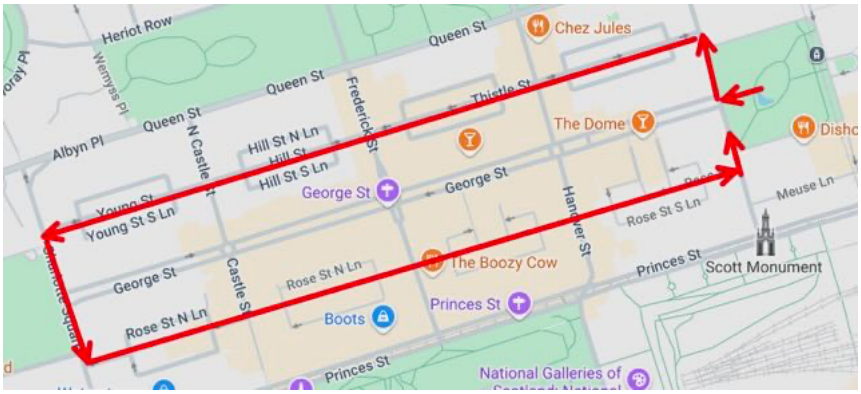
NTBCC

NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Notes from the NTBCC Walkabout of the First New Town on 28 October 2024

Four NTBCC Community Councillors and two members of the public undertook a planned walk along certain streets of the First New Town following the route shown in the map below on Monday 28 October 2024.



We identified a number of issues worthy of note and further action.

1. Commercial Waste

Several of the lanes along our route were being used for commercial waste bins. Many of these were overflowing and had other waste beside them. These were unsightly and adversely impacted the public realm and setting of the listed buildings within the World Heritage Site.

It is not clear who ensures the timely collection of this waste and the general upkeep of these areas. Some commercial bins were located on pavements and in locations marked with double yellow lines creating obstacles for pedestrians and vehicles.

2. Setted Roads

Many of the roads along our route were setted and most were in very poor condition with evidence of temporary patching or poor repairs associated with utility works. It is not clear who ensures that the utility companies undertake proper repairs especially when there is a subsequent failure of initial repairs.

There was also evidence of collapsed drains resulting in widespread subsidence of the road surface. Again, it is not clear who is monitoring the road surfaces and ensuring that repairs of the drains is undertaken before the damage to the road surface becomes severe.

3. Charlotte Square

We only looked at the temporary active travel measures on the east side of the square. These are not fully operational creating hazards for pedestrians and cyclists wishing to cross Charlotte Street. Clearly a lot of money has been spent on these temporary measures which appear to be very permanent.

It is not clear why the additional pedestrian space has been created on the east side of Charlotte Street given the existing width of this pavement. It does however prevent loading/unloading operations in this area with the potential to create additional congestion. The overall justification for these works, if they are indeed temporary and what it has cost for this work should all be clarified.

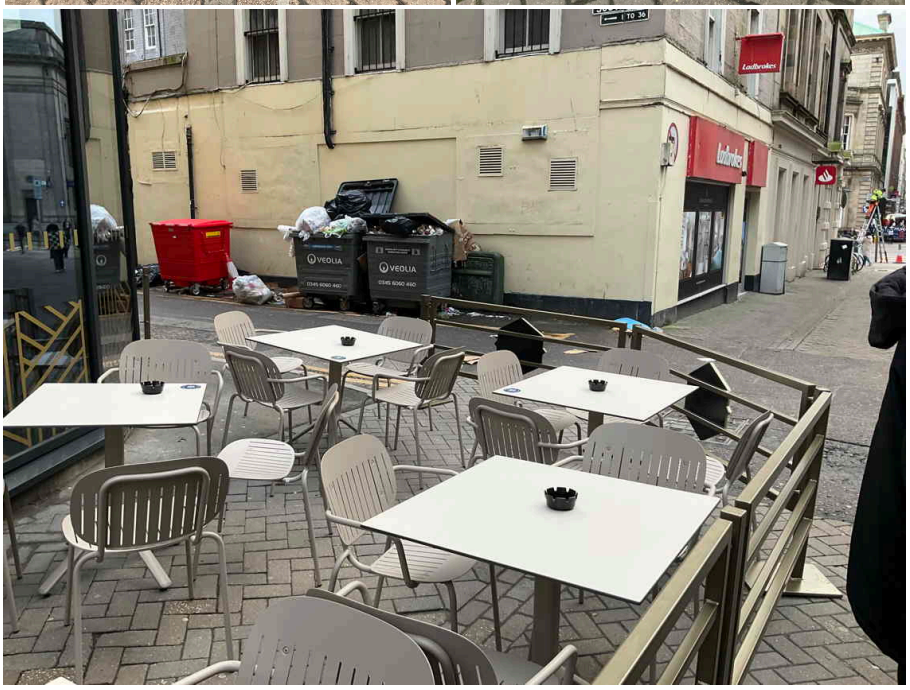
4. Continuous Footpaths

We noted several continuous footpaths had been installed on streets crossing Rose Street. None of these has tactile paving in place to alert visually impaired pedestrians that they are crossing road ways. Given that this work is relatively recent to what extent does it comply with the current guidance in Edinburgh Street Design Guidance, or the commitments made to improve accessibility of our public realm?

5. Rose Street

There are a large number of temporary repairs to the paving along this street including some that are hazardous. Again, these repairs appear to be associated with utility works. This issue was raised at a NTBCC meeting earlier this year and at the

time we were advised that the Council were trying to expedite some repairs by the utility companies. It would be worth getting an update on this work.
On a wider issue, the general state of the area was poor with several overflowing bins, uncared for planters and graffiti along the street some of which has been pedestrianised. This does not reflect well on the City or on the businesses operating along the street. As with other areas it is not clear who is responsible for making sure these issues are addressed.



6. Graffiti

We noted low-level graffiti along all the streets, with one notable exception, almost all of it on utility cabinets. This gives a drab, unkempt atmosphere to the street. Overpainting on metal to remove the tagging is quick and easy to do, so we would hope the utility companies would do this on a regular basis. Again, it is not clear who is responsible for making this happen.

NTBCC, 6 November 2024