Responding to the consultation on the outline strategic plan for Holyrood Park    
The online survey guides you through a series of questions, but we have grouped our suggestions under the main themes of the consultation.  
  
1.  How do people currently use the Park?  
Please respond as an individual to let HES know how you enjoy Holyrood Park and how often you visit.  
  
2.  What do people perceive the current issues and priorities for the Park are, and where do they wish to see improvement and action?

* Put people first – we fully support the proposed Strategy’s first principle of ensuring that the needs of people are central to all decisions relating to the Park. We welcome the commitment to work in partnership with residents, interest groups and local communities. Sadly the lack of meaningful engagement on the closure of the Radical Road over the last five years has been deeply disappointing.  We hope the Strategic Plan is the start of a new approach for true engagement with the public on the use and management of the Park.
* Reopen the Radical Road – the Radical Road is barely mentioned within the consultation document. Yet there has been a groundswell of public outrage about the closure, its impacts and the lack of discussion about this issue.  We believe HES has not proportionately assessed the level of risk for users of the path, given its natural, outdoor setting.  We want the path to be reopened, along with cautionary signage to warn the public of any potential natural hazards. Monitoring of the state of the rock face should also continue.
* Recreation and active travel – we support the aim to create an inclusive Park, with a well maintained network of paths and active travel routes.  The commitment to “largely cease” vehicle use of the park is welcomed.
* Climbing in the Park – we suggest that the outdated permit system that prohibits climbing in the Park, except for South Quarry, should be repealed.  This right to climb, free from permits, should be extended to other rock outcrops in Holyrood Park, the same as in the rest of Scotland.  The advice in the Official Guide to Climbing in Holyrood Park, produced by the Park Ranger Service, is an excellent guide to responsible behaviour while climbing.
* Creating a volunteer base – this is an excellent idea and warmly welcomed.  Volunteers can contribute towards conservation and other activities within the Park and assist the ranger service in a variety of ways.
* Green space and biodiversity – Holyrood Park is one of Edinburgh’s premier green spaces, supporting Edinburgh’s climate change mitigation and adaptation targets. Unfortunately the state of biodiversity across the Park is in decline.  This needs to be prioritised within the Strategy to ensure nature is restored and fully contributes to climate targets.
* Geology – Holyrood Park is valued for its cultural and historical heritage including its important place in the development of geological science. This value is referenced in the Strategy but currently Hutton’s Section is inaccessible due to the closure of the Radical Road.

3. How do people see the role of Holyrood Park in the future and in the context of wider Edinburgh?

* Access and recreation – this should be integrated with land management and natural processes, and a Park Ranger Service is an essential component of managing this.
* Equality of access – there are areas of deprivation near Holyrood Park whose residents can greatly benefit from the Park. It should be a long term priority to increase the use of the Park by a much wider range of people, many of whom already face a variety of barriers to recreation.
* Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 – the Park is not covered by this legislation. We believe HES should assess the way the Park is managed for recreation, to bring it in line with every other part of Scotland.  Working within the framework of the Act and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code would bring many benefits and improve the culture of the management of the Park.
* Increasing revenue – we would like the Park to enhance its role as a natural place for relaxation and enjoyment, accessible to all for free.  However we recognise the need to increase revenue to support management of the Park.  Any new initiatives should be carefully considered and discussed with partners and the wider community.