

# Little France Park Management Plan 2020 – 2030

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# Introduction

## The Site – Little France Park

Little France Park was previously referred to as South East Wedge parkland and is under ownership of City of Edinburgh Council. The context for the South East Wedge Parkland was first established with the approval of the Craigmillar Urban Design Framework (CUDF) in 2005. The CUDF set out that the area should be developed as a significant new strategic park linking with parallel developments in Midlothian<sup>1</sup>. The development of this new public park allows the City of Edinburgh Council to contribute to a quality greenspace that provides a setting for the EBQ (Edinburgh Bio Quarter) and established and newly developing communities around Craigmillar, Greendykes, Edmondstone, Moredun and Danderhall. The park resides within the NE locality boundary and the Portobello and Craigmillar Ward.

Little France Park is approximately 45Ha and lies north and south of Little France Drive, centred on OS grid reference: NT296706. The site runs to the CEC south east boundary at The Wisp adjacent to the Midlothian Council area. To the north west is Hawkhill Wood which forms part of Craigmillar Castle Park. The ERI, Bio Quarter and Edmondstone Estate form the south west boundary and the north east boundary lies on the new development of Greendykes and future housing developments under construction. <sup>1</sup>



Fig1. Boundary and main pathway features (Source: ELGT)

### **South East Wedge Parkland Development Principles<sup>1</sup>**

The parkland as a whole will:

- Have a clearly defined landscape structure which is designed with future use and low maintenance in mind
- Be a visually stimulating environment which provides clear transition between the urban area and Edinburgh's rural hinterland
- Use a limited palette of parkland furniture including benches, signage and footpath surfacing – exceptions to this should be high quality public art
- Through its design, walkways and planting, protect views to Craigmillar Castle, Arthur's Seat and Edinburgh Castle
- Maximise biodiversity throughout the design
- Promote the interpretation and conservation of the areas important archaeological and historic sites and monuments including the remains of the Edmonstone Estate and the scheduled ancient monument located NE of Home Farm and,
- Protect the function of the public transport link, the safeguarded tram route, and complete strategic footpath and cycleway networks

The North Meadow (North Slope) should;

- Create an attractive setting for the new adjacent buildings at the ERI and housing at Greendykes South
- Accommodate flood water storage, and,
- Enhance the setting of Craigmillar Castle and its Designed Landscape

The South Woods (South Slope) should;

- Create a robust and defensible edge to the housing at New Greendykes, the EBQ and the edge of the built up area
- Frame views of Craigmillar Castle, Edinburgh Castle and Arthur's Seat from Edmonstone ridge
- Recognise the setting of and highlight the Scheduled Ancient Monument (Prehistoric Domestic and Defensive NE of Home Farm) by use of careful interpretation and a maintenance regime, and
- Recognise and protect the Edmondstone estate boundary and remains of Home Farm

The Niddrie Burn Corridor should;

- Provide space for the Niddrie Burn to flood safely
- Create a safe and informal recreational space for the local community, allowing those on both sides of the river to interact
- Create a highly valuable wildlife corridor with a variety of habitats, ensuring that the surveyed otter population and potential water vole population can move freely along the watercourse, and,
- Conserve, interpret and enhance historic elements of the burn

The supplemental guidance (above) is extracted from the Finalised Edinburgh Bio Quarter and South East Wedge Parkland LDP (2013). In order to comply with the development plan, development proposals are required to adhere to the principles set out in the guidance. In addition, other LDP policies and Action Programme requirements also apply particularly those relating to developer contributions, urban design, landscape and open space in new development.<sup>1</sup>

Little France Park is a strategic section of green infrastructure for Edinburgh and the region. Central to the success of Little France Park and the entire redevelopment area is the provision of high quality cycle and active travel routes set within the parkland.<sup>2</sup>

**Note:**

1. *Finalised Edinburgh Bio Quarter and South East Wedge Parkland LDP (2013)*
2. *CSGN Integrating Active Travel Routes, Case Study (2016)*

## Purpose of the management plan

This site-specific management plan covers the period from 2020 to 2030. It was produced by the City of Edinburgh Council Parks & Greenspace site officer with contributions from ELL (Edinburgh Living Landscape) Partners within the site management group. Over the lifetime of the project other key stakeholders also include; Scottish Enterprise, EDI group, NHS Lothian, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), University of Edinburgh, Forestry Commission Scotland, SUSTRANS.

Reference should also be made to other available papers, plans and case studies below;  
“PARC North Meadows / South Woods Parkland, Feasibility study (2012/13)”  
“Local Development Plan for Edinburgh Bio Quarter and South East Wedge Parkland (2013)”  
“CSGN Integrating Active Travel Routes (2016)”  
“Little France Management Framework – Ecology summary with recommendations (2019)”  
“Little France Park – Wildlife Week, outcomes & species list (2019)”

Consultation will be undertaken with ELL partners, key stakeholders and the local community, and has been made available online via CEC Consultation Hub for comment. The plan is intended to offer guidance on all aspects of the management of Little France Park. It is a ten-year plan with a review to be undertaken after five years and annual commitment to carry out the detail of the work plan, subject to commitments of funding and resources.

# The Management Plan in relation to the wider national and local policy and legislative context

See appendices: Wider national and local policy and legislative context for further information on policy and legislation relating to CEC Parks and Greenspace management.

## Site Significance

### Site Location

OS grid reference: NT296706 (Centre of North and South slopes). Location: Little France Park, (north slope: 55.923015, -3.128567) (south slope: 55.922903, -3.127620) and is located to the south east of the City of Edinburgh, approx. 5.5 miles from the city centre. Little France Park is bounded by arterial routes, Old Dalkeith Road (A7) and The Wisp, and Little France Drive. It is partially surrounded by both established and developing communities at; Edmondstone, The Inch, Craigmillar, Craigour, Moredun, Gilmerton, Niddrie, Greendykes, Danderhall and new housing development at Tobias Street / Milligan Drive / Pringle Drive, Manor Wood, Sandilands.

Size: The site is approx 45Ha in size and almost exclusively reclaimed farmland. The north slope is approximately 13Ha and the south slope is approximately 32Ha. It rises from 160ft from sea level at the intersection at Little France Drive. Heading north the site rises to 220ft towards Greendykes Road entrance and 240ft at Hawkhill Woods entrance. The south slope rises through 262ft at midpoint of the site to around 300ft at the highest point of the site and towards The Wisp entrance / Edmondstone boundary.



Fig 2. Topographic Heatmap (source: <https://en-gb.topographic-map.com/maps/0v/Edinburgh/>)

The site is located within Portobello / Craigmillar Ward of Edinburgh. Current elected members to the ward can be found via the following URL: ([http://edinburgh.gov.uk/councillors/specificWard/15/portobello\\_craigmillar](http://edinburgh.gov.uk/councillors/specificWard/15/portobello_craigmillar))

Lothian Buses provide services to surrounding streets to Greendykes Terminus on Milligan Drive and services to and around Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on Little France Drive. There is very limited on street parking around the site. Responsible on street parking is available nearby in residential areas and there is currently no dedicated or formal parking provision for use of the site itself.

Stakeholders: Little France Park is open to all members of the public who wish to use the site under SOAC responsible access rights and Civic Govt Scotland Act 1982 and associated Local Authority management rules. (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1982/45/contents>)

### Historical Coal Seams

The Coal Authority website showing an area of possible shallow coal mine workings on the South slope of Little France Park. The Coal Authority manages the effects of past coal mining, including subsidence damage claims which are not the responsibility of licensed coal mine operators. It deals with mine water pollution and other mining legacy issues.

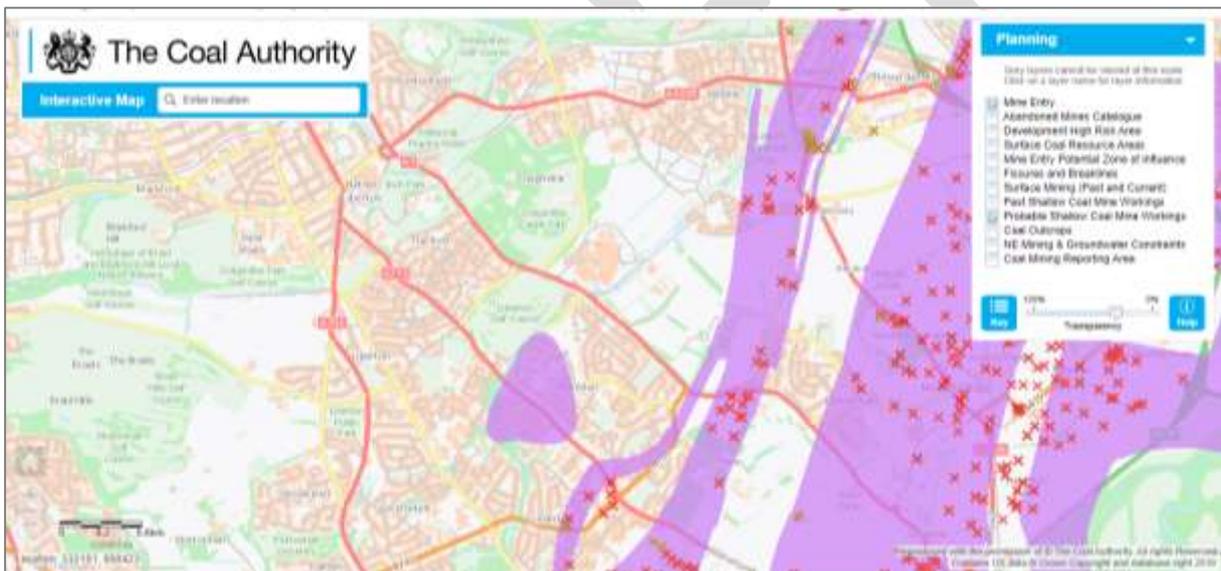


Fig 3. Historical Mineworkings – The Coal Authority (<https://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/coalauthority/home.html>)

Red 'X' = Mine Shaft entry  
Purple overlay = Probable Shallow Coal Mine Workings

## Ownership, tenure and responsible Authorities

Approx 40Ha of the land at Little France Park is owned by City of Edinburgh Council. Areas of land currently within the footprint of the park but privately owned make up approx 5Ha.

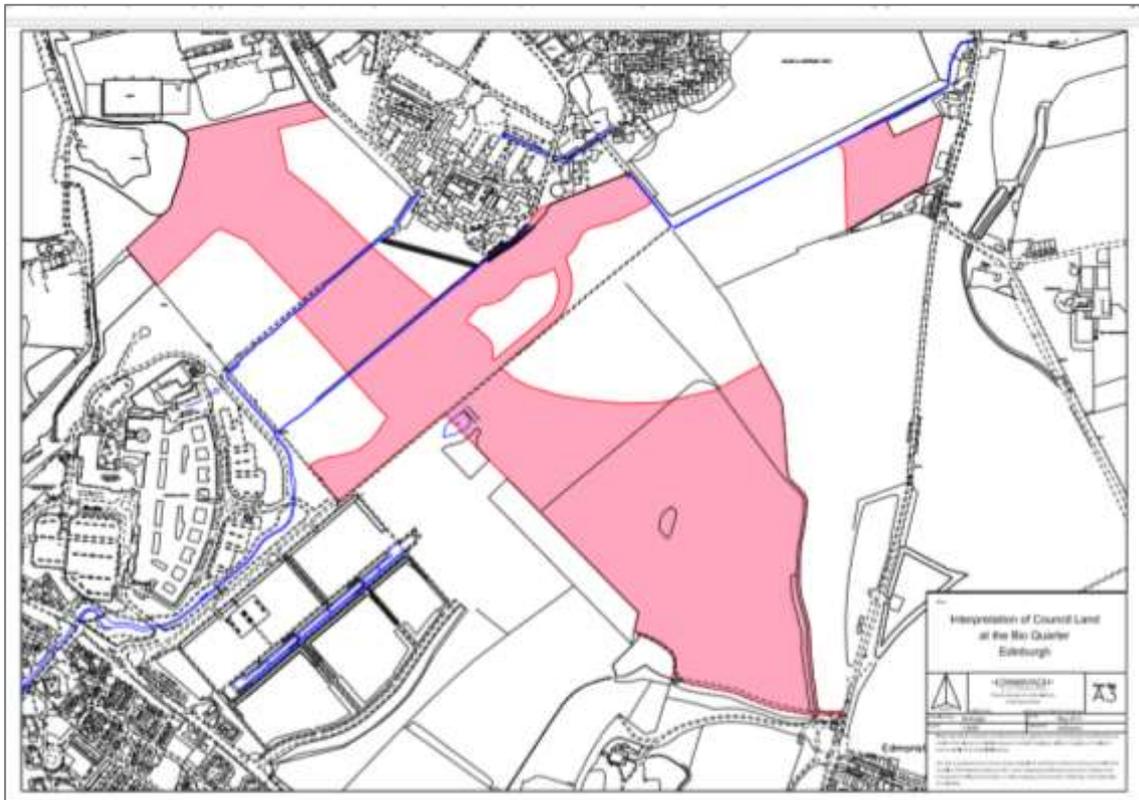


Fig 4. LFP Tenure / Ownership

Other key interested stakeholders include; Scottish Enterprise, Bio Quarter Management Group, EDI group, NHS Lothian and private landowners within the footprint of the site.

