

#Edinburgh2050 – Edinburgh Leisure boss wants you to get up and go!

✘ June Peebles is Chief Executive of Edinburgh Leisure which is the arms' length organisation which runs the council's leisure facilities. Here she offers her view on what Edinburgh might be like by 2050.

“As someone born and bred in the city, I truly believe Edinburgh is a fantastic place to live. It is a beautiful city that has so much to offer its residents and those that visit. I never tire of Edinburgh's stunning and varied architecture and the richness of the outdoor spaces we have on our doorstep. How many other cities can make claim to being the Festival City and yet offer easy access to the great outdoors? I like that Edinburgh is such a compact city, which is relatively easy to navigate (if you ignore the roadworks); it means you can pack a lot into your day.

“I try to start my day with a spot of physical activity. I love moving; it makes me feel good, it does me good and it also keeps me close to Edinburgh Leisure customers and employees. And, having visited sport and leisure facilities all over the UK, I know that we are fortunate in Edinburgh to have such a great range of facilities offering a vast array of activities for people of all ages and stages.

“Edinburgh is recognised on the global stage for its festivals, for its cultural heritage. I would like to see Edinburgh being recognised locally and nationally for its physical activity levels – for being a city that moves! I would like to see more people walking and cycling (enjoying the great outdoors) and being active in Edinburgh Leisure venues and venues throughout the city. I want everyone in

Edinburgh to enjoy being active – who wouldn't?

“I work with a great team of people that are committed to getting and keeping the good people of Edinburgh active; and with over five million customer visits across 31 venues we are doing well, however there is still much work to be done. We want to do better.

“There is so much I love about Edinburgh but there are most definitely areas for improvement. I do not like the dichotomy between the rich and the poor in Edinburgh and the relatively new socio-economic classification ‘in work and in poverty’. This economic gap between rich and poor gives rise to a number of other ‘gaps’ or differences, including health and life expectancy. Inactivity is now positioned as a risk factor in many health conditions and, conversely, activity is positioned as a magic pill to many health conditions. Moving can make such a difference to one’s physical, mental and social wellbeing.

“Poverty and inequalities are global issues and certainly not unique to Edinburgh. There is no quick or easy fix but we all have a part to play and physical activity has a huge role here – it can help transform lives.

“So, what could we do better?

“Appreciating the challenges in public sector funding and the increasing demand on many public sector services I advocate more joined up working and creative partnerships to deliver on shared goals. More connectivity and creativity is vital.

“Some areas of our city are less well served than others in terms of facility provision and opportunities to get active. With the growth in the city’s population and the continued building expansion we need to ensure the physical activity infrastructure keeps pace with developments; ensuring there are opportunities for everyone to be active, no matter where they live in the city. I would like for every community to

have a 'physical activity' centre that offers a place to be active in, a place that provides information, advice and support on all things active and a place that everyone in the community enjoys going to.

"The City Council's decision to transfer the management of the school sports facilities to Edinburgh Leisure will go some way to help meet the demand for access to local facilities. In the future, it would be great to design our school buildings as places for lifelong learning, open to all in the community; true community assets. There should also be more affordable housing – people who work in the city should be able to afford to live in the city.

"I love my city and am privileged to have a role to play in its future. We have big challenges, or rather big opportunities, to make Edinburgh better.

"Let's do it – let's be brave, creative and proud and, importantly, let's move – it is good for us!"

You can have your say [here](#)