cockburn Association welcomes the findings of the public consultation on West Princes Street Gardens.

We welcome the commitment to retain the operation and management of this key public asset by the publicly-accountable local authority. In this, we believe that much needs to be done to ensure open, transparent decision-making in the context of the Ross Development Trust proposals and recommend that a “Users Forum” be established to assist the Council in this.

We welcome the opportunity to improve access to the Gardens for all.

We welcome the recognition of the need to protect the tranquil nature of the Gardens and their importance as a place for enjoyment and relaxation. We look forward to possible future discussions in this regard, noting the commitment to the Parks Manifesto. The Cockburn believes that further work will be needed on this, together with a robust monitoring regime.

We support the need to develop a robust business plan for the developments. This must to be available for public scrutiny and comment before it is approved. The Operational Delivery Plan should form part of this and be open for public scrutiny as well. We also note the need for further clarity and information on the design proposals and believe that moving towards RIBA Stage three - Developed Design will be important to provide clarity.

Additional Points and Issues

A tranquil place for enjoyment and relaxation is clearly how the public see West Princes Street Gardens. Further research is needed to assist decision-making. For example, 12% thought that enhanced experiences should be a role for WPSG, but it is not clear what these experiences should be (horticultural, infrastructural, etc). We note the support for the new Pavilion (34%) and improved access (32%) and whilst interesting, it is clear that there is no conclusive overall preference for any particular aspect of the proposals.

Similarly, further research would be beneficial to understand the improvements to current infrastructure - 59% thought agreed the further investment is required but it is not possible to infer detailed support for specific elements from this.

The increased use of the Gardens for major activities is not supported. In this, there remains a lack of clarity as to the meaning of “major activities”. For example, the current Summer Sessions concerts comprises several events over an extended period (c.2.5 - 3 weeks). To define this as a single event could cause access issues – 5 multiple activities with a defined duration of this extent might mean significant impact for a quarter of a year. This should be made explicitly clear in the business plan and in the Parks Manifesto.

END 11 October 2018