### **City of Edinburgh Council Parks & Greenspaces / Natural Heritage Service**

The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) Parks and Greenspaces, Natural Heritage service currently manage 13 countryside type sites within the boundary of the city. With an emphasis on maintenance and provision of facilities to provide improved access to public land, conservation of natural, cultural and historical interests of each site, working in partnership to improve the quality of the sites, assist in increasing the use and diversity of users on each site, manage and preserve valuable habitats in the city's parks and greenspaces.

Site officers also seeks to increase public understanding, appreciation and care for parks & greenspaces in and around Edinburgh. CEC Parks and Greenspace staff undertake this by;

- Ensuring that all sites under our management are clean, green, safe and well maintained;
- Providing a service that responds to the various needs of our local communities and customers;
- Working in partnership with other organisations for the benefit of the sites and the local communities;
- Working in conjunction with Friends groups and local community groups to ensure that the public have the opportunity to be involved with the sites under our management;
- Ensure that we are efficient in how we work. Enable and fulfil quality delivery of projects on sites under our management;
- Ensure that any work delivered is appropriate, well supervised and is of a high standard.

Main contact:

Little France Park – Natural Heritage Service

City of Edinburgh Council, Parks and Greenspaces, 69a Braid Road, Edinburgh, EH10 6JF  
0131 529 2401

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

### The historic environment / previous land use overview

City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) have managed the site as a public park since 2018. The parkland occupies approx 40Ha owned by CEC. Areas of land currently within the footprint of the park but privately owned make up approx 5Ha. See Fig 4. LFP Tenure / Ownership.

Some areas currently within the footprint of the site, North slope, are in private ownership. These will be sensitively considered within the footprint of the park until any other function or use is determined by those owners.

The site under CEC ownership was previously undeveloped low-quality arable land much of which comprised high nutrient / nitrogen rich enriched soils and single species grassland dominates the space. There is an area of low nutrient grassland with some recorded herbaceous species diversity.

Wetland areas exist in three areas, one engineered flood defence, one SUDS and the blue corridor of the re-aligned Niddrie Burn. There are a number of historical boundary hedges with some continuous cover loss, successional, self-seeded scrub species and self-seeded birch, sycamore and ash, two areas of poorly formed, dense single species ash tree thickets suffering from Ash die back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*), a densely planted mixed species woodland block and mature boundary trees as well as a number of historical rubble field walls.

The area has been derelict for a number of years prior to its development as parkland and suffered from extensive fly-tipping. As part of the preparation to convert the site into active use as parkland CEC removed 90 tons of fly-tipped waste from the site.

There are some invasive species found on site, Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) on the boundary of Edmonstone Estate and the Niddrie Burn corridor. Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) in three areas targeted by CEC grounds maintenance invasive treatment team.

There is an opportunity to begin active management to clearly define improved habitats across the site. The site historically is abandoned farmland which is dominated by successional scrub establishing heavily across both north and south slopes. The areas outlined in this plan show a desire to retain significant scrub at discrete areas on the site whilst allowing conversion of areas to species rich grassland, some limited areas will be managed as amenity grassland.

## Partnerships

CEC Parks & Greenspaces site officer manages the day to day activities and maintenance of Little France Park, with the valued assistance of a range of partners and 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations. The CEC site officer manages the site and co-ordinates routine maintenance, H&S remediation work, planned revenue spend, project development and assists capital projects and co-ordinates and provides advice for appropriate community engagement, site use and conservation projects.

City of Edinburgh Council;

- CEC Parks and Greenspaces, Natural Heritage Service
- CEC Forestry Team
- Natural and Built Heritage – City of Edinburgh Council Planning
- CEC Localities Support (cleansing / grounds maintenance)
- CEC Archaeological Services (CEAS) - archaeological curatorial advisory and management service for the council

External Partnerships include;

- Edinburgh Living Landscape (ELL)
- Edinburgh Lothian Greenspace Trust (ELGT)
- Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh (RBGE)
- Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT)
- Butterfly Conservation (BC)
- Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BCT)
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
- Royal Society Protection Birds (RSPB)
- SUSTRANS
- Scottish Enterprise
- Bio Quarter Management Group
- Edinburgh University
- NHS Scotland
- The EDI group
- Forestry & Land Scotland (FLS)
- Trees for Cities
- The Woodland Trust
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)

- Corporate Volunteers
- Little France Park Friends Group (LFPF)
- Botanical Society of Scotland
- British Trust for Ornithology volunteers

We will continue to keep local communities informed including local elected members and local community members and organisations.

### Edinburgh Living Landscape Project

The Edinburgh Living Landscape (ELL) is a long-term vision to ensure that nature is at the heart of the city's future. It will demonstrate that investment in the natural environment makes economic sense as well as increasing biodiversity and creating healthier urban ecosystems. To do this we need to integrate nature into neighbourhoods across the city. The project will reinforce and expand existing green networks and reconnect the people of Edinburgh to their natural environment. The Edinburgh Living Landscape will work to benefit local people and wildlife with an aim to make the city one of the most sustainable in Europe by 2050.

See appendices: Edinburgh Living Landscapes in relation to CEC Parks and Greenspace management.

# Habitat Management - Habitats & Wildlife

## Hedge line Extension

Hedgerows are listed as a priority habitat in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Hedges are important as a linking habitats or as stepping stones and can provide pollen- and nectar-rich flowers throughout March to late-September, so can be particularly important at the beginning (e.g. willows, cherry, hawthorn and blackthorn) and at the end of the season as selected species may flower earlier or later than meadows. Hedges can also provide a breeding location and offer shelter for a wide variety of animals as well as provide a valuable food source.

A remnant hedge marks old field boundaries that runs south-west to north-east in the centre of the south slope. The total length of this remnant hedge (including gaps) is approximately 180 metres. It comprises scattered trees amongst denser re-growth. The species are a mix of sycamore, ash and elm in early maturity, and therefore likely to be too mature to bring back into management as a hedge, but offer an existing tree layer to underplant. Increasing the species diversity would also enhance the benefits of this landscape feature. The current structure does not provide the same depth and density of understory and scrub offered by a true hedge.

The map below, Fig 5. shows that the location of the derelict hedge is in a gap between woodland network features and with reinstatement would add to the woodland network along with the scrub creation. A wide hedge (similar to linear scrub) would function as quality habitat stepping stone, and visually could be used to delineated the more managed north-west of the site from a wilder south-east section.<sup>(4)</sup>

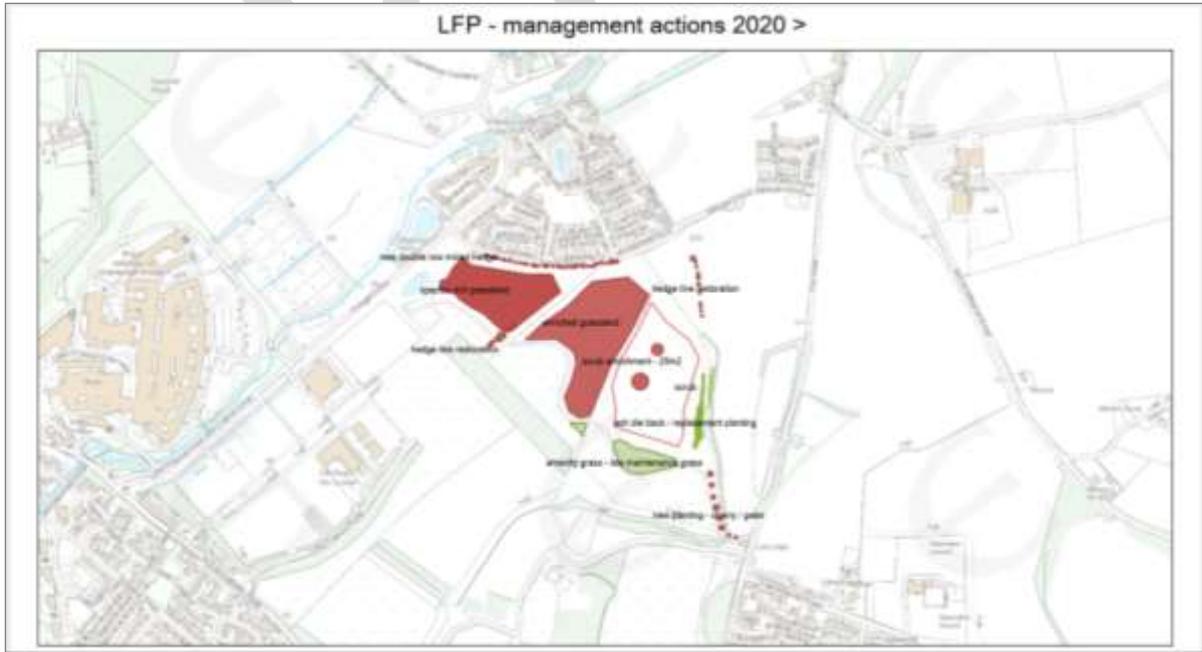


Fig 5. LFP Management Actions 2020 >

## Hedgerow Enhancement Proposal

It is proposed to enhance the species and structural diversity of the remnant hedge through planting and introducing a low maintenance regime. The objective is to create a well-structured hedge with a variety of habitat niches for a wide range of invertebrate species and food sources, and shelter for birds and small mammals. <sup>(4)</sup>

### Planting Plan

Consultant produced LFP Management framework document (see appendix: LFP Wildlife Report & Recommendations 2019) will provide guidance to the implementation of hedge line restoration and extension. A staggered triple row of appropriate species will encourage an effective distinct habitat.

Planting should focus on species that already occur in hedgerows in the area. All plants should be of native species from local provenance, as they are more likely to thrive in the local climate and soils. More shade tolerant species could be chosen for planting in the locations near mature trees. To ensure an authentic field boundary hedge, it is recommended that at least 50% of planting is hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with the remainder selected from native species appropriate for hedges as recommended in the report cited. <sup>(4)</sup>

### Post-planting Management

- Following coppicing, planting or laying most trees and shrubs re-grow quickly, so annual light trimming by removing up to one third of new growth each year for the first few years will help to stimulate a dense growth form, and would offer an opportunity for volunteers
- During the establishment phase, any plant which competes with the hedgerow plants is likely to reduce growth rates, so a weed free area around each plant for the first few growing seasons should be maintained. This can be done using a mulch. Chipped woody debris (such as from the onsite coppicing), or grassland cut arisings, could be used.
- Any plants that die in the first few years may need to be replaced to prevent gaps
- Once well established, the spirals, and if wanted, the fence can be removed <sup>(4)</sup>

Note:

4. *Little France Management Framework (extract) – Hebe Carus 2019*

## Scrub enrichment

There will be temporary scrub habitat as the newly planted woodlands grow, but this will mature to woodland. To maintain a presence of scrub habitat, which is ideal for thicket nesting birds, it is recommended that the area south of the enriched grassland be supported to develop into a mosaic of grassland interspersed with scrub. This would need no long term management. As the rank grass and lack of seed source will not naturally progress the habitat in this direction in a meaningful timescale, it is proposed that a few areas of scrub-specific species are planted.

Consultant produced LFP Management framework document (see appendix: LFP Wildlife Report & Recommendations 2019) will provide guidance to the implementation of scrub enrichment. Species selection should be based on linking with the proposed species for the hedge re-establishment in the report cited. These species are selected to balance nativeness, biodiversity benefit and avoidance of the need for long term height management. The ideal locations and sizes of scrub patches are flexible with irregular patches of average diameter around 25 metres planted at a density of 2,500 trees / ha (2 m spacing) to ensure density. Per Fig 5.

New planting on site is reported as at risk from rabbits, voles and roe deer. Fencing and other protection are however expensive and can be counterproductive, encouraging spindly growth and being difficult to remove as well as unsightly. The compromise proposal therefore is for initial establishment within 1.2 metre stock fencing with whips protected by spiral guards or tubes. The guards should be removed based on an assessment, but likely to be around 3 or 4 years dependent on growth rate. The fence could be removed after the trees and shrubs are no longer at risk of being killed by herbivores. Size or growth pattern-limiting browsing is acceptable. The species selected with a significant constituent of thorny species should be self-protecting after 5-10 years.<sup>(4)</sup>

### Note:

4. *Little France Management Framework (extract) – Hebe Carus 2019*

## Wildlife Week / Biodiversity Surveying

In June 2019 CEC Natural Heritage site officer in partnership with Edinburgh Living Landscape organisations and other conservation groups put together a programme of events in an informal wildlife week event to raise awareness of the park and to allow visitors to learn more about the wildlife that can be found there. Wildlife experts from across Edinburgh joined forces with local people to explore the park and discover the site. (See appendix: LFP Species recording Wildlife Week (2019)).

Over 200 new species records were generated. There were nine different activities that took place in the park over the week with nine different organisations contributing. This included workshops with schools, public walks and expert surveys. There were the following events offered during a 5 day period in June 2019;

- Beewalk ID and survey
- Bryophytes and lichens survey
- Butterfly transect & ID workshop
- Family bird walk
- Health walk wildlife survey
- Observational botanical survey
- Primary school bee transect and habitat creation workshops
- Training workshop for Forest School

The main aim of the Wildlife Week was to engage local people, highlight Edinburgh's newest park to a wider audience, promote the park as a biodiverse and valuable natural greenspace.

