

Custom House community consultation



The City of Edinburgh Council in partnership with Scottish Historic Buildings Trust opened up the doors of Custom House Leith today to find out what the public think about the use of the building in the long term.



Hundreds of people wandered around the building on Commercial Street offering their ideas as to future uses for it. Many said they had no wish for it to be converted into flats, and the overwhelming desire recorded on Post-its seems to be for an arts centre.



The Lord Provost, the Rt Hon Donald Wilson was there to cut the ribbon to officially open the building which the council recently acquired with its Common Good Fund.

The Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) is leasing the building and Out of the Blue arts organisations are Custom House tenants. SHBT is a charity which regenerates significant historic buildings for others to use. And Customs House is indeed an important building.



L-R John Campbell QC Chair of SHBT, Cllr Richard Lewis, Cllr Adam McVey, Cllr Gordon Munro. Front row – Cllr Chas Booth, Lord Provost Donald Wilson, Cllr Lesley Hinds.

Councillor Richard Lewis, Culture and Sport Convener, said: “This Open Day is the first chance local residents and

businesses have had to catch a glimpse inside one of Leith's most historic and iconic buildings.

“For the first time in decades, the building opened to the public and visitors were able to meet members of [SHBT](#) who will be looking after the building. The long-term plan for Custom House will be for the place to become a hub for the Leith community and I urge you to give them your ideas about what you'd like to see happen to the venue.

“Now that the keys have been handed over, the Trust will be able to start carrying out initial works to the interior and exterior of the building. With arts organisation [Out of the Blue](#) as tenants and the Council as landlord, arts and heritage will remain at the core of the building's use. Built in 1812 by Robert Reid, it was in this building that taxes and levies were collected as goods from across the world passed through the port. Most British customs houses were relatively modest, but Leith's is one of just a handful that stand out from the rest.



Deidre Brock MP and Councillor for Leith Walk addresses the audience ahead of the ribbon cutting.