

Edinburgh council online noticed by Europe

An online project to encourage people to get out and about in Edinburgh's parks and green spaces, and Edinburgh Libraries digital services have been shortlisted for two top awards at the prestigious EUROCITIES awards.

'Your Library, Your Edinburgh' and 'Edinburgh Outdoors' have both been recognised for outstanding achievement by EUROCITIES members in the delivery of local activities or practices which improve the quality of life for citizens.

Entries are judged by an independent jury of five members from the thematic sector, academia, EU institutions, media and NGO.

Councillor Lesley Hinds, the city's Transport and Environment Convener, said:- "These projects demonstrate how the Council is using digital and online platforms to engage with the people of Edinburgh. Edinburgh Outdoors makes use of the Council's vast wealth of data on parks and green spaces and gives users access to it – allowing them to find out more about what Edinburgh's outdoors has to offer. This has proved really popular and engaging, with over 1000 downloads of the app since we launched earlier this year."

Councillor Richard Lewis, the city's Culture and Sport Convener, said: "As increasing numbers of people carry out more of their day-to-day activities online, it is vital the Council continues to develop our technology to ensure our

services keep pace with the modern world. Giving libraries services an extra dimension online has completely revolutionised how people borrow books and has refuelled an interest in local libraries that has seen a steady increase in visitor numbers over the last few years.”

EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities. Their members are the elected local and municipal governments of major European cities.

Your Library Your Edinburgh – Shortlisted in the Smart Governance Category

Edinburgh’s library services have gone digital. Responding to the growing demand for seamless 24/7 mobile and online access, ‘Your Library’ is a digital one-stop-shop bringing together the city’s library facilities with local information, services and activities. Aiming to become ‘the Google of Edinburgh’, citizens can use the site to search for anything from an eBook download to a local music group. Developing continually in cooperation with citizens and community groups, and complemented by a mobile app, the site draws in new library users, both electronically and physically, and helps bridge the digital divide by attracting traditional library users online with a growing range of innovative and interactive multimedia tools.

Edinburgh Outdoors – Shortlisted in the Smart Living Category

Getting out and about in Edinburgh’s parks and green spaces

just got easier. At the end of 2012, the city launched an interactive website and mobile app to help citizens explore and make the most of the city's green areas. They can use the service to record wildlife sightings, report problems and find out about local events and park information. For the council's parks department, which hadn't previously been engaged in new media, the exercise has paid off: it now boasts 16,500 page views, 700 android and iPhone downloads and 1000 Twitter followers. Citizens and community groups were involved from the outset to ensure the service was user-friendly and would achieve its goal of getting more citizens into local parks, promoting the city's green heritage and protecting its biodiversity.