The event has helped increase awareness and the workshops with local school are changing perceptions and understanding of the area and the valuable habitats and species in the park. There were 212 new wildlife records were generated for the park from all the events and recordings filling in an important gap in our knowledge about the site.

There is likely to be a continuation of a similar event-based approach in future years. See appendix. LFP Species recording Wildlife Week (2019) for report on outcomes.

<https://edinburghlivinglandscape.org.uk/2019/07/new-film-explores-little-france-park/>

## Square Metre Project (SqM)

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) and Butterfly Conservation Scotland (BCS) are working with the CEC to identify areas on the site to create a square metre for butterflies travelling linearly through Little France Park for delivery during 2020. The project overall will travel beyond the footprint of the site towards Arthurs Seat. These SqM will take the form of raised beds or containers containing grasses and species planted out that provide food plants for three species of butterfly –Northern Brown Argus, Common Blue and Small Copper. The Small Copper has been recorded on the Little France Park site during formal butterfly transect recording and observations which began in 2019.

The Northern Brown Argus butterfly existed on Arthur’s Seat as early as 1793. After its discovery it became a highly prized addition to the collections of butterfly enthusiasts and over-zealous collecting plus land use changes at Holyrood including the building of a road through the last remaining population strongholds of this species. This meant that the iconic population of Northern Brown Argus butterflies had disappeared by 1869; less than 100 years after it was first discovered. In 2005 the Northern Brown Argus was re-discovered at Holyrood and the population has continued to increase annually.

Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh (RBGE) in partnership with Butterfly Conservation Scotland (BCS) working with CEC Natural Heritage site officer, and as part of Edinburgh Living Landscape project, are welcoming this beautiful butterfly back by providing all it requires– space, food for adults and caterpillars and shelter in open greenspaces in the city.

As part of the project there will be training sessions on butterfly identification to allow community members to monitor local plots when visiting the park and send in any observational records. The aim of the project is to demonstrate the importance of these high level resources for pollinators and other wildlife and offer extension of the range of these valuable butterflies. <sup>(3)</sup>

### Note:

1. *Butterfly Conservation Scotland /RBGE – statement of intent 2019*

A map is to be produced with notations of potential sites inside the footprint of the park and between the park and Arthur's Seat. Planters of around 15m<sup>2</sup> equivalents within the park some of which adjacent to the seating in the south section of the park to be constructed, likely 1m<sup>2</sup> and constructed of sleeper style timber boards.

Approx 1500 plants to be produced for planting out. Sourcing and growing on is to be determined as the project is progressed by all parties involved in the project; RBGE, CEC, Butterfly Conservation, ELGT. The focus is on northern brown argus butterfly and *Helianthemum nummularium* establishment. Compost/substrate infill could be augmented with limestone chips. Planting out on sites within the park is likely to be with local groups or schools and maintained by volunteers from the community.

## Grassland Management

### Current Grassland Context

Over the last 50-60 years, three million hectares of UK wildflower-rich grassland were lost (about 97%), and so far less than 1% has been re-created. It is therefore important to include a component of grassland enhancement at LFP as currently the grassland is predominantly dominated by grass with little diversity or structure. Diversifying the current mostly rank grassland will complement the meadows across Edinburgh created through the Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative and add to the network that links through the openings in Hawkhill Wood and Craigmillar Castle woods through the rough grassland element of Prestonfield Golf Course to the grasslands of Bawsinch and Holyrood Park. Light on-going management would be required to maintain the gains.

Consultant produced LFP Management framework document (see appendix: LFP Wildlife Report & Recommendations 2019). will provide guidance to the implementation of improvements or management changes to the grassland at Little France Park. The CSGN Integrated Habitat Network for grasslands illustrate an area on the south slope is neutral grassland. Neutral grassland areas are likely to be of greater diversity or potential than other areas. There is ecological value in enhancing the quality grasslands between to promote connectedness.

Management to promote habitat quality should target achieving a varied structural and species diversity, so delivering a wide range of micro-habitats that support diverse communities of dependent species. Structural diversity can be achieved through varied management regimes across the LFP grasslands, varying from unmanaged to an annual or twice annual meadow mowing regime with removal of arisings. Species diversity may be a challenge without specific intervention outside of areas with existing diversity as the seed bank will be depleted or absent and too distant from quality seed sources.

Long vegetation over the winter provides seed heads for birds and shelter for small mammals. It is also a valuable overwintering habitat for invertebrates such as bumblebees. A particular target species could be the small skipper butterfly (*Thymelicus sylvestris*). It's caterpillars overwinter in undisturbed tussocks of Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanata*), and both have been recorded in LFP. It is therefore useful to retain a proportion of unmanaged grassland, but this will tend to be species poor, hence the need for some areas to be managed. <sup>(4)</sup>

#### Note:

4. Little France Management Framework (extract) – Hebe Carus 2019

## Bee banks

In Britain there are around 270 species of bee, around 250 of which are solitary bees and 65 species are mining bees. Many solitary bees nest in the soil, but are dependent on un-compacted bare ground. As an historically agricultural site, the soil is likely to be compacted, and generally have good levels of nutrients promoting colonisation of bare ground. A simple approach to providing this habitat is to create soil conditions in raised areas that suppressed vegetation growth and remain un-compacted. Creating new high value habitats and managing existing linear raised features that are profiled with a south-facing slopes.

For aesthetic reasons, the mounds could be lightly sown or plug planted with species that are adapted to this type of soil or substrate which would benefit a range of invertebrates, but it is primarily the substrate that would be of value.

### Bee Bank Creation Proposal

Consultant produced LFP Management framework document (see appendix: LFP Wildlife Report & Recommendations 2019) will provide guidance to the implementation of this high value habitat. An area has been identified near the lower stone seat on the south slope and close to the high value, species rich grassland. The mounded stone / sand material is oriented so that the inner slopes of the raised crescent shape are south facing. <sup>(4)</sup>

The creation of an artificial bee bank was achieved using the BugLife online guide to creating this experimental habitat feature. The artificial bee bank should provide a warm, sheltered patch of bare ground where solitary bees can nest. The bank is south facing, and the shape is curved to trap the warmth of the sun. This first bee bank was built with the help of ELGT, corporate volunteers and a health and wellbeing programme. Some disturbance from dogs on the site is evident and fencing may be required to protect the face of the bank.

There is a nearby machined south facing slope running approximately 60m linearly that was created during the installation of the active travel route which is currently bare of vegetation. It will be attempted to be kept clear of vegetation over approx 40% of the slope. The soil is reasonably compacted so may not be found to be a desirable location for solitary bees. Ongoing observations will be undertaken by site officers and conservation or survey volunteers.

#### Note:

4. *Little France Management Framework (extract) – Hebe Carus 2019*

## Pollinator strip / enrichment

An area on the south slope close to the artificial bee bank and lower stone seat (location: 55.922239, -3.124687) and the reclaimed grasslands of approximately 150m x5m in a linear strip has been identified as a beneficial area to undertake specific enrichment using scotia seeds urban pollinator mix. In Autumn 2019 the area was prepared and the ground scarified to allow for an over seed of 3g per m<sup>2</sup> per scotia guidelines.

The mix is made up of native wildflower species that can provide nectar food sources over a longer period over the summer and without 'food scarcity gap periods' with a long and continuous flowering period from early spring to late summer and the grasses provide a valuable breeding ground for species of butterflies that must lay their eggs on grass stalks.

Once established the herbaceous plants should create a permanent community of attractive pollen and nectar producing plants to provide the best food for pollinators throughout the season.

There are 22 wildflower & 6 grass species in this mix and the mix includes annuals, biennials and perennials. (<https://www.scotiaseeds.co.uk/shop/urban-pollinator-mix/>)

## Natural Habitats & Wildlife

Little France Park lies is valued as part of the local nature network to boost resilience and target habitat for key species already present or nearby especially on EBAP or Scottish Biodiversity List where these will have broader benefit than for a specific species. <sup>(4)</sup> A future opportunity exists to undertake a full baseline survey to assist with informing future management actions.

Little France Park is essential to building a network for nature across the city for the benefit for the citizens of the city and the wildlife found on the 45Ha site. The context of the site is reclaimed farmland which is now dominated by successional scrub establishing heavily across both north and south slopes. There will be continued retention of scrub as a habitat of value on much of the site but with discrete management approaches to some areas. The site provides an opportunity to begin active management and to observe, record, define and improve the quality of habitats across the site.

The habitats found on the site include existing habitats of woodlands, grasslands, scrub, hedges, blue corridors and wetlands. There are opportunities to reinstate degraded habitats where historical hedges exist, control invasive species found on site, enrich and enhance grassland and scrub habitats, introduce and extend additional green corridors, provide arboriculture interest and allow for some amenity management.

There will be areas determined in this plan for discrete active management and some areas for light touch management. The defined habitats that could benefit from improvement will have associated management actions. These will include reclaimed grassland / enriched grassland areas and adjusted cutting schedules to allow for quality grasslands to establish. Some amenity management will be introduced including an amenity strip 1m either side of the boundary of the active travel route, creation and maintenance of grass paths as defined

across the site to provide improved access to the community where a current lack of access exists or where there is a landscape benefit. Defined areas with a more frequent grass cutting schedule to provide low maintenance amenity grass, improving sightlines and perceptions of good management and quality grounds maintenance of the site for general enjoyment by visitors.

The grassland contributes to significant species biodiversity. Several species of solitary bees have been observed, as well as honeybees, hoverflies and butterflies including the red tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lapidarius*) and common carder bee (*Bombus pascuorum*). Little France Park is one of the most diverse sites in Edinburgh for butterflies. As well as many of the common and widespread species, less common species like Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*) and Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*) have been found, as well as high numbers of Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*), a species which has declined by over 50% in forty years. Other species of note include Ghost Moth (*Hepialus humuli*). Mother Shipton (*Callistege mi*), Cinnabar Moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*) and Five spot burnet (*Zygaena lonicerae*).

The key to this diversity is the mixture of habitats at Little France Park and its connection to the wider countryside beyond the city. Its location means that it can act as a stepping stone to connect the insects in the city and the countryside, helping to keep insect populations healthy.

Rodents observed include field voles (*Microtus agrestis*) and common shrews (*Sorex araneus*). The grassland provides resident and migrant birds with nesting and feeding space including swifts (*Apus apus*), Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*), Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*). Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*), Kestrels and Buzzards (*Buteo buteo*), hunt over the grassland. Wrens, (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), all nest in the unmanaged grassland and scrub. It provides cover for roe deer, (*Capreolus capreolus*), red foxes, (*Vulpes vulpes*) and Brown hares (*Lepus Europeaus*) which have all been seen on the site.

The park supports a rich variety of species. Existing records will offer a good baseline for monitoring future development of a set of habitats to be protected into the future - both for the enjoyment of people and the for enrichment of local biodiversity.

Further exploration of discrete habitats and how they may be managed follow.

## Neutral Grasslands

Proposals to enhance species richness have been targeted towards parts of the site that are likely to have lower fertility and more free-draining soils. Lower fertility of the soil is critical, and this can be achieved most economically and sustainably through removal of arisings after cuts. Removal is likely to incur a cost if this requires an external contractor to bale and remove as dog foul in grass renders the arisings a risk to cattle and therefore is categorised as waste rather than potential feed. A potential solution is proposed below. With the presence and likely adjacency of non-native invasive plant species and the remit to propose management that minimises costs, it is suggested that weedkilling and planting / seeding is not the best option. Although producing a quick result, this may result in a higher management input requirements as bare soil allows the pernicious weeds to take hold.

Consultant produced LFP Management framework document (see appendix: LFP Wildlife Report & Recommendations 2019) will provide guidance to the implementation of grassland management and enrichment opportunities. The Urban Pollinator Seed Mix developed through the Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative, and composed of locally-appropriate species seeds with local provenance, is a useful guide should re-seeding or “plugs” be necessary. These biodiversity-targeted management proposals will complement maintaining good public access and desired amenity cuts.

As part of the SNH Biodiversity Challenge Fund (BCF) project being delivered in partnership with ELGT yellow rattle overseeding and adjustment to the cutting schedule to include an annual end of season cut, and an arisings lift on an annual or biennial basis to allow establishment of quality and species rich grassland and to keep nutrient levels low. See Fig 5. LFP Management Actions 2020 >.

## Reclaimed / Enriched Grasslands

The reclaimed and enriched grassland is detailed as part of the BCF project funded by SNH and delivered in partnership between ELGT and CEC Parks & Greenspaces site officer.

The opportunity here is to begin active management to clearly define quality habitats and improved these across the site. The whole site is largely abandoned farmland which is dominated by successional scrub establishing heavily across both north and south slopes.

There is significant retention of scrub on discrete areas on the site with elements of additionally planted scrub with species diversity currently not on site such as; apple, pear, cherry, yew, rowan, hazel, whitebeams and wild Service tree. See Fig 5. LFP Management Actions 2020 >.

The grassland element of the project has removed some successional scrub to allow the grassland enrichment project to be delivered and managed into the future across 4ha of the 45ha site.

