

Leith Links Masterplan

About this project

What are we doing?

The City of Edinburgh Council's Thriving Green Spaces Project is producing a vision masterplan for Leith Links. This aims to set out what could happen at Leith Links in the future. This involves park improvements for people and the environment.

The following proposals have been developed by working with Atkins Landscape Architects and a Working Group made up of Council staff, representatives from the Community Council, Council partners, other local organisations and members of the Leith community.

The proposals are now on display during public consultation to gain feedback from the Leith community and park users. This will be a six-week engagement exercise starting in June 2022. These boards will be available online on the Council's Consultation Hub. Take a look at let us know what you think.

Where is the site?

The project boundary red line is below, the proposals look at within the park (excluding the roads that run around the park.)



What informs this project?

- Planning policy and context
- Principles of the '20 minute neighbourhood'
- The Edinburgh Green Blue Network
- The Edinburgh Nature Network
- Engagement with the working group
- Desk based analysis
- Site visits

How can you help?

Have a look at the proposals on the boards and tell us what you think.

Please ask for a paper survey if you are at Leith Gala Day or scan the QR codes on these boards and let the Council know your thoughts.



About Leith Links

The existing site...



Edinburgh Parks Quality Assessment 2021
Leith Links is ranked 117th out of all parks in Edinburgh. This is the lowest ranked Premier Park, Grade C Park.

Observations
How can we improve an already popular park for people?
How can we enhance the park for nature?
How can Leith Links help adapt to climate change?
What could we do with the former bowling green area?

Existing site photos

Children's Orchard: Site photos



East Links: Site photos



Former Bowling Green Area: Site photos



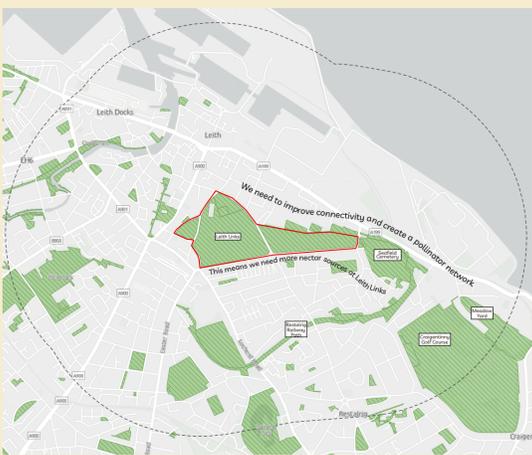
West Links: Site photos



Things to consider...

Edinburgh Nature Network (ENN)

The ENN identifies the importance of connecting the Meadows Yard LNR to Leith Links, via Craigenfinny Golf Course and Seafield Cemetery. This network would connect pollinator habitats allowing bumblebees to move from Meadows Yard to other sites.



Could Leith Links improve to the level of gaining a Green Flag Award?

Key categories to improve to reach this aspiration:

- Welcoming: Unappealing run down entrances.
- Signage: Better wayfinding/ placemaking strategy.
- Appropriate provision.
- Safe equipment and facilities could always be improved.
- Perceptions of safety.
- Ground maintenance could be improved.
- Tree maintenance.
- Climate change adaption.
- Create a Leith Links Friends group?

Leith is in the highest demand of ecosystem services in the whole of Edinburgh...

Leith Links will soon be serving new residents and have enhanced public transport links...

North East Edinburgh is the second fastest growing locality with 9% growth by 2022 much of this happening in areas like Leith...

Covid 19 has shown the importance of outdoor spaces for recreation, exercise and social interaction.

Edinburgh Green Blue Network (GBN)

The GBN considers sustainable water management and climate change to underpin future change and development as part of Cityplan 2030 and City Vision 2050.

The GBN identifies Seafield as an area to deliver significant green and blue benefits. Leith Links is within this catchment area.

What does this mean?...

- Changes to green space management
- Habitat creation
- Tree planting
- Increase biodiversity
- Potential to create Sustainable Urban Drainage SuDS



Leith Links Masterplan

Analysis, Strategy & Design objectives

Design objectives

The following design objectives have been informed by desk based analysis, site visits and developed with continual contact with the Working Group. The objectives have been identified to improve the park for people and nature. These are:

1. Enhance sense of arrival
2. Enhance sense of place
3. Increase activity
4. Enhance green and blue infrastructure
5. Improve provision

1. Enhance sense of arrival

Improve perceptions of Leith Links and the sense of arrival through enhancing entrances. Features could include:

- Wayfinding boards
- Gateway features like SuDs
- Cycle parking
- Benches



2. Enhance sense of place

Leith Links history could be celebrated by:

- Interpretation boards for informal educational opportunities at locations of historical points of interest.
- 'Outdoor museum murals' could be introduced along wall façades celebrating Leith Links History.

Alternative ways:

- Naming benches, paths or sponsoring trees.
- Introducing interpretation boards that explain new green and blue infrastructure features.



