

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 5 December 2024

Parks and Open Space Investment Update

Executive/routine
Wards

Routine
All

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Culture and Communities Committee is asked to note this update on the Parks and Open Space investment programme.

Gareth Barwell

Interim Executive Director of Place

Contact: Andy Williams, Head of Neighbourhood Environmental Service

E-mail: andy.williams@edinburgh.gov.uk

◆ EDINBURGH ◆
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Report

Parks and Open Space Investment Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the Parks and Open Space investment programme for 2024/25.

3. Background

- 3.1 A six-monthly update on the Parks and Open Space investment programme was included in the [Business Bulletin](#) presented to Committee on the 8 August 2024.
- 3.2 An update on the Parks and Open Space Investment for 2023/24 was [reported](#) to Committee on the 29 February 2024.
- 3.3 Including the additional investment agreed for 2024/25 of £150,000 for Water of Leith Improvements, the total budget for Parks and Open Space investment in 2024/25 is £2.949m. A breakdown of the allocation of this funding is shown in Appendix 1.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Appendix 2 provides an update on the capital investment programme for 2024/25 and provides a progress update on each project planned for delivery within the existing budget.
- 4.2 Since August 2024, key developments include:
Progress Updates
- 4.2.1 Stabilisation works on the riverbed, wall, and weir at Saughton Park have started and are expected, in accordance with the species protection plans, to be completed by March 2025;
- 4.2.2 Remediation of the walls at Braid Hill and Gracemount Park have been completed and work on the Regent Road park wall next to Abbey Mount has recently started;
- 4.2.3 Katesmill 'pipeline' bridge replacement continues to be delayed due to ongoing supply chain issues associated with the fabrication of the fibre reinforced polymer bridge. Installation is expected by early December;

- 4.2.4 Dell Road drainage and path remediation - a non-geoengineering solution was implemented, and the path has been reopened. The path, slope, and wall condition will be monitored over the next few years to ensure the continuing safety of the solution. The removal of trees, whose failure would adversely affect the path and the church grounds, are expected in the next few months;
- 4.2.5 Belford bridge walkway and Bell's Mills footbridge - a contractor has been appointed to remediate and replace the decking on both structures. To date the footbridge has been completed and, subject to permission from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), work on the walkway will start in December;
- 4.2.6 Path improvements have been completed at Gyle Park and Victoria Park. Remediation works are ongoing at Saltire Steps and at Gyle Park (following the installation of a new sewer);
- 4.2.7 Park lighting progress is summarised in a separate report to the Culture and Communities Committee (5 December 2024). Notable developments include provisional delivery dates and costings for lighting within Hailes Quarry, Gyle, Hunters Hall, Ferniehill, Roseburn, Leith Links, Ratho Station, Allison, St. Marks and Pilrig parks; and
- 4.2.8 Designs for permanent publicly accessible toilets in Inverleith Park, Leith Links and the Meadows are being progressed and installation is scheduled prior to summer 2025.

Early Phase Projects

- 4.2.9 Hailes Quarry Park leachate - a methane treatment plant trial was successful, and proof of concept achieved. Investigations continue into the volumetrics, source of leachate, and the levels of dissolved methane;
- 4.2.10 Water of Leith path erosion near Damside - specification of works being developed;
- 4.2.11 Water of Leith wall, near Arboretum Avenue - specification of works being developed;
- 4.2.12 Treverlen Park wall - no immediate remediation requirements;
- 4.2.13 Davidson Mains Park perimeter rockface and wall - specification of works being developed;
- 4.2.14 Water of Leith Dean path - remediation design to be tendered;
- 4.2.15 Brighton Park perimeter wall - priority to be re-assessed;
- 4.2.16 Craigmillar Castle Jubilee Park perimeter walls - restoration programme to be tendered;
- 4.2.17 Figgate Park boardwalk- remediation design to be tendered;
- 4.2.18 Longstone Road to Stenhouse Mill Lane sinkhole - solution being developed assessed; and

4.2.19 Ferry Glen path located behind Queensferry Bowling Club. Path remains open but regular monitoring of wall and path condition is required.

Parks and Open Space Site Surveys

- 4.3 So far, 154 of the 193 parks and open space sites have been surveyed (80%). The surveying of low priority sites has been suspended due to an increase in workload for inspections across the Council. Parks Officers continue to assess and monitor all areas to ensure the safety of infrastructure assets.

Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund

- 4.4 In addition to the Council's investment funding, the Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund awarded the Council funding in 2023/24. Based on the funding conditions associated with this, eight projects are being progressed this year:

- 4.4.1 Water of Leith (Canonmills) natural bank stabilisation;
- 4.4.2 Braid Hills Elfin Loch wetland meadow;
- 4.4.3 Easter Craiglockhart Hill Pond rewilding and boardwalk;
- 4.4.4 West Pilton Park wetland creation;
- 4.4.5 Cramond boardwalk erosion control coastal habitat;
- 4.4.6 Nature on doorstep pilot;
- 4.4.7 South Edinburgh Parks habitat improvement; and
- 4.4.8 Linking Leith Parks nature network.

Other Investment Projects

- 4.5 Funding from developers' contributions, Visit Scotland, Shared Prosperity Fund, Scottish Water, Paths for All, and ring-fenced capital receipts provided investment for six projects:
- 4.5.1 Double Hedges Park - replacement team changing facilities;
 - 4.5.2 Enhancement to car parking and facilities within the Pentland Hills Regional Park, scheduled for completion February 2025;
 - 4.5.3 Cammo Estate - remediation of heritage structures;
 - 4.5.4 Hunters Hall Park - tender issued for path network improvements;
 - 4.5.5 West Princes Street Gardens and Calton Hill - electrical upgrades; and
 - 4.5.6 Stop Glyphosate and improve biodiversity equipment - tender to be issued.