**Grassland Enrichment / Conversion**

Approx 4Ha area identified (Tobias Street slope) is targeted for conversion / enrichment for improved species variety / grassland habitat with some removal of areas of self seeded scrub. An appropriate preparation of the ground over Winter 2019/20 with a mechanical cut, lift and targeted chemical treatment for 15 / 15m2 sections. Early Spring 2020 requires a further harrow, arisings removal, scarification and overseeding with scotia seed mix. Following the preparation and overseeding an ongoing cut and lift regime should be introduced from 2020 to support continued grassland diversity.

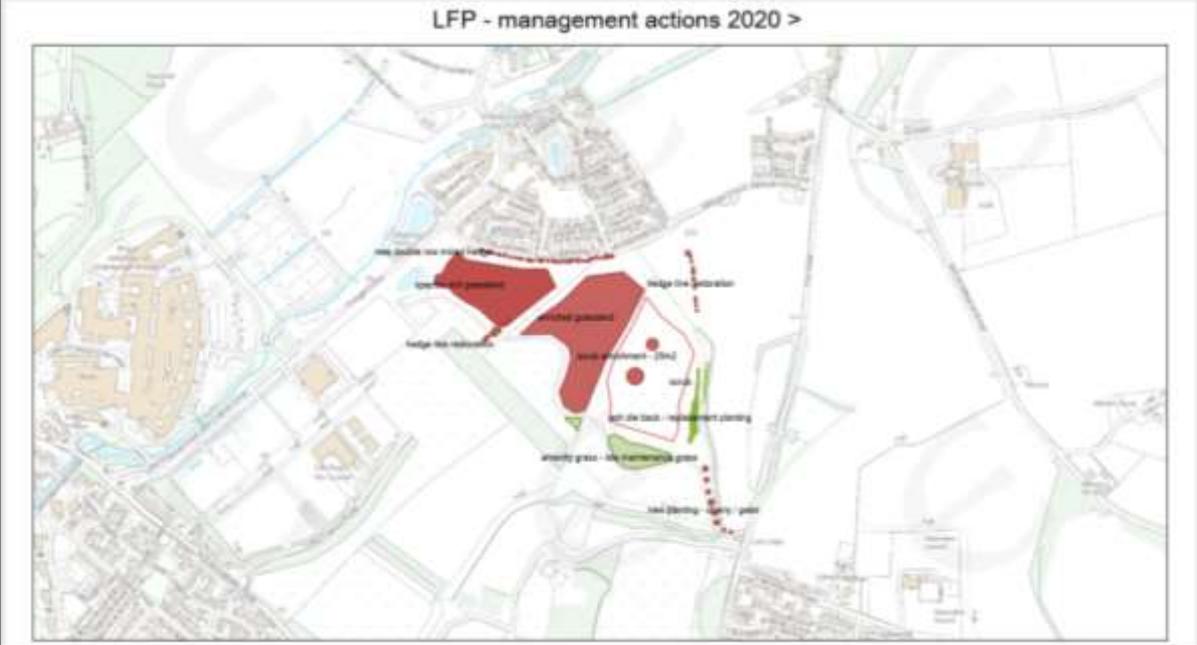


Fig 6. LFP Management Actions 2020 >

**Scrub**

The site was dominated by successional scrub establishing heavily across both north and south slopes. There will be continued retention of scrub as a habitat of value on much of the site with some limited removal where grassland enrichment is being undertaken.

The benefit of scrub on the site is of high value particularly as thickets for nesting birds. The area defined in Fig 5. LFP Management Actions 2020 > will be supported to develop into a mosaic of unmanaged grassland interspersed with scrub.

Overall management of the area will be light touch and allow continued successional growth of the scrub and trees as it develops into mature scrub with associated self seeded and specimen planted trees. This will enhance the scrub provision on site already and provide further species diversity and dense nesting and undisturbed areas for wildlife.

Areas highlighted in the map will be retained as scrub habitat and will have additional scrub areas added. The area identified for scrub definition will be bulked out over Winter 2019/20 as part of the SNH Biodiversity Challenge Fund (BCF) project being delivered in partnership with CEC and ELGT will add two 25m<sup>2</sup> fenced scrub areas including species such as; apple,

pear, cherry, yew, rowan, hazel, whitebeam and wild service tree. The areas will be fenced to protect from grazing from rabbits, voles and deer. A 1.2m stock proof fence will be installed initially whilst establishing with the option for removal around year 4.

## Protecting trees and woodlands

We have a legal duty to protect trees in the city and do this by issuing tree preservation orders. Trees in the City is a set of policies with an action plan which we use to guide the management of our trees and woodlands.

Download Trees in the City action plan (PDF, 724 KB)

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/22574/trees-in-the-city-action-plan>

Download a summary of our policies (PDF, 53 KB)

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/22642/tree-policy-summary>

## Schedule of works

When the Forestry Service inspects a city tree and finds work required it raises a work order in one of the priority categories;

Urgent - completed within 48 hours / High - within 28 days / Medium - within 3 months / Low - within 12 months.

It marks trees that are to be removed with a white cross. Trees to be pruned are marked with a white spot.

## Dutch elm disease

There are almost 15,000 elms trees in Edinburgh. They are slowly being attacked and killed by Dutch elm disease. To monitor the spread of this disease the city's elms trees are surveyed each summer. Trees marked with a yellow or orange cross have Dutch elm disease. Any trees showing signs of the disease are removed.

## Ash die back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)

Ash die back has spread very rapidly through the UK over the last few years and is now firmly established in Edinburgh. Unfortunately there is no cure for the disease and although mature ash trees can live for a long time with Chalara, young trees are particularly vulnerable and can succumb to infection much more quickly. Where infected trees on council land are considered to pose a risk to persons or property corrective works and felling will be carried out. In locations where infected trees do not pose any significant risks they will routinely be left to decline naturally for the other benefits that deadwood provides to the environment. Further information and advice for landowners can be found on the Forest Research website. Where opportunities exist to remove and replace as part of a wider project these will be considered on a case by case basis.

<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/pest-and-disease-resources/ash-dieback-hymenoscyphus-fraxineus/>

## Heritage trees

Heritage trees are notable and exceptional, whether this is due to great age, size or historical and cultural significance.

## Valuing Edinburgh's Urban Trees

Valuing Edinburgh's Urban Trees is a survey by Forest Research on the state of Edinburgh's urban trees in 2017. It examined the benefits Edinburgh's urban trees have on the people living here and used location, species health and size to calculate the scientific benefits provided by trees.

## Ezytreev

CEC Forestry Unit employs the use of their Easytreev Data Base to monitor the condition of trees that are next to roads, paths, buildings. Storm damage or the age of some of the trees and their susceptibility to disease result in some tree stock being felled for public safety. Where ever possible these are de-limbed to maintain as much biodiversity value as possible in addition to stumps being retained on site.

## Trees at Little France Park

The majority of the tree stock in the park has been recently planted and due to the nature of the site has varying degrees of risk from mammal damage; voles, hares and roe deer are all currently present. Rabbits and squirrels are likely to move into the park from neighbouring Craigmillar as younger woodland blocks mature to provide cover and form wildlife corridors. Specimen trees planted as standards have mesh guards which should be retained for as long as practically possible with future repairs to damaged guards being preferred over removal. Specimen trees should be widely spaced to maximise future development requirements, minimise vandalism likelihood and set back from the path network to minimise conflict. Newly planted woodlands have been planted in high density with a combination of both deer fencing and tree tubes. These woodlands comprise mainly of native mixes of Oak, Birch, Alder, Scots Pine and Cherry.

It is expected that minimal initial losses will occur but overall these protection methods are likely to establish the woodland blocks at high density. Higher density younger woodland stands in Edinburgh suffer from increased squirrel damage than sparser density comparisons so future thinning will be required to minimise this. Species choice also greatly influences mammal damage. Oak has been predominantly planted within these groups and from experience is favoured by squirrels. Birch, Pine, Alder and Cherry in Edinburgh are suffering from less squirrel damage when other more favourable species are present. For future thinning operations in younger high density woodland blocks the selective removal of Oak, Sycamore, Beech and Poplar should be in preference to Birch, Pine, Alder, Hazel, Cherry and Lime unless grey squirrel control is implemented.

The erection of raptor boxes on the mature trees within the site will encourage nesting and promote territories to predate on mammal populations.

Another major factor to consider when protecting the tree stock is threat from pests and diseases. Identification and control of such instances is essential in controlling spread and outbreaks as they occur. Regular monitoring should be undertaken with control measures implemented as necessary.

Dutch Elm Disease and Ash Dieback are both currently present within the site.

The removal of younger Ash stands has been conducted to hopefully preserve the mature ash trees within the site. Regrowth from cut stumps will likely succumb to the disease over time and is unlikely to pose any long term concerns.

Insect pests are also a considerable threat. Aside from monitoring and instigated control the promotion of wildlife also serves as a form of defence. The creation of hedgerows and preservation of naturally occurring self-seeded open space scrub will enhance much necessary cover and nesting opportunities for wildlife that predates on insect pests. Deadwood habitat and naturally formed habitat features should be retained where safe to do so with supplement of both bird and bat boxes to maximise the potential features that this site can offer.

Resilience is another key factor to ensure a good defence against the influx of pests and diseases. A rich mix of native and non native is essential. Supplementation of the newly planted native woodlands with sporadic non native tree species will provide diversity options that will increase long term resilience options.

### Specimen Trees

Full mapping and a species list is available for planted trees on site (see appendix: LFP trees - list of species 2019) which provide full detail of all caged specimen trees along with any original species of interest has been recorded / surveyed.

### Mixed deciduous planting

#### Replanted Woodlands

Strips of legacy woodland on the site with close to 100% ash composition, densely planted, with the majority having a stem diameter of <7cm and suffering with significant infection of Ash die back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*). These areas have been identified as suitable for removal and replanting. See Fig. 6 Replanted woodlands.

The total area of both locations is approx. 1.3 hectares. Composition for replanting will be native broadleaves, NVC W9 Upland Mixed Broad-leaves.

Ash die back compartment on the SE boundary was thinned with CEC site officers leading corporate volunteer days over several days on site during 2018. Additional thinning / removal works were left for future funded projects.

Through 3rd party funded projects working with ELGT and Trees for Cities both compartment 1 and 2 of these woodlands strips were contractor felled and all arisings chipped to waste onsite between 2018 and 2019.

Trees for cities funded approximately 800 stems of mixed deciduous native broadleaf whips with protective tree shelters and stakes to be planted by volunteers led by ELGT Engagement Officer with assistance from Postcode Lottery staff in 2019. See Fig. 7 replanted woodland – compartment 2. The ash suckering that may occur from cut stumps will be managed by corporate volunteers or Friends of Little France Park as required.

Trees for cities have funded approximately 500 stems and the Woodland Trust have funded approximately 500 stems of mixed deciduous native broadleaf whips with protective tree shelters and stakes to be planted by volunteers led by CEC site officers, Woodland Trust and ELGT Engagement Officer with assistance from corporate volunteers. These will be planted by March 2020. See Fig.7 replanted woodland – compartment 1. The ash suckering that may occur from cut stumps will be managed by corporate volunteers or Friends of Little France Park as required.



Fig. 7 Replanted woodlands.

**Established woodland compartment**

The site contains a single block of legacy woodland, estimated age around 15-20 years, on the site with mixed composition and densely planted. We do not have a full survey of species or planting density at the time of writing this plan.

The full compartment retains a low fenced boundary around the whole compartment. This could be considered for removal following thinning and crown lifting management actions with agreement with the landowner. The overall footprint of the woodland is 2.9Ha and is intersected by the active travel route from Little France Drive. See Fig. 8

The compartment would benefit from selective thinning and retention of desired species and crown lifting and thinning at path edge margins. There are ongoing discussions with the Bio Quarter on improved pedestrian access on surfaced paths through the woodland compartment to allow pedestrian egress to the park.



Fig. 8 Established woodland compartment

### Newly Created Woodland Compartment

Trees for cities funded approximately 1000 stems of mixed deciduous native broad leaf whips with protective tree shelters and stakes to be planted by volunteers led by ELGT Engagement Officer with assistance from local schools and community planting session during 2018. See Fig. 9. Newly created woodland compartment.

The total area is 3.22 hectares. Composition is native broadleaves, NVC W9 Upland Mixed Broad-leaves with the following mixes and stocking densities:

- English oak (*Quercus robur*) 30%
- Sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) 15%
- Silver birch (*Betula pendula*) 15%
- Downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) 10%
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) 5%
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) 5%
- Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) 5%
- Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) 5%
- Open Ground 10%

Stocking densities: 1,600 stems per hectare for 90% of the area and 10% open ground. The species choice is from NVC W16 Lowland oak-birch. As part of the species mix it is proposed to plant 5% Scots pine to link in with the Scots pine planted in the adjacent woodland at Craigmillar Castle Park.

The area was prepared by mechanical mounding with whips being planted with no protection in the exposed soil in the turned sod. The area was deer fenced in two sections with the active travel route intersecting two fenced areas to Greendykes Road. Some beating up will be required due to grazing of the newly planted whips prior to fencing being installed.

These requirements can be tackled with corporate volunteers, conservation volunteers or Friends of Little France Park.



