

Culture and Sport Committee

10.00am, Wednesday, 14 December 2016

Inverleith House

Item number	8.3
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

Executive Summary

A Capital Coalition motion tabled at the Culture and Sport Committee on 25 October 2016 expressed concern at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's (RBGE) decision to close Inverleith House from Sunday 23 October 2016. The Motion welcomed the meeting arranged between the Council and RBGE to seek an explanation and rationale for the withdrawing of support for a much loved and internationally recognised contemporary arts space in Edinburgh.

Councillor Lewis and Councillor Munro along with Council officials met the Regius Keeper, Simon Milne, on 10 November 2016. The meeting was positive and a full and detailed explanation was given by Mr Milne on RBGE's position. Assurances were given that the venue will not close and that RBGE will be exploring future options for the use of the House that would include exhibiting art both within the House and in the Gardens.

Future possible collaborations between the Council and RBGE were suggested and it was agreed that ongoing dialogue would be welcome.

Subsequently and following discussions between RBGE, the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland, it has been agreed that a Short Life Working Group will be established to advise the RBGE Board on the future arts programming that would include, but not be restricted to, exhibitions at Inverleith House.

Links

Coalition Pledges	P24, P31
Council Priorities	CP6
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1

Inverleith House

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

- 1.1 notes the positive nature of the meeting with RBGE on 10 November 2016;
- 1.2 welcomes the RBGE's decision to continue a dialogue with Creative Scotland and Scottish Government, and to establish a Short Life Working Group to advise the Board on the future strategic direction of arts programming across the Gardens and the future options for the House; and
- 1.3 agrees that a further report will be brought to the Culture and Sport Committee detailing the recommendations arising from the work of the Short Life Working Group.

2. Background

- 2.1 Inverleith House was built for Sir James Rochied as a family home in 1774 before becoming part of the RBGE in the mid 19th century. In 1960, after a period as the official residence of the Regius Keeper, it housed the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art. Since the Modern Art Gallery's relocation in 1986, Inverleith House has been used to exhibit contemporary art. Under the curatorship of Paul Nesbit, the gallery has developed an international reputation by exhibiting the very best in contemporary art.
- 2.2 On 18 October RBGE announced that Inverleith House would no longer be used to exhibit contemporary art.
- 2.3 Significant public interest and concern has been expressed in the media and in the establishment of an on-line petition to save Inverleith House as a contemporary arts venue.

3. Main report

- 3.1 At the meeting on 10 November 2016 Simon Milne, Regius Keeper, detailed RBGE's position regarding the future of Inverleith House. Mr Milne explained that RBGE had reviewed its operation and that the priority was to their core mission. As such it was the view of RBGE's Board that Inverleith House would no longer be dedicated to the display of contemporary art and they were looking at alternative uses for the House. Mr Milne made it clear that they were committed to maintaining their reputation as an arts venue in its widest sense, both within the House and

across the Gardens. Mr Milne recognised the concern expressed by the people of Edinburgh and beyond and gave assurances that the House would continue to host exhibitions, however, a more flexible, multi-purpose approach was being explored.

- 3.2 Subsequently, and following discussions between RBGE, the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland, it has been agreed that a Short Life Working Group would be established to advise the RBGE Board on the future strategic direction of arts programming across the Gardens. A review of the current position and approach will be undertaken to establish a range of options for the Board of Trustees to consider in June next year.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 The future use of Inverleith House as a space that includes the exhibition of contemporary art.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 There are no financial impacts arising directly from this report.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no risk, policy, compliance or governance impacts arising directly from this report.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 There are no impacts on duties under the Equalities Act arising directly from this report.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no impacts on carbon, adaptation to climate change, and sustainable development arising directly from this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 N/A

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 N/A

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges	P24 - Maintain and embrace support for our world-famous festivals and events P31 – Maintain our City’s reputation as the cultural capital of the world by continuing to support and invest in our cultural infrastructure.
Council Priorities	CP6 – a creative, cultural capital
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 – Edinburgh’s economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all
Appendices	None