Edinburgh is the seventh most populous city in Britain and the second largest financial center after London. It’s also well-known for education, particularly in the fields of medicine, Scottish law, literature, the sciences and engineering.

Edinburgh is a city people are proud to live in, with its wealth of heritage, beautiful parks, renowned events and culture, tourism and a good social life. There is underlyng confidence: the city center is still hugely attractive and developments are snapped up, and the central areas are steadily being rejuvenated. It’s the seventh most populous city in Britain and the second largest financial center after London. Edinburgh’s education sector and institutions are renowned, particularly in the fields of medicine, Scottish law, literature, the sciences and engineering. Its high level of education is linked to its success, attracting investment in fields such as biomedical science, but that very success brings its own challenges: house prices are high and demand exceeds supply, making Edinburgh the second most expensive place to live in Britain and challenging for political ambitions to achieve greater equality.

The City of Edinburgh Council (EEC) has a vision for the future and a plan to achieve its vision. Realizing this vision requires significant private sector involvement, which may constrain how readily Edinburgh can adapt to future challenges. The condition of some infrastructure, such as roads, needs urgent investment, like in other areas across the country.

Targets for development are ambitious, but access to funding is limited, a consideration when assessing the strategies in place. As the city expands, council support systems are coming under strain and many schools are already over capacity.

In 2017 the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region secured a CAD1.8 billion City Region Deal from the United Kingdom (UK) and Scottish Governments, signed off in 2018, to drive investment and address inclusion across the area. With its commitments to a regional skills program, to investment in innovation centers, key road and transport improvements, and to new funding for housing to unlock strategic development sites, fulfilling it involves universities, government and industry working in partnership.

Local authorities typically only have a 10- to 15- year plan, shorter than this review’s 2035 horizon. However, Edinburgh is a member authority of SESplan, the Strategic Development Planning Authority for Edinburgh and South East Scotland, which has published the strategy for how Edinburgh and the area around it will grow to 2030 and beyond, highlighting how this city region will be easier to move around and provide better public transport options.

Significant proportions of funding for longer-term infrastructure, particularly transport infrastructure to enable development, must be from national public bodies, such as the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland.

The tram system, opened in 2014, has proved popular – indeed, extra capacity is already needed at peak periods. There are extension proposals that will unlock a major regeneration area. Edinburgh also enjoys one of the best bus services in the country, controlled mainly by the city council. Congestion remains, however, a growing challenge.

Impacts of the megatrends surrounding climate change, societal change, technology and resource depletion are likely to exacerbate the challenges faced by the city. The Edinburgh Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan focuses on the risks of flooding, but there appears less focus on those caused by rising temperatures.

As house prices force younger people to move out of the city center, the city’s age profile is likely to change in the lead-up to 2035. The demographic is expected to ‘age’ dramatically; those aged over 65 and 85 will increase by 52 per cent and 82 per cent respectively.
CITY ASSESSMENT

PLACES 6.5/10

HOUSING SCORE: 7.5 / 10

The need to develop affordable housing is addressed in Edinburgh's Local Development Plan (LDP), a strategy adopted in 2016 to increase affordable housing by 25 per cent. It was built on in the city's latest housing strategy, published this year, which acknowledges the forecast long-term population increase (nearly 27 per cent by 2051) and pledges CAD5.2 billion towards housing development in the city. It includes a commitment to building 50,000 affordable houses by 2020. There is funding to back this strategy, although its progress is unclear.

The city encourages compact development because it is surrounded by a green belt. Whilst this area faces pressures from the need to build housing, it remains protected by planning regulations. Amenities are considered in current housing design standards, such as the Edinburgh Design Guidance and Edinburgh Standards for Housing documents.

PUBLIC REALM SCORE: 6.8 / 10

The public is well catered for in the city center tourist areas. There is plenty of green space and the city is well-connected out from the center. Traffic, air quality and noise pollution are problems. The council has introduced a blanket 20 mph zone throughout much of the city center to improve the situation. It has also announced a 'car-free Sunday' pilot which will close Tram services are good, although extensions are announced a 'car-free Sunday' pilot which will close

URBAN GREEN SPACE SCORE: 6.0 / 10

Edinburgh's urban green space strategy is set out in a section of the LDP and aims to protect, promote and enhance the value of the green network through various policies. It includes 11 areas where green space proposals are in place, indicating how Edinburgh is aiming to expand the network.

The plan mentions the importance of ensuring development does not increase flood risk, although streets are not specifically considered. It also discusses local nature reserves, but there is no mention of extending these areas.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE SCORE: 5.0 / 10

Edinburgh has a high percentage of private schools, a continuing feature that reflects the city's wealth. Its citizens are unusually well educated: of UK cities it has the third highest percentage of residents with high-level qualifications, behind only Cambridge and Oxford. Its hi-tech industries contribute significantly to Scotland's GDP but that success makes housing more expensive: a challenge for political ambitions for social inclusion and equality.

