

Culture and Sport committee approve second Sky Ride

Councillor Richard Lewis convened a meeting of the committee this week with many diverse topics up for discussion, but a couple around cycling, including the approval of the second Sky Ride later this summer.

The committee discussed the sports facilities at Meadowbank with Cllr Booth of the Green Party requesting information about the formation of a Member officer Working Group. Officers reassured him it would be set up over the next few weeks and then begin community engagement to have decisions made on the facility's future by September.

The Committee then discussed the Summer Exhibition at the City Art Centre 'Coming Into Fashion' – a selection of rare fashion photographs and original magazines from the Conde Nast archives in New York, Paris, Milan and London. Councillor Munro questioned the entrance fee for the event in a public space, which Museums Manager Frank Little explained would be cheaper than London and other major cities. He also expressed the view that exhibitions would not be possible without entrance fees while Convener Richard Lewis added that "there's always that fine balance between access and bringing major shows".

The Forth Bridge Festival which will celebrate the iconic structure's 50th birthday next year, have asked for £50,000 from the council to stage a parade and pageant which was duly approved. South Queensferry Councillor Lindsay Paterson expressed concern that the event would push the limits of the local area's facilities and reminded the committee that coordination is needed with the local community council.

Sports investment 'Activcity' was the third item and raised

questions on how a sport is defined, whether activities outside the mainstream such as yoga and dance were encouraged to apply for funding, and whether sustainable practice was promoted. The committee were told that their list of activities include Roller Hockey, Martial Arts, fencing and that the Council were looking to work with DanceBase to promote dance. Councillor Munro suggested international cricket matches by amateur players alongside the Mela Festival at Leith Links, and the council added that these could take place at the time of the Commonwealth Games next year.

Museum Manager Frank Little explained the Collections Development Policy 2013-2017 as "the fundamental basis of what we do...the heart of our service", adding that the Policy adheres to the National Accreditation Scheme applying standards to the service and an emphasis on "quality rather than quantity".

During discussion about the 2013/2014 investment in cycling facilities, Cllr Booth took the focus back to Meadowbank questioning whether there were any plans to make the facilities indoor, rather than outdoor as it is as present, to reduce maintenance. Cllr Booth also wanted to know if there could be ways of reducing such problems at the proposed cycling hub at Hunter's Hall Park in the future. The council officer replied that Meadowbank had received funding, but the infrastructure was of an age. The building will have to compete with other facilities for maintenance as the council is simply unable to "maintain all the buildings all the time". Hunter's Hall Park unlike Meadowbank, would use concrete instead wood so should be easier to maintain.

Councillor Henderson questioned the accessibility to the local community of the proposed 3G pitch at Balerno High School. Cllr Lewis replied that the "Focus is on accessibility...we do ourselves no favours if we have facilities sitting empty on weekends and evening". The council will also look to move sports from easily damaged grass parkland onto synthetic

surfaces to reduce damage on poorly drained land, only made worse by bad weather.

A pilot scheme to extend opening hours for museums and galleries was duly approved. Frank Little said that public research proved a desire for Sunday and later opening hours. The pilot scheme will involve the City Art Centre and the Museum of Childhood over the summer. Cllr Lewis added that visitor numbers were healthy and that he was personally excited about more people visiting.

The meeting concluded with approval for a second Sky Ride, the mass city centre cycling event, at the Meadows which Councilor Lewis described as “good news all round” for the city’s cycling aspirations and economic investment.

City of Edinburgh Culture and Sport Committee members are:

Councillors Lewis (Convener), Austin Hart (Vice-Convener), Balfour, Booth, Cairns, Doran, Fullerton, Gardner, Bill Henderson, Milligan, Munro, Paterson, Shields, Burns (ex officio) and Cardownie (ex officio).