Fig. 9 Newly created woodland compartment

### Margin Tree Planting

There has been an additional approx. 30 wild cherry / bird cherry whips with protective tree shelters and stakes planted in the grassed margin of the cycleway towards Danderhall in 2019. This fills in gaps to the rear of the established and mature hedge / tree boundary where significant gaps are apparent. When established this will provide visual enjoyment, framing of the views from the top of the site and will be of high value to birds and wildlife.

### Hedges

Hedgerows are listed as a priority habitat in the UK BAP. These are important to link habitats or stepping stones and an provide pollen and nectar rich flowers throughout March to September and can be particularly beneficial at the beginning and end of the season (willow, cherry, hawthorn and blackthorn). These can also be used as beneficial breeding and nesting areas and provide shelter for a variety of animals. A mature hedge has structural elements of mature trees and layers of bush/shrub and herbs.

There exists a derelict hedge in old field boundaries. In particular there is a mature field boundary hedge running south-west to north-east in the centre of the south slope. The total length of the hedge is 180m and comprises scattered trees among denser re-growth. Species make up is sycamore, ash and elm in early maturity. This offers a mature tree layer to underplant. Increasing species diversity will enhance the benefit of this landscape feature. <sup>(4)</sup>

As part of the SNH Biodiversity Challenge Fund (BCF) project delivered in partnership with ELGT there will be improvements to two areas on the site.

Firstly, the degraded willow hedge in the centre of the South slope during Winter 2019/20. There will be an additional 150m of native hedging. The planting out will be with the assistance of a local community / social inclusion programme. The existing hedge will be

bulked out into a triple line in an informal planting scheme of mixed hedge species to allow for the green corridor to extend further across the site to existing woodlands.

Secondly, a green corridor is being introduced at the fence line boundary of Tobias Street with a more formal 300m of double row mixed deciduous native hedge species. This will provide a more biodiverse and natural boundary to the streetscape, link existing stands or strips of more established woodlands and ensure that wildlife corridors are established via these new hedges.

Ongoing management including weeding or suppression of weed or grass growth and pruning of any new planting could be undertaken by local community groups or corporate volunteers to ensure successful establishment of dense growth form. Adoption and grounds maintenance support for formal cutting of street side hedges will be required once established.

An additional gap in the South Easterly site boundary has benefited from additional restoration of the original hedge with interplanting where gaps have developed. TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) attended in early 2020 with a large corporate group to plant 480 whips in a double row of mixed hedgerow species to re-establish the hedge to full original length contributing to restoration of green corridors on and around the site.



Fig 10. Restored and newly created hedge line

Dashed red line = Funded or delivered hedgeline creation / restoration  
Dashed orange line = Unfunded hedgeline creation / restoration – future potential

**Note:**

4. *Little France Management Framework (extract) – Hebe Carus 2019*

## Dutch Elm Disease

Dutch Elm Disease within the site is predominantly through root infection. English Elm thickets from an old field hedgerow are frequent among the mature woodland edge towards the wisp entrance. Infected areas should be removed as necessary. With the development of the majority of the nearby neighbouring land, elm trees are becoming ever sparser. This will aid DED disease management for this particular site by isolating the elm population and reducing instances of beetle pathways. Specimen elm trees have been newly planted in the open areas of the larger site so annual monitoring will be required as these trees mature. As these specimen elm trees mature the surrounding buffer zones will likely further increase offering them a fair chance of developing to maturity. Annual DED assessment will still be prudent.

## Ash die back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)

Ash dieback has the potential to cause significant damage to the UK's ash population, with implications for woodland biodiversity and ecology, and for the hardwood industries. Experience in continental Europe, which is beginning to be seen replicated in the UK, indicates that it can kill young and coppiced ash trees quite quickly. However, older trees can resist it for some time until prolonged exposure, or another pest or pathogen, such as *Armillaria* (honey fungus), attacking them in their weakened state eventually causes them to succumb.

Ash is one of our most useful and versatile native tree species, providing valuable habitat for a wide range of dependent species. It can grow in a variety of soils and climatic conditions. The 'airy' nature of its foliage allows light to penetrate to the woodland floor, encouraging ground plants and fauna. A number of insects, other invertebrates, lichens and mosses depend wholly on ash for habitat.

The Joint Nature Conservation Council (JNCC) in January 2014 published reports of studies into the potential ecological impact of ash dieback in the UK, and on the options for long-term monitoring of its impacts on biodiversity.

A number of growers across the UK produce ash for the timber market. Ash timber is strong, durable, flexible and attractive, with a wide range of practical and decorative uses such as tool handles, flooring, furniture, joinery and sports goods, such as rowing oars and hurley sticks.<sup>5</sup>

### Note:

5. Forest Research – <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/pest-and-disease-resources/ash-dieback-hymenoscyphus-fraxineus/>

Narrow strips of legacy woodland on the site with close to 100% ash composition, densely planted, with the majority having a stem diameter of <7cm and suffering with significant infection of Ash die back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*). These areas have been identified as suitable for removal and replanting. See Fig. 7 Replanted woodlands. The area affected totals approx. 1.3Ha.

Ash die back compartment on the SE boundary was thinned with CEC site officers leading corporate volunteer days over several days on site during 2018. Additional thinning / removal works were left for future funded projects.

Through 3rd party funded projects working with ELGT and Trees for Cities both compartment 1 and 2 of these woodlands strips were contractor felled and all arisings chipped to waste onsite between 2018 and 2019.

Trees for cities funded approximately 800 stems of mixed deciduous native broadleave whips with protective tree shelters and stakes to be planted by volunteers led by ELGT Engagement Officer with assistance from Postcode Lottery staff in 2019. See Fig. 7 replanted woodland – compartment 2. The ash suckering that may occur from cut stumps will be managed by corporate volunteers or Friends of Little France Park as required.

Trees for cities have funded approximately 500 stems and the Woodland Trust have funded approximately 500 stems of mixed deciduous native broadleave whips with protective tree shelters and stakes to be planted by volunteers led by CEC site officers, Woodland Trust and ELGT Engagement Officer with assistance from corporate volunteers. These will be planted by March 2020. See Fig.7 replanted woodland – compartment 1. The ash suckering that may occur from cut stumps will be managed by corporate volunteers or Friends of Little France Park as required.

Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) can affect ash trees of all ages, younger trees succumb to the disease quicker but in general, all affected trees will have the following symptoms:

- Leaves develop dark patches in the summer and hang loosely from the branches.
- Obvious die back of leaves in the crown of the tree.
- Leaves wilt and discolour to black. Leaves might shed early.
- Lesions develop where branches meet the trunk, often diamond-shaped and dark brown.
- Inner bark looks brownish-grey under the lesions.
- Epicormic growth due to response to stress.

<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/pest-and-disease-resources/ash-dieback-hymenoscyphus-fraxineus/>

## Wetlands

Creation of a featured quality wetlands would add to the diversity of habitats present on the site. The flood alleviation basin may offer opportunities for wetland features on the site.

There are no current plans for additional development or planting for the flood alleviation basin and SUDS in the south slope of Little France Park. The flood alleviation basin has good vegetation diversity and varying dense marginal vegetation with open water pools. If the open water pools become dominated with vegetation it would be advisable to ensure the open water pools are maintained to preserve open water areas. <sup>(4)</sup>



Fig. 11. Flood alleviation / wet scrape burn outflow

There is an area on the south slope shown in fig 11, labelled “wet scrape / burn outflow” (location: 55.923104, -3.122767) which is a naturally wet area with spring fed water travelling eastward from the south slope towards an area on the boundary of the low nutrient grassland before being caught by the large open ditch and into vertical drainage infrastructure on the boundary of Tobias Street/Pringle Drive.

Additional culverting or ditching could feed this water to a formally defined scrape which may offer better run off / spring fed water management in this area and allow for the area to be planted up with appropriate wetland marginals. The design of wetlands is dependent on various criteria including further feasibility associated with water balance, appropriate plants and species selection and any wetland buffer considerations.

There is scope to develop a concept and evaluate how it may be delivered if funding and biodiversity outcomes are thought to be favourable. To progress further, some technical development is essential to demonstrate that the project is feasible, in terms of site hydrology, wildlife outcomes, practicality and site impact.

### Note:

4. *Little France Management Framework (extract) – Hebe Carus 2019*

## SUDs

SUDs at little France in the park on the south slope (location: 55.923219, -3.126737 ) is owned and maintained by Scottish Enterprise as agreed when the biomedipark was built and the SUDs was placed in this location due to physical limitations on the original site. Ongoing maintenance for the SUDs would be explored with the facilities manager of the biomedipark as required with potential reduction of overgrowth of reeds within the SUDs basin for effective water management and habitat benefit to allow for exposure of open water.

The SUDs system associated with Sandilands Close housing development (location: 55.924499, -3.126565) management status and responsibility is to be confirmed. At the time of writing this plan the information was not available.

Where SUDs exist on public land ownership and maintenance will depend whether the SUDs system is owned by Scottish Water. Water from the roads which goes into a SUDs systems is owned and maintained by the council. Water that is public water (roof and pavements) that goes onto land can be vested (owned by Scottish Water). There is a proposal that there is movement toward a shared system where water would enter a system and Scottish Water would maintain the underground system and the council would be liable for the above ground system although in most cases this maintenance would be carried out by a factor. There is planning policy relating to SUDs and Edinburgh design guidance which has the current advice. A Sustainable Rain Water Management guide (detention basins and raingardens etc) is being produced but is not available at the time of writing this plan.

### Note:

*Further information on the Bio Quarter development water management proposals can be found via the document Edinburgh Bio Quarter and South East Wedge Parkland - December 2013*

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/26060/edinburgh-bioquarter-and-south-east-wedge-parkland-finalised-supplementary-guidance>

## Flood Alleviation

City of Edinburgh Council have a flood prevention team who undertake visual inspection of flood defences including all demountable barriers and flood gate. The flood alleviation area defined within the footprint of the public space (location: 55.924583, -3.128496) is under the management of the CEC flood prevention team. Management and policy notes relating to this area were not made available at the time of writing this plan.

### Note:

*Further information on the Bio Quarter development water management proposals can be found via the document Edinburgh Bio Quarter and South East Wedge Parkland - December 2013*

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/26060/edinburgh-bioquarter-and-south-east-wedge-parkland-finalised-supplementary-guidance>

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/flooding>

## Watercourses

A river ecosystem is the sum of interactions between plants, animals and microorganisms and between them and non-living physical and chemical components in a particular natural environment. River ecosystems have flowing water that can be in a state of continuous physical change, can contain different microhabitats and variable flow rates of water and plants and animals that have adapted to live within water flow conditions.

Niddrie Burn follows from Lothian Burn and the Pentland Burn in the Pentlands to the Burdiehouse Burn to the Brunstane Burn in the lower reaches where it flows into the Firth of Forth.

The £11m Niddrie Burn Restoration Project in 2013 saw 1.8km of the Niddrie Burn realigned to form a river corridor, with landscaping, footbridges and a flood storage area within the parkland, now defined as Little France Park. As part of the re-alignment project this included a transport link road consisting of 1km of carriageway connecting Little France Drive with Greendykes Road, with a 200m section that forms a bus lane for public transport.

Niddrie burn is fed by a network of burns and providing space for wildlife to move through the landscape and is surrounded by scrub, grassland and provides an essential corridor through urban spaces. Movement across or through the environment requires proximity or connectivity of habitats and that some species require different habitats for different aspects or life stages.

Plants are successful in slower currents. Water currents provide oxygen and nutrients for plants provide a food source. A large number of the invertebrates in river systems are insects and can be found in almost every available habitat. A large number of birds also inhabit river ecosystems, but they are not tied to the water and spend some of their time in terrestrial habitats.

City of Edinburgh Council Biodiversity Action plan 2019-2021, requires broad actions to be considered for blue networks including to record locations of INNS. The section in this report includes records of Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) within the section running through Little France Park.

On a low area of the South slope the area of wet scrape / burn outflow (location: 55.922074, -3.123454) to be further investigated and developed into a potential future project with additional ditching or culverting of existing water flow via the spring or burn to a formally defined scrape area and plant with appropriate wetland marginals.

## Transects

CEC site officer working partnership with Butterfly Conservation Scotland (BCS) and Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BCT) to identify suitable routes through suitable habitats and botanical species of interest that may be of most value to yield good quality representative records during the survey season. By early 2019 these transects were agreed and mapped.

There has been local and online recruitment for regular volunteers to take on informal and formal surveying for all species of butterfly and bumble bee via these established transects.

BCS have co-ordinated a weekly volunteer schedule during the months of April – October and the Bumblebee Conservation Trust require monthly volunteers to keep observational records of any species found on the transect routes to the same calendar.

More technical detail on the overall transect and recording methods can be found on each of BCS and BCT websites for guidance.

