

# Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 10 August 2023

## Parks and Openspace Investment Update

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Routine All
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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Culture and Communities Committee is asked to note this update on the Parks and Openspace investment programme. The next update will be presented to Committee on 29 February 2024, with an update on the additional investment for 2023/24 to be included in the Business Bulletin for Committee on 7 December 2023.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

Contact: Bob McAllister, Parks Technical Manager

E-mail: [bob.mcallister@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:bob.mcallister@edinburgh.gov.uk)

# Report

## Parks and Open Space Investment Update

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides an update on the Parks and Openspace investment programme for 2023/24.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 This report provides a six-monthly update on the Parks and Open Space investment programme for 2023/24 and follows the previous report from [13 December 2022](#).
- 3.2 On [23 February 2023](#), the Council approved an additional investment of £3m for parks and open spaces. An update on how the additional funding will be spent was presented to Committee on [11 May 2023](#). A biannual update on this will be provided in the Committee Business Bulletin on 7 December 2023.
- 3.3 Including the additional investment agreed for 2023/24, the total budget for Parks and Openspace investment in 2023/24 is £4.053m. A breakdown of the allocation of this funding is shown in Appendix 1.

### 4. Main report

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- 4.1 Appendix 2 provides an update on the capital investment programme in 2023/24 and provides a progress update on each project planned for delivery within the existing budget.
- 4.2 Since December 2022, key updates include:
- 4.2.1 In 2022/23, a total of 120 footbridges were assessed and urgent repairs / replacements were actioned. A programme of ongoing assessment and maintenance will ensure their continuing safety. The replacement of two footbridges has been completed at Redhall Weir (which reopened in July 2023), and Ferry Glen (where a small footbridge has been replaced). The design of the footbridge at Katesmill Pipeline is being reviewed to reduce the anticipated cost;
- 4.2.2 It is unlikely that the remedial works required for the Water of Leith Path to Dell Road will be contained within the existing budget (£100,000). Currently,

the path remains closed and further technical advice has been commissioned;

4.2.3 Ongoing monitoring of the landslip at Ferry Glen Back Braes, with updated geotechnical modelling, is being commissioned. Visual monitoring will continue, but it is not expected that the cost of any remedial works can be contained within the available budget (£100,000);

4.2.4 The Dean Path project is nearing completion;

4.2.5 The remediation of walls is an ongoing issue. Priority is given to any wall located in a high-traffic area or where the condition of the wall necessitates restricting access to grounds; and

4.2.6 Difficulties in procurement are indicative of wider problems throughout the civil engineering industry with increasing prices and a limited pool of suitably qualified companies to undertake construction work.

4.3 Where the cost of any proposed work for a project or at a site will exceed the allocated budget projects will need to be reprioritised unless additional funding can be secured.

4.4 External funding continues to be pursued wherever possible. So far, external funding of £1.8m has been secured to deliver an 8km flexi-pave surface along the Water of Leith Walkway (between Lanark Road and Balerno) by August 2023; £128,000 will also help to deliver an upgraded path network within Gyle Park with work taking place over the next few months; and, as reported to Committee in May 2023, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is contributing to the cost of refurbishing tennis courts in four city parks.

4.5 As part of the investment programme, surveys of parks and openspace assets have been completed. Of the 193 parks and openspace sites to be surveyed, 150 are now complete (78%). The remaining surveys are expected to be completed by the end of this financial year. [This will be updated in advance of Committee]

4.6 As the surveys continue, it is anticipated that projects will be added to the programme. Where these are identified as priority 01, these will be incorporated into the existing programme until existing funding is exhausted. To date, £1.987m has been committed for 2023/24. £0.316m remains uncommitted in anticipation of further Priority 1 works being identified in the remaining asset surveys.

4.7 In addition, officers highlight remedial works as part of their day-to-day duties. An initial assessment of potential future priority 01 and 02 work is estimated to be around £5m.

## **5. Next Steps**

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5.1 The programme of remediation is ongoing, with prioritisation given to those assets whose failure will present a potential danger to the public and staff and/or which could result in the closure of grounds.

