

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL (PORTOBELLO PARK) BILL

PROMOTER'S WRITTEN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE COMMITTEE AT 11 SEPTEMBER MEETING

We refer to your letter of today's date in relation to the above, to which we can respond on the Council's behalf. Apologies for the delay in providing the requested information, but some of the required information had to be obtained by the Council from third parties who took a little time to respond.

At the Committee meeting of 11 September 2013, the witnesses appearing on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council (the Council) undertook to follow up in writing with further information in respect of two matters. The requested clarifications are below, by reference to the questions as set out in your letter of today's date.

Whether the distribution company responsible for delivery of the consultation leaflets delivered other items at the same time, or were responsible solely for the delivery of the leaflets

Alison McInnes MSP asked this question of Billy MacIntyre (column 30 of the Official Report).

Having sought clarification from the companies involved, the Council can confirm that the leaflets were not delivered with other items unrelated to the consultation on the Bill. In respect of the first round of deliveries carried out in December, the distribution company made a single item drop consisting only of the information leaflet (a copy of which has been provided to the Committee).

The second leaflet drop in January was undertaken at the same time as the Council's planned distribution of 'reminder postcards'. An example reminder postcard is enclosed for reference. The Council had scheduled delivery of these postcards for early January to remind local residents that the consultation was still ongoing and open for participation. As the distribution company had already been engaged to deliver these postcards, the Council asked them to re-deliver the information leaflet at the same time (with deliveries to be made first to those areas in respect of which the Council had received feedback that the original delivery may have been unsuccessful). Households would therefore have received the information leaflet with this other item in the second round of deliveries, but not any mail or other documents unrelated to the consultation.

Details of arrangements and dates for the removal of the goalposts from the Park

John Baker offered to clarify this matter, with specific reference to the open space audit conducted in June and July 2009. You had asked whether the goalposts were removed from the field before or after the audit took place (column 43 of the Official Report).

The audit of the use of Portobello Park was undertaken during one-hour periods on 10 separate days between 11 June 2009 and 5 July 2009; full details of the dates and timings

are provided in the report by Ironside Farrar which has been submitted to the Committee. These dates were chosen to include periods likely to be times of peak use and to allow an assessment of all potential uses which might be made of the Park.

Edinburgh Leisure are responsible for the removal and reinstatement of goalposts on municipal football pitches, but unfortunately cannot provide the specific dates on which goal posts were removed from Portobello Park in 2009. However, they have confirmed that the grass pitches were 'rested' in 2009 outwith the football season, which involved the goalposts being removed between the end of the 2008/09 football season in mid-May and the start of the 2009/10 season in mid-August. They were therefore not present during the audit period.

This was, and continues to be, common practice at all Council grass pitches in the city during the close-season months, to allow them to recover for the next football season. Pitch areas do, however, remain available for a range of informal uses (including informal, casual games of football) until the goalposts are reinstated for the start of the formal football season in mid-August.

It may also be worth noting, in case it was not clear from the evidence given at the Committee meeting, that the 2009 use audit did take account of the formal use made of the pitches when the posts were in place. Pitch bookings were reviewed in consultation with Edinburgh Leisure, and the results of that review are recorded on page 16 of Ironside Farrar's report, at section 4.2.

Your second question on this subject, recorded at column 43 of the Official Report, asked for confirmation that the removal of the goalposts at the time of the audit was not to do with work that was being carried out. Some of the written submissions and objections also refer to the removal of goalposts and digging up of football pitches for the purposes of the archaeological works carried out on the site. For the avoidance of doubt, we can confirm that those works were carried out in 2011, and therefore did not impact upon the usage audit in 2009.

We hope that the clarification of these outstanding points will be of assistance to the Committee. Should any further clarification be required, please do not hesitate to contact us.

25 September 2013

Your opinion matters



Portobello Park Private Bill Consultation

Portobello Park Private Bill Consultation

The City of Edinburgh Council proposes to take a Private Bill to the Scottish Parliament to allow the use of Portobello Park as the site for a new Portobello High School.

Look out for posters of Roadshow Events, where you can find out more.

What's your opinion?

Online survey www.edinburgh.gov.uk/newportobelloschool

Pick up survey in Portobello or Piershill Libraries

E-mail NewSchoolBuildings@edinburgh.gov.uk

Write to Portobello Park Private Bill, 1/2 Waverley Court, The City of Edinburgh Council, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh EH8 8BG

Closes 31 January 2013