**Beewalk Transect – Monthly**

Converted farmland to amenity / public park in 2019 / Total 850m linear metres

**NT301706 || S1 – 419 linear metres**

Habitat: Classified as Outdoor amenity and open space  
Habitat: Classified as Agriculturally improved/re-seeded/heavily fertilised grassland

**NT298704 || S2 – 408 linear metres**

Habitat: Classified as Outdoor amenity and open space  
Habitat: Classified as Dry semi/unimproved (flower rich) neutral grassland

<https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/beewalk/>

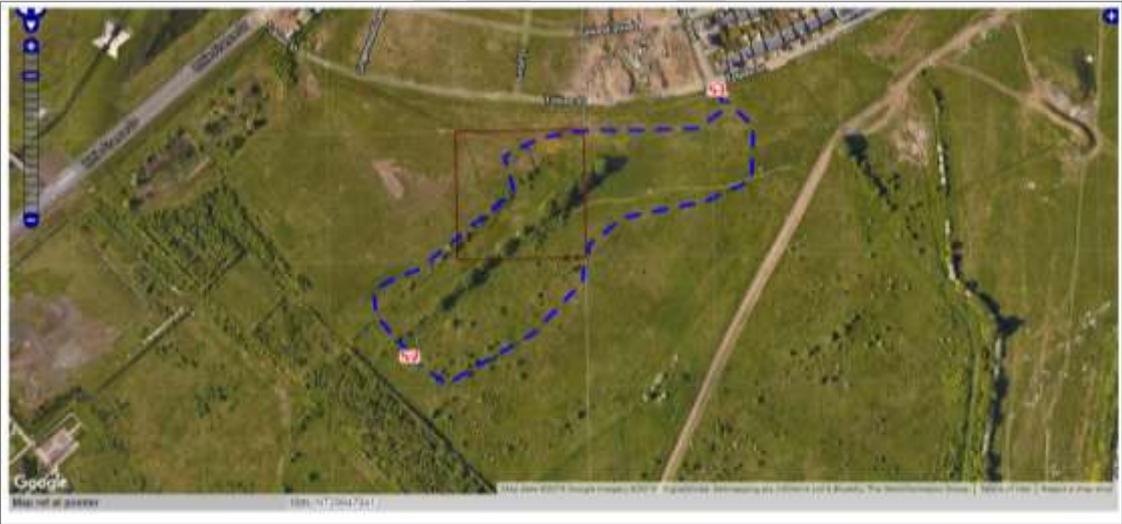


Fig12. BeeWalk transect

**Butterfly Conservation Scotland (BCS) – Weekly**

Converted farmland to amenity / public park in 2019

**Recording points 4 / 5 / 2 / 3**

Habitat: Classified as Outdoor amenity and open space  
Habitat: Classified as Agriculturally improved/re-seeded/heavily fertilised grassland

**Recording points 1 / 6 / 7**

Habitat: Classified as Outdoor amenity and open space  
Habitat: Classified as Dry semi/unimproved (flower rich) neutral grassland



Fig. 13. Butterfly Conservation transect

### Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

The guiding principle for habitat distribution across the site should be of no loss in habitat diversity and to increase diversity where possible across the site. An essential minimal action is reasonable attempts to control non-native invasive species as detailed below.

Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is noted at various areas across site particularly along the existing access track in the south and along the Niddrie Burn, as shown in the map below. Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) is recorded at three points on the site as shown in the map below.

### Invasive Species Management Proposal

- Search and record locations of non-native invasive species
- Treat these locations using recommended methods already used across the Council area
- Monitor the site for the need for subsequent treatment as these species can spread quickly from surrounding areas
- In general any management creating fertile bare ground should be avoided

## Management Approaches to INNS

Due to the toxicity of the sap of Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) manual removal is not recommended. CEC grounds maintenance have a small team who undertake targeted actions on INNS Giant hogweed. As mapped the grounds team will visit during periods of early growth to spot treat over the growing season in line with CEC herbicidal use policy and best practice.

Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), as mapped, will be attempted to be controlled through seasonal manual removal during early growing season before seed pods ripen. The non notifiable status of this INNS means the best means of suppression is manual and often requires use of volunteer groups, corporate volunteer days, community engagement and friends groups on any site affected. Although this method may not entirely eradicate the INNS from the site it should contribute to suppression of the seed bed and localised control whilst efforts are made to control the species.

### Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)

Glabrous annual herb with stout succulent, reddish-translucent hollow stems to 2.5 m; leaves opposite or in whorls of 3, 5-18 cm long and 3-7 cm wide; flowers with short spur, helmeted upper petal, deep purplish-pink to white, strong balsam smell. Well established and extremely invasive throughout most of lowland Great Britain. Moist and semi-shaded damp places, predominant on banksides by slow-moving watercourses.

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/factsheet/factsheet.cfm?speciesId=1810>

### Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)

Aptly named 'giant', this umbellifer (member of the cow-parsley family) has flowering stems typically 2-3 m high bearing umbels of flowers up to 80 cm in diameter. The basal leaves are often 1 m or more in size. Giant hogweed is widespread in lowland GB, and is invasive by lowland rivers and on waste land. It is especially abundant by lowland streams and rivers, but also occurs widely on waste ground and in rough pastures. It grows on moist fertile soils, achieving its greatest stature in partial shade. In more open grassland, flowering may be delayed by repeated grazing.

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/factsheet/factsheet.cfm?speciesId=1705>

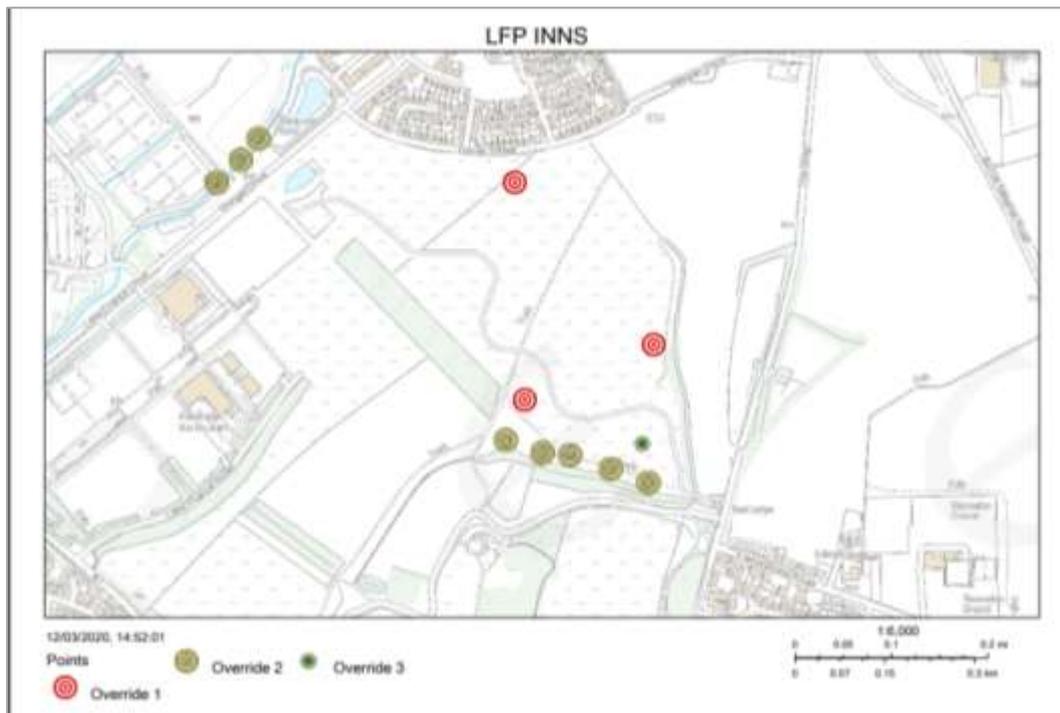


Fig. 14. INNS mapped on LFP

Label > Override 1 = Giant Hogweed locations

Label > Override 2 = Himalayan Balsam locations

Label > Override 3 = Rosebay Willowherb

### **Rosebay Willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*)**

A tall plant, Rosebay willowherb is a successful coloniser; it can form dense stands of bright pink flower spikes on disturbed ground, such as woodland clearings, verges and waste ground. This expansion occurred as a result of two World Wars clearing huge areas of forest and burning the ground in both town and countryside - just the right conditions for this plant to thrive, one of its common names is 'Bombweed'. Although not considered an invasive per se, the hillside at the top of the site (location: 55.919363, -3.118615) is dominated by this species and some long term suppression with seasonal cutting by volunteers before the plant releases its seed and cutting below the lowest node can yield good results over a number of years with reclamation of the area over the long term being the desired outcome.

## Infrastructure

Having access to good quality, well maintained paths close to where people live is essential for promoting active lifestyles and removing barriers to accessing open spaces and creating connections between communities. CEC aim for providing a welcoming, safe and accessible outdoor environment which can improve our physical, mental and social health by allowing people to be physically active outdoors and helping people to connect with and get closer to nature.

Path surveys and assessment of the site will be undertaken to identify which routes to include in any future network and to identify detail of the work that will be required, the methods of construction and design considerations will take account of local environmental conditions to create a sustainable path network providing good quality access whilst preserving the parkland setting.

### Active travel route

The main route through the site is a 3.5m edged asphalt footway / active travel route running for 2.4km linearly meandering across both North and South slopes with lighting at 25m intervals fitted with LED downlights. The route connects active travel routes from Craigmillar Castle Park and has primary nodes from the main linear route leading to communities at Greendykes Road, Edinburgh Royal Infirmary (ERI) and travels linearly to The Wisp at Danderhall. There are plans to provide further nodes for improved access to the Bio Quarter development from 2020.

The main active travel route is interspersed with rest stops, benches and bike racks at strategic locations across both slopes. Site infrastructure on the active travel route includes 2 stone cairn seating areas, 8 benches, 5 notice boards and 4 cycle racks.

The meander of the active travel route affords a well planned route with a couple of steeper sections due to overall topography of the site. The remainder of the site offers limited surfaced pathways at the time of writing, however, there is a desire to establish further surfaced pathways on the site as a future development, subject to available funding.

The site overall is accessible for people with reasonable mobility on the active travel route. Access for those with limited mobility such as those using a walking aid or wheelchair may find the site has some restrictions but the active travel route offers good stable path with many rest stops.

## Future secondary paths & routes

### Secondary Path Network

There are significant developing conurbations surrounding the Little France Park site and access should be considered essential to ensure the public have good access to a quality greenspace within their community.

Access via Tobias Street, previously inaccessible, was provided via two timber built footbridges constructed by CEC Parks and Greenspace staff in 2019. The slope leading into the site from this access point is steep and is currently served by cut grass paths (summer months) meandering to the double track intersecting the site and the active travel route.

There are secondary routes maintained as cut grass pathways to encourage exploration of the site, these secondary routes are largely reserved to the South slope. As shown in Fig. 15.



Fig 15. Secondary Routes Little France Park

The site contains the following path types, seen in Fig 15.

- Tarmac active travel route (grey)
- Future tarmac access path (pink)
- Grass paths (green)
- Double track legacy track (red)

There are opportunities on the site to create improved formal entrances. These should be gated for security and to prevent antisocial behaviour or illegal vehicle use. These would provide welcoming access points and should be considered as important next steps for site development, subject to available funding.

Surfacing some of the routes shown in Fig. 15 should be considered as important next steps to improve the sustainable path networks and provide alternative routes and walks with interesting views or connection to nature as the site develops, subject to available funding.

Sensitive development of the secondary path network should not negatively affect the naturalised nature of the site or create any significant impact on valuable habitats.

Any surfaced unbound pathways to be provided should meet a good practice build standard as detailed in the Lowland Path construction guide document produced by Paths for All.

**Secondary paths – opportunities**

When funded opportunities for improvement are available considerations shown in the map in fig. 16 indicates routes that can be considered for upgrading with the creation of surfaced path provision. Any surfaced unbound pathways to be provided should meet a good practice build standard as detailed in the Lowland Path construction guide document produced by Paths for All. The style to be considered would be a compacted path with a base 'load bearing' layer dressed with grey whin or granite dust to an appropriate width and with appropriate drainage for surface water and scouring mitigation on steeper slopes.

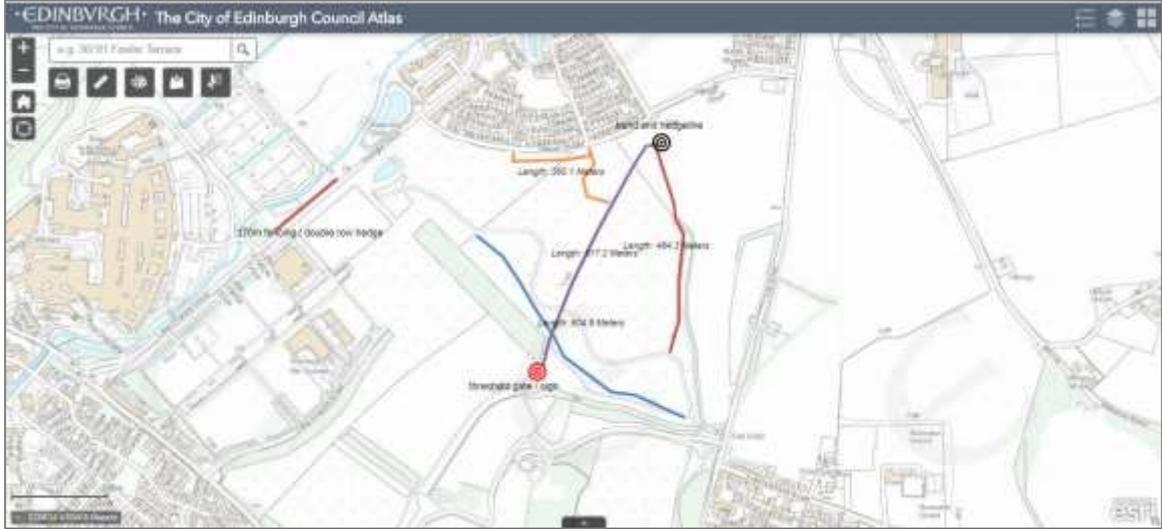


Fig. 16. Secondary paths opportunities

## **Boundaries and thresholds**

There are further opportunities to provide improvements to the boundary of the parkland site with formalisation of existing informal entrances to Edmondstone developing communities with a pedestrian gate and new threshold signage. An extension of a ditch and bund 0.5m<sup>2</sup> inverted with double row hedge planting at Springfield graded wedge above Milligan Drive approx. 5-7m linear to secure the boundary on a previously used off road track for illegal dumping and flytipping. Additional boundary post and wire fencing and double row hedging of mixed hedge species at LF Drive 170m linear to further protect the boundary and scrub habitat at the Niddrie Burn corridor.