- 5.2 While much of the work is unlikely to attract additional investment, officers will continue to seek opportunities to do so where possible (e.g., through Planning-led developer contributions, community fundraising, and third-party grants). In addition, projects with Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust are ongoing to assist in leveraging additional third-party funding where appropriate.
- 5.3 The Scottish Government operates a Nature Restoration Fund for projects that specifically encourage restoration of wildlife and habitats on land and sea. The Council has received £425,000 from this fund over the last two years and has delivered countryside improvement projects throughout the city. The funding award for 2023/24 is around £272,000, and at least half of this will need to be directed towards projects which contribute to a Nature Network.
- 5.4 Moving forward, the sustainability of remediation works will be a key feature of future designs, with solutions focused on meeting the long-term placemaking aspirations and development plans for each site.
- 5.5 The next update on the Parks and Openspace investment programme will be presented to Committee on 29 February 2024. An update on the additional investment will also be provided in the Business Bulletin for Committee on 7 December 2023.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The cost of investment works will be funded from the approval capital allocation for Parks and Openspace investment and any other funding secured. A summary of the capital allocation is provided in Appendix 1. Details of the expenditure to date and balance remaining are included above in paragraph 4.6. The remaining funding will be retained to respond to any new priority 01 projects identified in the condition surveys still to be carried out.
- 6.2 When budgets permit, asset investments that do not meet the capital *de minimis* of £10,000 will, if possible, be funded through revenue budgets.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 There are significant health and safety, liability, and service delivery failure implications by not addressing the maintenance and remediation needs of infrastructure assets.
- 7.2 Prioritisation has been given to those assets whose failure will present a potential danger to the public and staff and/or which could result in the closure of grounds.
- 7.3 Investment in nature restoration projects is expected to have a positive impact on local wildlife and habitats and contribute to mitigating both climate and nature emergencies.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 Response to motion by Councillor Thornley – Playparks Investment – [report](#) to Culture and Communities Committee, 7 March 2023.
- 8.2 Response to motion by Councillor Hyslop – Safer Parks – [report](#) to Culture and Communities Committee, 7 March 2023.
- 8.3 Guidance on Park Lighting – [report](#) to Culture and Communities Committee, 11 May 2023.
- 8.4 Parks and Greenspace Investment Prioritisation – [report](#) to Culture and Communities Committee, 15 June 2021.

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Parks and Openspace programme investment allocation 2023/24.
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Parks and Openspace programme 2023/24 update.

**Investment Capital Budget Allocation**

APPENDIX 1

**Current and Predicted Capital Allocation - Parks and Openspace Assets**

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>£m</b>	<b>4.053</b>	<b>0.25</b>	<b>4.303</b>

<b>Budget Allocation for 2023/24</b>	<b>£m</b>
Park Lighting Improvements (includes £0.1m carried forward from 2022/23)	0.5
General Accessibility Improvements to Paths	0.5
Permanent, Publicly Accessible Toilets	0.6
Ongoing and new investment priority rated 01 and 02	2.303
Operational equipment	0.05
Parks and open space investment support	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.053</b>

**Appendix 2 - Parks and Openspace Investment Programme 2023/24**

**Path Lighting Improvements**

Ward	Location	Summary of Project	Comments
3	Gyle Public Park and Recreation Ground	Park lighting project	Completed April 2023. Part funded by the Friends Group.
All	City-wide	Park lighting projects across the city	This work is on-going

**General Accessibility Improvements to Paths**

Ward	Location	Summary of Project	Comments
16	Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park	Refurbish Path Network	This work is on-going
6	Corstorphone Hill Local Nature Reserve	Path network improvements	This work is on-going
13	Water of Leith - Bonnington Road	Resurfacing of path	This work is on-going
All	City-wide	Path network projects	This work is on-going

**Permanent Publicly Accessible Toilets**

Ward	Location	Summary of Project	Comments
5	Inverleith Public Park and Allotments	Installation of permanent toilets	This work is on-going
13	Leith Links	Installation of permanent toilets	This work is on-going
15	Meadows	Installation of permanent toilets	This work is on-going

**On-going Priority Investment rated 01**

Ward	Location	Summary of Project	Comments
8	Colinton Dell Forest Public Park	Refurbishment of Rustic Bridge at Redhall Weir	Completed July 2023
8	Colinton Dell Forest Public Park	Landslip between Bogsmill Road and Katesmill Pipeline Bridge	Completed March 2023. Some residual costs in 2023/24.
8	Colinton Dell Forest Public Park	Replacement of Katesmill Pipeline Bridge	Revised design currently being progressed as the funding available will not meet the cost of replacement.
8	Colinton Dell Forest Public Park	Landslip on Water of Leith Path to Dell Road	Contractor tenders higher than available funding. The path remains closed.
17	Craigmillar Castle Jubilee Park	Refurbishment of wall, fences and gates	This work is on-going.
1	Ferry Glen Public Park and Back Braes	Landslip Investigation and Remediation	An update on the geotechnical model for the site is being progressed to develop a design for path realignment. In addition, a monitoring strategy is being developed to ensure continued safety of the site while design work continues. This will identify any critical or increasing signs of movement.
15	Inch Park, Depot and Nursery	Refurbishment and resurfacing projects across the site	Including: refurbishment of walls, historic cottage, sewage pipework; resurfacing of storage area. Some works completed, some on-going
7	Saughton Park and Gardens	Refurbishment of walls	This work is on-going.
7	Sighthill Public Park	Refurbishment of car park	Completed June 2023.
5	Water of Leith - Miller Row	Refurbishment of walls.	Design complete and project management support in place. However, two tender exercises for remediation did not attract any interest. The project will be split into smaller lots to attract interest.
9	Wester Craiglochart Hill	Vegetation clearance and rock bolting	This work is on-going.

**Other**

Ward	Location	Summary of Project	Comments
4, 5, 6 and 13	Inverleith Park, Leith Links, Victoria Park and St Margarets Park	Redevelopment of tennis courts	This has been progressed with funding from the LTA and a contribution from the Council.
2	Pentland Regional Park Office and Harlaw House Visitor Centre	On-site improvements	This project is part funded from external sources and the Council has agreed to contribute to the cost of these improvements, which include: improved car parking facilities; improved visitor facilities; public toilets; EV charging points; bicycle repair stations; and improve parking arrangements for people with disabilities.