Strategy diagram



3. Increase activity

The park should offer a range of free or low cost activities and host events that can generate income for the park. The masterplan will provide opportunities for...

Outdoor exercise for people of all ages and abilities.



Natural play in the East Links.



New activity at the former bowling green.



Games tables to introduce new uses.



Potential for new events or vendors at the park.



4. Improve provision

Leith Links would benefit from:

- Varied benches and furniture for all ages and abilities
- Bins in formalised areas
- Potential enhanced lighting in some areas of the park.
- Increased cycle parking.
- Path surfaces.
- Permanent toilets.



5. Enhance green & blue infrastructure

Green infrastructure:

- The park has good tree cover and the new arboretum enhances tree planting in Leith Links.
- Biodiversity can be improved with wildflower meadow.
- Flat roofed structures could be retrofitted with green roofs.

Meadow will increase biodiversity and nectar sources.



Green roofs on buildings and new structures.



Ecological features can provide habitat and visual interest. As well as educational opportunities.



Blue infrastructure:

To improve water management SuDs could be introduced into the park... This would benefit Leith, not just Leith Links. It is important that issues like climate change are considered in the masterplan.

SuDs can combine with other features and provide multiple benefits.



What are SUDS?

Sustainable Urban Drainage systems collect rainwater and reduce the amount of water running directly into storm drains.

Why are SUDS good?

- They help in reducing flooding and drains from overflowing.
- They improve amenity and biodiversity; they can help to create habitat space for wildlife.



Leith Links Concept Masterplan



Existing features:

- A** Giant's Brae Battery
- B** Lady Fyfe's Brae
- C** Tennis court
- D** Petanque court
- E** Children's Orchard
- F** Football pitches (Leith AFC)
- G** Cricket pitches
- H** Leith Links Golf Course
- I** Leith AFC Club house
- J** Earth in Common
- K** Golf monument
- L** Play area

Proposed features:

To enhance green and blue infrastructure:

- 1** Leith Links Arboretum. In collaboration with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and City of Edinburgh Council. This area includes new tree planting of varied species and meadow.
- 2** SuDs features in soft landscape. Rain gardens and swales with hibernacula/ ecological sculptural features.
- 3** SuDs features in hard landscape. Rain gardens at park entrance.
- 4** Wildflower meadow with hibernacula/ ecological sculptural features.
- 5** Existing flat roof buildings in the park could be retrofitted with sedum or other type green roofs to enhance biodiversity on site and provide further visual interest in the park.

Proposed features:

To enhance sense of arrival and place:

- 6** Improved entrances to Leith Links. All main entrance points to the park should have features such as cycle stands, a park map board, wayfinding signage and benches within close proximity.
- 7** Leith 'Outdoor Museum' Mural. The wall in this section of the park is currently covered in graffiti and detracts from the appearance of the Links. There is scope to create an outdoor museum along this wall to tell the story of Leith and Leith's local history along this wall. This would enhance the sense of place and celebrate Leith's rich history.
- 8** There is potential to put a mural or signage feature along the grassed wall at Seafield Place. This could be a 'Welcome to Leith Links or I love Leith' feature sign. This could be developed to have ecological features also.

Proposed features:

To improve provision and activity

- 9** 'Links Place Community Activity Park'. The concept proposals include; an outdoor gym for all ages and abilities, a wheeled area, climbing zone and a new building use with public toilets. Any proposals will be set within a framework of SuDs, meadow and new planting.
- 10** Enhanced seating opportunities in key areas of the park. Furniture could include benches with arms and back rests, wheelchair friendly picnic benches, tables with game board tops such as chess and table tennis.
- 11** Potential to introduce features like ping pong tables and football tennis tables to provide new opportunities in the Links.
- 12** Trim trail features throughout the park as part of a 3km fitness loop. The trail would be guided by wayfinding features or floor markings providing direction.

- 13** Natural Play Area at the East Links. There are homes in close proximity to the East Links that are not served by the Council's play standard, 2016. A 'Good' rated play space in the East links could assist in addressing this issue.
- 14** Contemporary band stand. An outdoor space that would allow future small events to take place. This would also allow for informal performance, imaginative play for children, space to hang out and provide another level of activity and engagement in Leith Links.
- 15** Communal shed in the Children's orchard to store maintenance equipment for community groups interested in maintaining spaces in Leith Links.
- 16** Position of existing and potential concession vendors in the park. Earth in Common Cafe, coming soon.



Leith Links Masterplan

Concept Visuals

Concept visual 1: Enhanced entrances

Enhancing entrances into the Leith Links to improve sense of arrival and place.



1. Landscape precedent images:



Concept Visual 2: Improve provision and activity

Improving features in Leith Links to increase opportunity for use.



2. Landscape precedent images:



Concept visual 3: Enhance biodiversity

Wildflower meadow and ecological features in Leith Links enhances biodiversity.



3. Landscape precedent images:



Concept visual 4: Activity Park Concept

Features that could be in the Links Place Community Activity Park.



4. Landscape precedent images:

