

Sports clubs want to know when Meadowbank will open

Sports clubs in Edinburgh are growing increasingly frustrated at the council as they are yet to be told when the new Meadowbank Sports Centre will open.

The City of Edinburgh Council, which has been handed keys to the new centre, said last month its doors would open to the public “at the start of the summer holidays”. But with just three weeks to go until the end of term for schools in the capital, an official date is still to be announced.

Clubs which trained at Meadowbank prior to the £49 million regeneration project beginning five years ago have highlighted how membership has been impacted by the closure and the pandemic, which has already pushed the completion date back by two years.

A source associated with one of the athletics clubs said: “All the different clubs are being told different stories, they’re not happy.

“All the clubs that used to use the old centre, they’ve lost a lot of members due to the fact that the facilities aren’t there.”

They added: “I don’t think they can use the pandemic as an excuse because Birmingham managed to build a brand new stadium for the Commonwealth Games and that has opened in time.

“There’s three major athletics championships on this year and

you would hope they would have an athletics facility open to coincide with those because that's when people get really invested."

Another source said clubs are "anxious to be allowed to use the facilities in order to let our athletes train properly and also build up our membership again".

And they suggested there are continued delays of some equipment coming from abroad "due to transport issues".

A spokesperson for Edinburgh Leisure admitted there are "the usual snagging issues that need to be sorted", however denied claims made about further delays caused by equipment not arriving in time.

The charity said it hopes Meadowbank will reopen in the "early summer holidays" and added people would be informed "as soon as we have an official opening date".

In February, the then Council Leader, Cllr Adam McVey, said the new sports complex – which includes games halls, two artificial football pitches, a state-of-the-art gym and a brand new outdoor running track – would be used to host the vote count for May's local elections "with any luck".

However, the council later said only postal ballots were to be processed at the new sports centre.

In a statement released just before the election, Edinburgh Leisure CEO June Peebles said: "Now that the completion certificate has been issued, we will be spending the following weeks with final snagging, fit out items, finalising operating arrangements and a comprehensive staff training programme before we finally open the building.

"So, keep your eyes on social media and Edinburgh Leisure's website for more announcements about the official opening date. We can't wait to welcome you into the impressive

new Meadowbank.”

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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