

Council still in talks about an Edinburgh bike hire scheme



The city council is to engage in talks with advertising giant JCDecaux about the possibility of Edinburgh getting a bike hire scheme just like most other large cities around the world. Decaux is the outdoor advertising company which deals with placing ads on bus stops and elsewhere in the urban landscape and recently took over the council's business from Clear Channel. It also describes itself as the number one company for self-service city bike hire, which we think is long-awaited in the capital.

At next week's transport committee meeting the council will be told that talks are imminent and a report will be brought back to the council in October 2015. The matter began with a petition by some Edinburgh students asking why Edinburgh did not have a scheme such as those in other cities. The petition attracted 739 signatures by the time it was considered by the Petitions Committee at their meeting in January 2015.

The Edinburgh Reporter spoke to Transport Convener about the potential timeline for introduction of such a scheme:

Dublin has had a bike hire scheme for five years and it has been so successful since its launch that there have been around 8 million bike journeys on the city's streets in that time. It is growing fast with a major expansion offering a total of 1500 bikes across 100 stations. Although it was initially funded by JCDecaux it is now sponsored by Coca-Cola Zero. Members pay a small annual fee to get a card which makes using the bikes much simpler, although tourists can also hire bikes with a credit card.

In London there is an annual charge of £90 for annual membership but there is also a Pay as You Pedal scheme which adds a fee of £2 on each first hire of the day. The bike hire scheme was initially sponsored by Barclays Bank but Santander has now taken over that role to offer 10,000 bikes across the capital 24 hours per day. The scheme also extends to cycle training for community groups.

What do you think? Would you use bike hire in the city?