## **Site Features - Opportunities**

### **Natural play / Formal Play / Public Art & Sculpture / Arboretum / Wetland**

There are further opportunities to develop the parkland site with further site features whilst re-enforcing the existing landscape character, subject to availability of future funding. Feasibility and consultation within the community may be sought for a number of future projects. The following are a non exhaustive example of potential place making concepts; Activity provision through natural play features or sensitively integrated formal play provision. Further enhancements of planting marginal aquatics and / or infrastructure providing access for walks and wildlife observation around the areas of water management, SUDS, flood alleviation. Arboretum collection, tree trail and specimen interpretation. Interpretation of the sites unique and important views to Craigmillar Castle, Edinburgh Castle and Arthurs Seat from Edmondstone ridge with formal information provision. Public art and sculpture designed to complement the natural landscape and provide a connection to the site and its historical land use and / or species and habitats. Wetland habitat formalisation with additional ditching or culverting of existing water flow via the running spring to a formally defined scrape area planted with appropriate wetland marginals.

## Management Objectives

### To comply with all legal and policy requirements

Site owners have to ensure compliance with the national and local policies and legislation relevant to the site. Details are provided in section 'The Management Plan in relation to the wider national and local policy and legislative context'. There is agreed a management group and a CEC consultation process that facilitates communication and collaboration between main partners. CEC will have overall responsibility for the site and its management.

The role of the active management group: Implementation of the management plan, coordination of programme of activities and project delivery, fundraising. An update to the management plan will also be carried out after 5 years.

### To conserve and enhance the natural environment

The diversity of habitats within Little France Park is a great asset. The aim is to proactively enhance all valuable habitats. The aim of this management plan is to provide a framework to carefully manage a wide range of existing habitats within the site, including; long-grass, short-grass, species rich grassland, rank grassland, converted grassland, enriched grassland, woodlands, scrub, hedge lines, standing water, running watercourses, wetland areas, open ground, green corridors, single specimen trees and to promote biodiversity and linking management practices with any EBAP recommendations. Management for conservation will consider appropriate provenance and species selection where adjustments or conversion or enrichment is employed. The aim is to implement appropriate management regimes including suitable calendar timing of planned grassland cutting, appropriate lifting and removal of arisings and possible introduction of rotational cuts. This will be secured by the commitment to an appropriate management regime for the duration of the Management Plan.

This entails additional detail of management prescriptions found in the Workplan. The site will be monitored for invasive species and these will be controlled as per the INNS section in this plan.

The aim of this management plan is to provide a framework to carefully manage a wide range of existing habitats within the site listed above and to promote biodiversity and linking management practices with any EBAP recommendations.

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20065/conservation/247/biodiversity\\_in\\_edinburgh](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20065/conservation/247/biodiversity_in_edinburgh)

Areas of scrub will be managed to provide suitable nesting habitats for songbirds. Long and short grass areas will be managed to promote a high diversity of grassland species and to provide a suitable food source/habitat for insects and pollinators. Woodlands will be managed following CEC good practice such as tree operations to take place outside of bird

nesting season, leaving dead wood in situ, leaving standing monolith, planting of native species etc. Badger sets and bat roosts will be monitored and protected. Invasive species will be monitored and controlled as per INNS management plan. Damaged or removed trees and shrubs will be replaced with species of suitable provenance.

CEC site officers has responsibility for furthering the conservation of biodiversity and wildlife habitat within Edinburgh, including within Little France Park. Crimes against wildlife (“the illegal destruction and theft of animals, plants and habitats, both in the countryside and urban areas”) are the province of the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime in Scotland (PAW Scotland), which includes the police, land managers, conservationists and the Scottish Government. Reporting of wildlife crimes in Edinburgh is done through the Wildlife Crime Liaison Officer (WCLO) of the Edinburgh Division of Police Scotland.

### Preserve and protect protected site features

In order to maintain a balance between conservation of protected / ancient monuments and conservation of biodiversity, as required by The Scottish Historic Environment Policy, the site will be kept in good condition and monitoring to ensure that any damage to the site is minimised and monuments or historical site features and protected and preserved.

### Contribute to research in ecology and natural history

The site has potential to offer opportunities to contribute to valuable research and monitoring due to the presence of locally rare and valuable species on the site. Of particular note is the species rich grassland, areas of enrichment and actively managed grassland and the recently planted mixed woodland blocks and mature woodland habitats on site margins. However, the publicly accessible scientific and species data about the site is quite poor. The aim is to improve biological recording and understanding of the natural history and ecology of the site.

#### **Monitor vegetation cover**

The aim is to keep regular chronological records of changes to vegetation cover (natural succession) and grassland enrichment at appropriate points across the site, by means of drone surveys (based on available funding) and fixed point photographs.

#### **Expand the species database and share data with national conservation bodies**

The aim to keep an observed record of plants and animal species observed on site using trained volunteers informally and to share recorded species information with a range of conservation bodies and contribute to their own surveys.

#### **Support scientific research into the ecology of the site**

The proximity of the site to several of Edinburgh’s University campuses offers the potential to carry out research projects on the geology, ecology and natural history. The intention is to offer links with suitable research organisations, particularly the appropriate departments of education establishments and the research departments of national conservation groups, in order to develop student projects and research proposals.

### **Support provision of educational resources and independent learning**

The focus is to enhance visitor's experience by deepening their understanding of the sites natural and social history, while at the same time stimulating interest in conserving and protecting the site. The aim is to provide pertinent on-site interpretation to all visitors, and more detailed information in accessible formats online and provide supportive information to groups who want to undertake any self led learning on site.

### **Provide information and interpretation on site features**

Consider installing interpretation appropriate to the setting. These could provide summary information about the natural and historic importance of the site, maps of paths and information about SOAC/ parks management rules, wildlife, geology, site features, species and habitats. There is scope for exploring and installing information boards on the historic, heritage and natural habitats of the site as well as other form of interpretation. A digital flyer or leaflet could be designed to promote the value of and points of interest on the site.

### **Encourage community involvement in conservation**

Community members will be encouraged to become involved in biodiversity recording and other conservation activities through any future friends group established at the site. Information should be provided of any public event or activity at the four noticeboards on site, links with Community Council and support provided to local schools to use the site for their activities. Encourage the Little France Park Friends group or local community interest to affiliate or become associated with the Friends of Greenspace Forum offering an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas on biodiversity conservation and recording with other Friends Groups and to maintain contact with the Friends of Parks and other Scottish Greenspace initiatives.

## Evaluation

### Marketing and Events

You can find out more about parks we manage, how to get there, what activities or events are scheduled, and how to contact us to report any issues via CEC website or online social media channels.

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/directory\\_record/1085391/little\\_france\\_park](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/directory_record/1085391/little_france_park)

Social media feeds include online observations, events, activities and future planned works can be found [@EdinOutdoors](#)

Social media feeds from our partners can also be found via Edinburgh & Lothian Greenspace Trust, Edinburgh Living Landscapes and LFP Friends Group.

There are noticeboards at four locations on the site where posters about events and activities in the park are displayed.

CEC Parks and Greenspace site officers also seeks to continue to promote responsible use of the park by groups, schools and individuals, and will continue to work with partners to increase responsible site use, consider external event applications and continue to support a diversification of site use and users.

### Recreational Use

The site is currently used for these broad types of recreational activities:

- Active travel by bike and foot, linear movement across the site to and from destinations off site including Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and surrounding areas within City of Edinburgh and beyond to Midlothian.
- Exercise, family walks, dog walking and enjoying views. Many users enjoy local access to a developing greenspace. The views from the site are to be preserved and offer superb views to Craigmillar Castle, Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh Castle and the Firth of Forth estuary.
- Enjoying nature. The site is rich in wildlife and natural habitats and offers many opportunities to observe, record and enjoy being in a natural park with a wide array of species that occupy the mixed habitats on the site.
- Running. There is evidence of the site and active travel route being used by lunchtime runners and likely in the evening too for similar use.
- There is evidence of the site being well used around midweek lunch times by local workers as a pleasant outdoor space to enjoy within a short distance of their workplace.

## Education and interpretation

There are currently five noticeboards on the site with site specific information offered including; opportunities to get involved on the site, information about the site, site maps and contact information.

There are currently no orientation panels at the site. There is a desire to offer orientation panels at strategic points on the site as the site develops. These additions will be subject to available funding and further place making planning. There are six threshold signs at entrances providing the name of the park welcoming visitors and encouraging visitors to enter the park.

Information about Little France Park is available online. CEC Website, Google, ELL website, Bio Quarter website, LFPNG website, ELGT website and general information relating to the site and surrounding areas, projects undertaken and events occurring in the area. There is a newly formed Friends of Little France Park group who intend to correspond with the wider community via facebook, newsletters and emails.

CEC Natural Heritage site officer co-ordinated a Wildlife Week with partner organisations. A week of activities took place in Little France Park from 17 – 21 June 2019 to celebrate its value for wildlife and collect new biological records. Invites were offered to local residents, workers and organisations can get involved in, as well as activities with local schools and specialist groups.

Information gathered during the wildlife surveys contributed to a report demonstrating the importance of Little France Park for biodiversity, producing good quality base line survey data of species on site as well as an excellent promotional video produced for wider awareness raising for this new park in Edinburgh:

<https://edinburghlivinglandscape.org.uk/2019/07/new-film-explores-little-france-park/>

ELGT successfully applied for funding via Lothian Health foundation and Paths for All for fixed orientation and interpretation panels and waymarked 'health walk' route guidance will be provided to assist orientation, understand and exploration of the site.

These will be designed, manufactured and installed on the site by 2020. CEC site officers are working in partnership with ELGT on the design, content and siting of the panels. They will feature orientation maps and highlight specific site features in four locations.

## Access including public transport and parking

The main route through the site is a 3.5m wide edged asphalt footway / active travel route running for approx. 2.4km linearly meandering across both North and South slopes. The main active travel route is interspersed with rest stops, benches and bike racks at strategic locations across both slopes. The meander of the active travel route affords a well planned route. The remainder of the site offers limited surfaced pathways at the time of writing this plan, however, there is a desire to establish further surfaced pathways on the site as a future development, subject to available funding. Access for those with limited mobility such as those using a walking aid or wheelchair may find the site has some restrictions but the active travel route offers good stable path with rest stops.

See appendices: LFP Core paths and future routes and LFP Boundary Map & Informal routes for further information on routes on and across the site.

Lothian Buses provide services to surrounding streets to Greendykes Terminus on Milligan Drive and services to and around Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on Little France Drive. There is very limited on street parking around the site. Responsible on street parking is available nearby in residential areas and there is currently no dedicated or formal parking provision for use of the site itself.

## Safety

CEC Parks and Greenspace staff aims to provide high quality sites which are safe, enjoyable and welcoming. Impacts such as extreme weather (high winds and flooding), littering, vandalism, crime, erosion and misuse require the site officer to resolve complex and difficult issues on site.

There is contact with the local community, Friends of Little France Park established in early 2020, Wildlife Crime Officers and Police Scotland. Any anti-social behaviour is dealt with by site officers and other supporting services within the City of Edinburgh Council and where appropriate reported to Police Scotland. Community members can contact site owners with published management contact information available in on site noticeboards and the CEC website.

CEC Environmental Wardens can assist by providing a high visibility presence as part of local enforcement campaigns with the aim to reduce dog fouling, flytipping and littering offences. CEC Environmental Wardens will take enforcement against anyone found to be contravening the Dog fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 or contravening the Environmental Protection Act 1990 by littering or flytipping will be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice.

## Sustainability

Formal planted areas do not require addition of peat but some areas on the site may require herbicide treatment. Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) Giant Hogweed is present on the site. See the INNS section of this plan more information on the practicalities of managing INNS.

Where new planting occurs appropriate maintenance should be built in to the projected management approach, and herbicidal use will meet CEC best practice. Any further planting, enrichment or management for conservation purposes will use healthy plants of appropriate provenance and species selection and will not use fertiliser or pesticides.

Leaf litter and fallen tree branches are left in situ where it is safe to do so and moved away from paths. When diseased or dead individual trees are felled any non-diseased wood will be moved away from paths and left on site. Any significant arisings from thinning or felling or diseased stock will be extracted as appropriate and brash discretely chipped on site.

The grassland areas are to have discrete management to continue to encourage establishment of species rich grassland, see the Grassland section of this plan. Management for conservation will consider appropriate provenance and species selection where adjustments or enrichment is employed.