Edinburgh's LDP mentions schools and healthcare provision as part of the strategy for social infrastructure. Future school locations are determined through an assessment of proposed housing growth and existing schools. Planning permission for some of these schools has been granted, although funding might not be sufficient for the 10 schools proposed. The future expansion of Herriot-Watt University is mooted. Demand pressures on healthcare will be higher with an increased population. The LDP outlines that Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian will work in partnership to adjust existing healthcare facilities, which could mean providing services in a different way or providing new facilities. Primary healthcare provision is mentioned in the LDP, which says that the Edinburgh Council will work in partnership with NHS Lothian to identify actions to meet future demand. Similarly, the LDP mentions child nursery facility development as part of the International Business Gateway.
Public institutions and expanded cultural assets are also included in the LDP, including the development of a new public library at the Craigmiller regeneration site. However, there is no overall strategy in place.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**SCORE: 7.3 / 10**

The Edinburgh Adapts Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan looks to create a climate ready Edinburgh. It sets out a comprehensive package of resilience—increasing measures to implement up to 2020. Inevitably, with such a short timeframe, this does not address the levels of change expected by 2050, although it does recognize what changes are likely to occur. Actions identified focus on awareness raising and place, although the plan doesn’t cover financing to achieve it.

The plan also reviews Edinburgh’s vulnerability to weather-related risks, building on the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 Evidence Report, which also covers Edinburgh in detail. Some projects and actions discussed in the framework have been funded and are under way, and most of these are related to the risks caused by flooding. There is less focus on the risk of overheating, which is less understood and for which funding is harder to obtain. Most of the measures are listed as ongoing, although the plan only maps actions up until 2020 with no indication of further implementation.

As a part of the wider Edinburgh Partnership, the plan also considers more long-term resilience of the city in terms of both the economy and social resilience. As part of it, the Resilient Communities scheme works to encourage greater community cohesion in resisting the impacts of climate change.

Some projects are already under way as part of the Sustainable Energy Action Plan through the Covenant of Mayors to reduce the city’s reliance on carbon intensive energy. A successful application for Salix funding in 2013 secured about CAD2.1 million to replace 7,200 street light units with more energy intensive energy. Transport for Edinburgh recognizes the transport demands the city’s quickly growing population will impose up into the 2040s. From a present of increasing congestion and fragility and reduced public spending it will make an impact on the intensive collaboration and cooperation across agencies needed to improve mobility, including integration of bus, tram and other transport modes, increasing modal shift to public transport, and establishing active travel infrastructure. Funding is a challenge, increasing the need for private sector involvement.

Planning applications for new developments must have a transport assessment to ensure the maximum feasible sustainable transport access. At the same time, the strategy directs new housing developments to sites that meet a range of criteria, including accessibility to public transport.

Edinburgh already has a remarkable bus network, with high bus usage, and is a rare example of a city with a publicly owned bus service that has managed to maintain its bus patronage. The routes network is under review as demand for radial movements is increasing.

The city’s transport strategy aims to improve interchange facilities and increased integration and coordination. This includes a new interchange being built at Haymarket and strong support for coordinated ticketing.

The tram system currently connects the city center and the airport to the west, and although it has spare seats for much of the day, it runs at capacity in peak times. Plans for enhancing provision and extending the tramline are being taken forward, with future routes safeguarded, but are not expected to occur for a while. Plans for the eventual extension of the High Speed 2 railway north from England to Edinburgh (and a high-speed line to Glasgow) are now being taken up by central government in Scotland, and capacity at Edinburgh Waverley Station is being enhanced for increased demand.

### MOBILITY

**SCORE: 5.7 / 10**

### INFRASTRUCTURE: PUBLIC TRANSIT

**SCORE: 6.5 / 10**

Edinburgh’s transport vision targets that by 2040 the transport system will be one of the greenest, healthiest and most accessible in northern Europe. Transport for Edinburgh recognizes the transport demands the city’s quickly growing population will impose up into the 2040s. From a present of increasing congestion and fragility and reduced public spending it will make an impact on the intensive collaboration and cooperation across agencies needed to improve mobility, including integration of bus, tram and other transport modes, increasing modal shift to public transport, and establishing active travel infrastructure. Funding is a challenge, increasing the need for private sector involvement.

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### LOGISTICS AND FREIGHT PRODUCTIVITY

**SCORE: 3.8 / 10**

The freight strategy in Vision 2030 mentions the possibility of consolidation hubs, although Edinburgh’s transport strategy states that this is not feasible because of high costs and lack of similar examples. The movement of freight from road to rail and sea is also supported. It is important to safeguard these routes.

### GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY

**SCORE: 5.7 / 10**

International flights from Edinburgh airport are expected to continue increasing. The strategy focuses on improving the airport’s accessibility through developing a gateway from the terminal to the tram stop and a park-and-ride facility.

Rail freight through the port of Leith has decreased and plans for tram extension to improve the accessibility of the docks are mentioned.

### INFRASTRUCTURE: PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLING

**SCORE: 7.8 / 10**

Edinburgh’s cycle path strategy involves CAD21 million for two new routes. The cycle path network is considered in the LDP, the QuietRoutes initiative and a specific Cycle Action Plan in the Active Travel Plan, which aims for cycling to make up 15 per cent of trips. Edinburgh also recognizes the importance of cycle parking, resulting in required levels of storage in new developments, and the bike-and-go scheme.

An extensive pedestrian network is already in place. Expansions are considered as well as increased coverage of 20 mph zones following a successful pilot. However, funds are limited for the improvement of existing facilities. Funding contributions from developers are sought for any new facilities.

### BUILT FORM: PARKING PROVISIONS

**SCORE: 5.0 / 10**

Parking options in Edinburgh include extending zones, increasing prices, varying permit charges on vehicle emissions and giving parking guidance on limits for new developments. The city recognizes that a decrease in parking provision needs to occur where accessibility to public transport is highest so 24-hour restrictions can be introduced.

### FUTURE MOBILITY: SERVICES

**SCORE: 6.0 / 10**

Edinburgh’s Transport 2030 Vision briefly aims to improve demand-responsive transport and measures to encourage ride-sharing by giving priority to high-occupancy vehicles on the city bypass and motorway network. However, this strategy will not be undertaken in the city center because public transport accessibility is high.

### FUTURE MOBILITY: TECHNOLOGY

**SCORE: 5.3 / 10**

Investment in charging infrastructure in residential areas between 2020 and 2023 should improve this network for electric vehicles. It is not clear if targets will meet demand as there are only 89 charging points in Edinburgh, 58 of which are available to the public. Codeplay, based in Edinburgh, is investing in driverless car technology, although the council has no overall strategy for the rollout of this technology.
Edinburgh has committed to and funded a 10-year plan for implementation and investment through an accompanying Growth Fund.

The city has one of the highest percentages — 83 per cent — of households connected to ultra-fast broadband. Edinburgh is now included in the first phase of BT Openreach’s Fiber First program, which is tied to Britain’s national Digital Infrastructure Investment Fund (DIIF).

Vodafone has a strategy that supports the national push. This fund aims to increase the number of homes with fiber-to-the-premises services in Britain. Although this strategy has funding from the Treasury, the strategy lags behind other European cities and critics argue that the funding is insufficient.

Edinburgh’s Sustainable Energy Action Plan includes goals of 30 per cent of overall energy demand met by renewables by 2020 and 100 per cent of gross electricity demand from renewables by 2030. It does not include clear strategies to achieve this target.

Some renewable projects are being funded to help increase the renewables proportion of the energy mix, including the Edinburgh Community Solar Cooperative SolarPV project using 25 council buildings, a review of potential sites for solar farms including unused council lands and former landfill sites, exploring the potential for large scale application of PV for car parking and hydrogen combined heat and power systems installed in six locations. The council is also funding the first phase of redevelopment of Soutghton Park, which includes a micro-hydro scheme at Saughton Weir.

Projects for smart grids include the Smart Meter Street that aims to trial smart meters to demonstrate how energy can be saved. The first phase is funded. The council has set up Energy for Edinburgh, an energy services company that will be charged with delivery of major energy initiatives included in the Sustainable Energy Action Plan.

Scottish Water provides Edinburgh’s water supply and has a CAD6.1 billion 2015 to 2021 investment program that involves working in partnership with three new alliances to deliver improvements to existing assets. The LDP highlights that developers must consider water resources to prevent development in areas with inadequate water supply.

Marchbank Water Treatment Plant recycles washwater. Scottish Water generates renewable electricity at several sites with plans to pilot the use of waste heat from sewage pipes. The new water treatment works at Glenconse in Midlothian has modern treatment processes and a capacity of 175 million litres daily. Whether this can cater for the growing population remains unclear.

Edinburgh’s Zero Waste Project aims to build specific facilities for waste treatment, including waste to energy and an anaerobic digestion-of-food waste plant, which is being built.

Although there are no specific bans on waste in place and no framework for waste reuse, recycling is encouraged with an overall aim of 70 per cent of waste recycled and less than 5 per cent of waste to landfill by 2025. Similarly, there are no clear plans for landfill remediation in Edinburgh. Planning permission for new landfill sites will not be granted.