5. Next Steps

- 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 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 assist in leveraging additional third-party funding.

- 5.3 The next update on the Parks and Open space investment programme will be an update in the Business Bulletin for Committee in August 2025.
- 5.4 Following on from the request from Committee to consider trialling an outdoor litter picking hub, officers are currently developing proposals for a trial in 2025. This will provide litter pickers, disposable gloves, high-vis vests, bag hoops, refuse bags and disinfectant wipes and will make clear how volunteers can access the equipment. An update will be provided in the Business Bulletin for Committee in February 2025.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The cost of works is funded from the approved capital allocation for Parks and Open Space investment and any other funding secured. A summary of the capital allocated, spent, and current commitment is provided in Appendix 1. Remaining funding will be used to respond to variances in estimated cost and tackle any new priorities identified.
- 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. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 Parks and open spaces are a shared resource open to all and promote improvements in physical and mental health.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 As a public body, the Council has statutory duties relating to climate emissions and biodiversity.
- 8.2 The City of Edinburgh Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to work towards a target of net zero emissions by 2030 for both city and corporate emissions and embedded this as a core priority of the Council Business Plan 2023-27. The Council also declared a Nature Emergency in 2023.

Environmental Impact

- 8.3 Investment in Parks and Open Spaces not only ensures the Council meets its duty of care for a critical social and green infrastructure, but it also helps revitalise tired spaces and enriches lives and wellbeing through improving access to the natural environment.
- 8.4 Investment in nature restoration projects has a positive impact on local wildlife and habitats and contribute to mitigating both climate and nature emergencies.
Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact
- 8.5 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.

- 8.6 There are significant health and safety, liability, and service delivery failure implications by not addressing the maintenance and remediation needs of infrastructure assets.

9. Background reading/external references

- 9.1 Parks and Open Space Investment – [report](#) to Culture and Communities, 29 February 2024.
- 9.2 Response to motion by Councillor Hyslop – Safer Parks – [report](#) to Culture and Communities Committee, 7 March 2023.
- 9.3 Guidance on Park Lighting – [report](#) to Culture and Communities Committee, 11 May 2023.
- 9.4 Parks and Greenspace Investment Prioritisation – [report](#) to Culture and Communities Committee, 15 June 2021.

10. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Summary of Parks and Open Space Investment Budget 2024/25.
Appendix 2 – Parks and Open Space Investment Programme 2024/25

APPENDIX 1 - Investment Capital Budget Allocation

Current and Predicted Capital Allocation - Parks and Open space Assets

Financial Year	2024/25	2025/26	Total
£m	2.949	0.400	3.349

Allocation for 2024/25	Budget £m	Actual & committed to date £m
Biodiversity and Park Safety	0.600	0.380
Permanent Toilets in Parks	1.035	0.184
Priority 1, Access and Other Investments (Inc Water of Leith Improvements)	1.314	1.452
Total	2.949	2.016

Appendix 2 - Parks and Open Space Investment Programme 2024/25

Path Lighting Improvements

Ward	Location	Summary of Project	Comments
1	Allison Park	Lighting Improvement	Contract awarded
5	St Marks Park	Lighting Improvement	Contract awarded
7	Hailes Quarry Park	Lighting Improvement	Contract awarded
1	Ratho Station Park	Lighting Improvement	Programme for Jan-Mar 2025
3	Gyle Park	Lighting Improvement	Programme for Jan-Mar 2025
17	Huntershall Park	Lighting Improvement	Programme for Jan-Mar 2025
16	Ferniehill Park	Lighting Improvement	Programme for Jan-Mar 2025

Permanent Publicly Accessible Toilets

Ward	Location	Summary of Project	Comments
5	Inverleith Public Park and Allotments	Installation of permanent toilets	Construction scheduled for summer 2025.
13	Leith Links	Installation of permanent toilets	Construction scheduled for summer 2025.
15	Meadows	Installation of permanent toilets	Construction scheduled for summer 2025.

Priority 1, Access and Water of Leith Improvements

Ward	Location	Summary of Project	Comments
8	Colinton Dell Forest Public Park	Replacement of Katesmill Pipeline Bridge	Foundations completed June 2024 construction delayed due to fabrication issues, completion expected December 2024.
8	Colinton Dell Forest Public Park	Landslip on Water of Leith Path to Dell Road	Non geo-engineering solution agreed. Drainage improvement & path realignment due November 2024. Tree removal to be programmed.
17	Craigmillar Castle Jubilee Park	Refurbishment of wall, fences and gates	Tender prepared for works. Paused while budget is identified.
7	Hailes Quarry Park	Leachate investigation.	Flow monitoring to be established to determine scale of potential plant. Reassessment of dissolved methane levels ongoing.
7	Saughton Park and Gardens	Stabilisation of riverbed/weir/wall - adjacent to micro hydro plant on the Water of Leith.	Construction works ongoing.
5	Bells Mill Footbridge	Refurbishment of decking	Construction scheduled November 2024.
5	Belford bridge walkway	Refurbishment of walkway	Construction scheduled November 2024.
6	St Margarets Park	Refurbishment of walls.	Completed June 2024
10	Braids Hill	Refurbishment of walls.	Completed August 2024
16	Gracemount Park	Refurbishment of walls.	Completed August 2024
16	Seven Acre Park	Refurbishment of walls	Completed May 2024
11	Abbey Hill	Refurbishment of walls.	Paused
5	Water of Leith - Miller Row	Refurbishment of walls.	Completed June 2024

Other Projects

Ward	Location	Summary of Project	Comments
2	Pentland Regional Park	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.	To be supplied by Jessica/Steven