Visitors are encouraged to take their litter home or dispose of their waste responsibly. Seven bins are currently provided at the entrances to the site in six locations.

Any litter that is left is removed and disposed of as contaminated waste. The site was heavily fly-tipped prior to conversion to public park with approximately 90 tons of industrial fly-tipped waste removed from the site by CEC during 2018. There have been several further instances of fly-tipping, burnt out vehicles and littering recorded. CEC cleansing teams are responsible for waste on public land and can be contacted for bin servicing or reports of accumulations of waste for removal (<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/litter-flytipping>).

## Maintenance

CEC Parks and Greenspace site officers carry out regular site visits to Little France Park. Any issues with infrastructure, access, vegetation control, invasives control, H&S issues, woodland condition, anti-social behaviour, biodiversity and habitat management, vandalism, litter or other site considerations for action is identified and prioritised for remediation working directly with other council colleagues or appointed 3rd party contractors.

## Play Equipment

There are no formal provision of play equipment to date on Little France Park. However, if future facilities are provided these must meet The British and European safety standard BS EN1176. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) strongly recommend that all play areas have at least one inspection every year from an independent suitably qualified body such as RoSPA

(The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents). Advice from ROSPA suggests that Children's Playgrounds should be inspected annually by an independent specialist to ensure the long term safety of the site, equipment and ancillary items. This will also meet legal and insurance responsibilities as well as complying with the requirements of EN1176 (the new European Playground Standard).

### Grounds Maintenance

CEC Parks and Greenspaces, and in particular Natural Heritage sites, with their size and complexity, require co-ordination of the maintenance schedule by the site officer. Working closely with any appointed department, grounds maintenance team or contractor to deliver consistent grounds maintenance standards and maintain quality of delivery on site which are monitored across the year.

The site contains the following grounds maintenance commitment to management actions.

- Verge Maintenance – 1m width cut (orange dotted line)
- Grass paths - approx. 2m width pathways (green solid line)
- Amenity grassland – low maintenance grass (solid green area)
- Species rich grassland – annual cut / biennial removal (solid orange area)

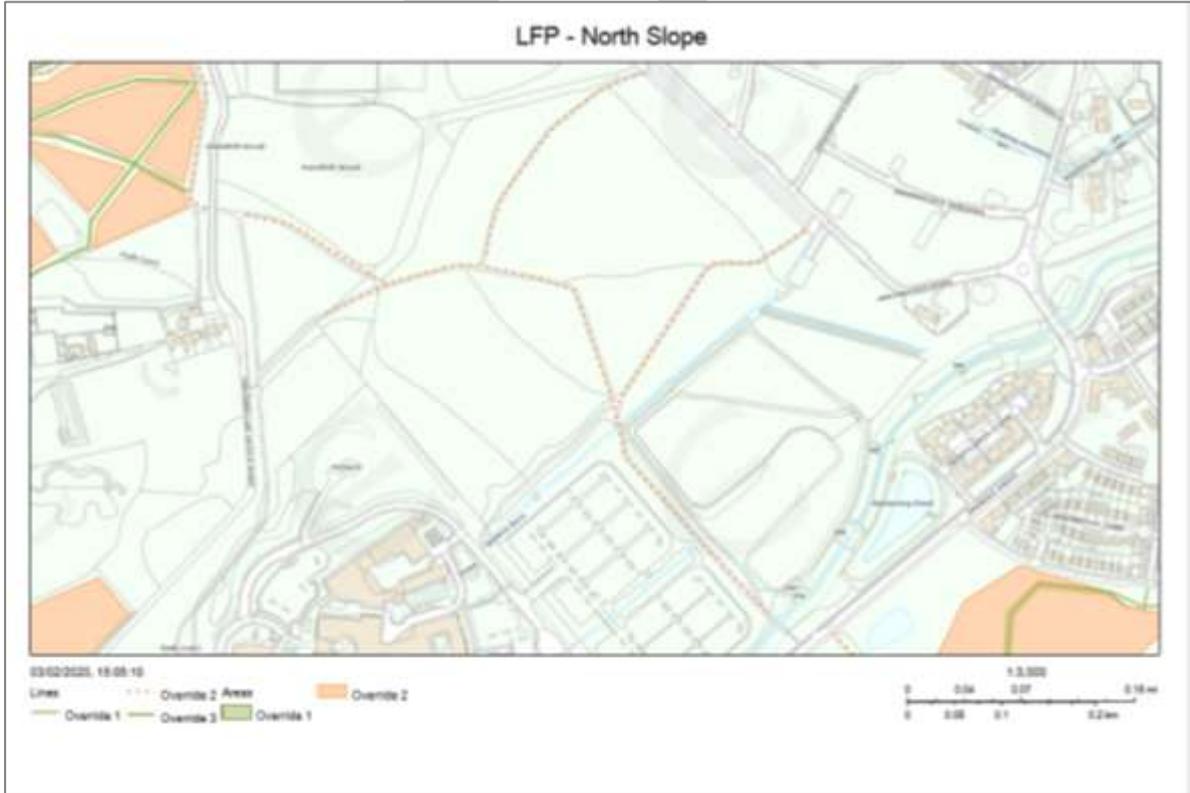


Fig 17. Grounds maintenance overview – North Slope

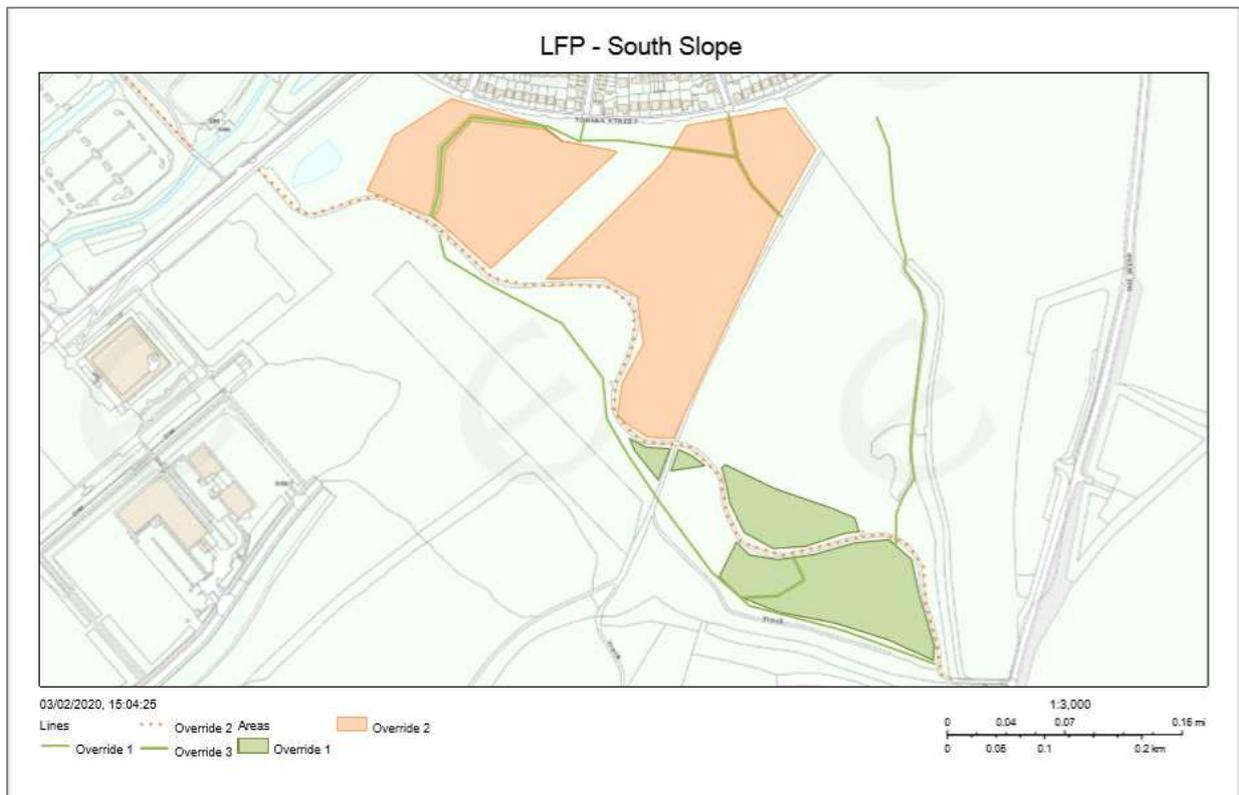


Fig 18. Grounds maintenance overview – South Slope

### Verge Maintenance

Following the route of the tarmac cycleway Fig 17. And Fig 18. all surfaced pathways under CEC management will require a 1m wide machine cut on a monthly basis during growing season on both verges (orange dotted line).

### Grass paths

Following the route of the grass paths marked on Fig 18. grass path routes will require approx. 3m width machine cut on a schedule each 3 months or 2-3 times annually during growing season (green solid line).

### Amenity grassland

Following the area marked on Fig 18. amenity grassland will require a full area machine cut on a scheduled bi-annually during growing season. These areas are considered low maintenance grass (solid green area).

These will allow some height in these areas of grass and herbaceous species establishing without it getting away into rank grass. It should contribute towards a considered management approach, improve sightlines and perceptions from the community that the site is actively managed.

## Species rich grassland

Following the area marked on Fig 17. and Fig 18. Species rich grassland will require a full area machine cut on a scheduled annual basis at the end of the growing season. These areas are considered species rich grassland and will require a minimum of biennial removal of arisings (solid orange area).

## Infrastructure Maintenance

There are approximately 2.4km of surfaced paths which are adopted by Parks and Greenspaces with support from other appropriate CEC departments for ongoing maintenance and upkeep. Lighting and columns will be managed by CEC Street Lighting team (<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/streetlightproblem>). Built infrastructure on the site such as seating, cycle racks, gates, fences, bollards, signage, noticeboards and walls are all under the immediate management of the CEC site officer.

## Litter

There are 6 bins across the site located at key entrances which are serviced on a schedule by CEC cleansing team.

The Wisp  
Tobias Street / Galvane Road  
Tobias Street / Errol Drive  
Little France Drive / North  
Little France Drive / South

Litter found in and around the site and path networks is removed by CEC site officer when on site, if in small quantities, and removed for disposal. Larger accumulations or fly-tipping is passed to the CEC street cleansing teams to support removal.

Local volunteers, corporate days, engagement days, spring cleans, 'giving back' days can all supplement and help us keep the site clean and well maintained. In cases of extensive littering e.g. significant fly-tipping, burnt out vehicles or items that merit further investigation, the service involves Police Scotland or local Environmental Wardens where necessary. Environmental Wardens teams can investigate and prosecute if evidence is found identifying the owner of fly-tipped items.

## Park Quality Assessments (PQA) and Green Flag

There are measures that are used to determine consistent standards in parks and greenspaces locally and nationally. City of Edinburgh Council started to use the nationally recognised Green Flag Award as an indicator of quality in 2007. In 2014 a record 26 parks were awarded a green flag and 124 of Edinburgh's 137 parks and greenspaces met or exceeded the parks quality standard, established to ensure quality across all of the council greenspace estate.

The Green Flag Award is the UK's national standard for parks and green spaces where the Council green spaces, strategies, management policies and practices are peer reviewed by Green Flag judges. It aims to recognise and celebrate high quality green spaces. The award strives to ensure that everyone has access to safe, clean and pleasant space where they can relax, meet, play or exercise. Awards are given on an annual basis and winners must apply each year to new their Green Flag Award status.

### **Green Flag - Parks Quality Assessments**

The Parks Quality Assessments (PQA) are a local measure of overall quality carried out annually on all council parks and green spaces. Each park is given a score from a set of standard measures and feedback on these scores help departments manage and improve their parks.

Green Flag PQA criteria include the following categories:

A welcoming place

Healthy, Safe and Secure

Clean and well maintained

Sustainability

Conservation and Heritage

Community involvement

Marketing and promotion

Management

Little France Park first achieved its PQA score in 2019

**2019:** 65% (Grade C)

Results and specific feedback on each category is factored in to site maintenance programmes on the site where improvements can be realised with available budgets. See appendix: LFP PQA score 2019 (year 1).

Following the assessments judges are asked to propose three recommendations for each site based on their findings. These recommendations are designed to ensure that structured improvements are undertaken in every park, which will hopefully improve the targeted criteria score and therefore the quality across the whole site. It also provides a broad level indication where improvements will be targeted based on the Green Flag criteria which will enable possible strategic citywide assistance in some cases.

Improvement actions can be identified for parks through various sources but the Park Quality Assessments (PQA) carried out each year provides the site manager with specific information on the quality of their parks that can be used to identify areas for improvement or promotion.

## Operational Objectives

### Capital Investment Opportunities

CEC Parks and Greenspaces working with all noted partners in this management plan will remain receptive to ongoing development of Little France Park to best meet the needs of the city and its users. CEC Parks and Greenspaces staff will work with ELL partners to identify sources of funding or alternative delivery of the stated outcomes of this management plan.

### Ten year work plan

See the associated workplan for years 2020-2030. This workplan will be reviewed annually to meet the ongoing needs of the site and any strategic or operational adjustments to CEC parks & greenspace management.

DRAFT