

St Margaret's Park's Bowling Greens

Summary of consultation responses (June 2024)

1. Executive Summary

This report details the consultation and design work conducted to develop proposals for re-purposing the bowling greens at St Margaret's Park. These efforts were initiated in response to a motion by Councillor Osler, approved by the Council on June 1, 2023. The document outlines the key steps required to implement these schemes.

2. Background

In 2023, Edinburgh Leisure returned the bowling green venue at St Margaret's Park to the Council due to its condition and low usage. The area was identified for potential re-purposing. The Council, through an adjusted motion, sought to explore alternative uses for this venue, including community growing spaces and other recreational facilities.

3. Summary of Engagement and Consultation Methods

Council officers engaged with local stakeholders, including Friends groups, community councils, elected members, care homes, support groups, fitness professionals, schools, and other community organisations. These engagements, held between December 2023 and May 2024, led to the development of outline proposals and surveys published on the Council's Consultation Hub.

Online preliminary conversation – February:

- Attended by AtkinsRealis, three Council Officers, and 6 participants (including representatives from Corstorphine Community Council and community group Improve Corstorphine).
- Initial design suggestions included a community garden, event space, outdoor education area, and public toilets, with strong support for including a multi-use sports space. Maintenance of the park was a key concern among attendees.

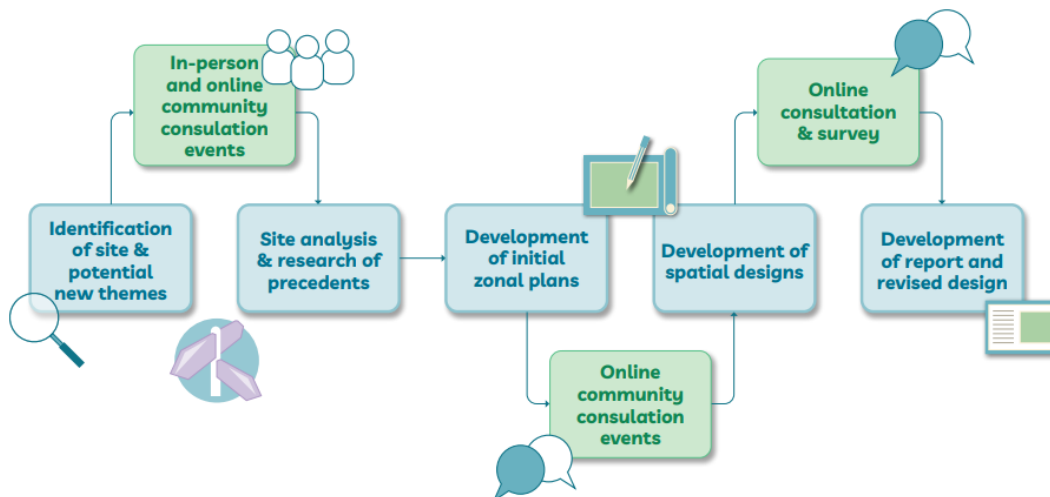
Drop-in workshop – March:

- The consultation held on March 4 adopted a drop-in format, facilitating engagement between approximately 30 community members, 3 council officers, and Ben Ferguson of AtkinsRéalis.
- Throughout the evening, participants provided feedback on various ideas, reflecting a spectrum of perspectives.
- Key recurring themes revolved around considerations of maintenance, accessibility, and integration with existing park features.
- Most favoured ideas were: Natural Play Space, Garden, Nature-Friendly Interventions, Urban Growing Areas.

Workshop with Corstorphine Primary School – March:

- Council Officers created a short video about the project, which was played in assembly, followed by a visit to the school. Over 100 students contributed ideas for the park, focusing on nature preservation, recreational activities, and social spaces.
- Suggestions included ponds, themed gardens, sports facilities, and community gathering areas.

Through these consultation activities, these ideas formed the basis of AtkinsRealis’s designs. Additional stakeholder workshops were held to refine ideas further. These ideas were then developed into design proposals for the Consultation Hub.



4. Consultation Hub findings

Draft design proposals and additional information about the features included were uploaded to the Council’s Consultation Hub. Questions were asked in a matrix Likert-scale format, with also an optional text comment box to add additional feedback. There was a total of 193 responses, with 15 responding on behalf of a group or organisation. The survey results have reported the following:

Question: To what extent do you support the introduction of the following features?

Design features - Meadow Area: A meadow area would introduce a naturalistic landscape featuring native grasses and wildflowers.

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly support	83	42.78%
Support	61	31.44%
Neither support nor oppose	26	13.40%
Oppose	12	6.19%
Strongly oppose	9	4.64%
Not Answered	3	1.55%

Design features - Sensory Planting and Seating: planting vegetation that stimulates the senses and installing seating areas amidst these plants to create a tranquil environment.

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly support	96	49.48 %
Support	63	32.47%
Neither support nor oppose	17	8.76%
Oppose	5	2.58%
Strongly oppose	10	5.15%
Not Answered	3	1.55%

Design features - Growing Areas: This plan involves dedicating spaces for community members to grow their own fruits, vegetables, and flowers.

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly support	68	35.05%
Support	36	18.56%
Neither support nor oppose	45	23.20%
Oppose	28	14.43%
Strongly oppose	14	7.22%
Not Answered	3	1.55%

Design features - Sports Area: A designated space for sports activities (e.g., pétanque, yoga)

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly support	90	46.39%
Support	56	28.87%
Neither support nor oppose	22	11.34%
Oppose	11	5.67%
Strongly oppose	13	6.70%
Not Answered	2	1.03%

Design features - Multi-Use Space: A multi-use space could accommodate various community events, gatherings, and activities.

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly support	89	45.88%

Support	62	31.96%
Neither support nor oppose	19	9.79%
Oppose	13	6.70%
Strongly oppose	8	4.12%
Not Answered	3	1.55%

Design features - Tree Planting: Planting trees throughout the community space can provide shade, improve air quality, and enhance the overall aesthetics.

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly support	115	59.28%
Support	47	24.23%
Neither support nor oppose	14	7.22%
Oppose	7	3.61%
Strongly oppose	9	4.64%
Not Answered	2	1.03%

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed plan and its features will:

Overall design benefits - Meet the needs of the local community

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	57	29.38%
Agree	84	43.30%
Neither agree nor disagree	28	14.43%
Disagree	10	5.15%
Strongly disagree	13	6.70%
Not Answered	2	1.03%

Overall design benefits - Make the park more accessible to residents of all ages and abilities

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	67	34.54%
Agree	70	36.08%
Neither agree nor disagree	34	17.53%
Disagree	12	6.19%
Strongly disagree	9	4.64%
Not Answered	2	1.03%

Overall design benefits - Improve inclusion and accessibility within the park

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	54	27.84%
Agree	60	30.93%
Neither agree nor disagree	53	27.32%
Disagree	17	8.76%
Strongly disagree	9	4.64%
Not Answered	1	0.52%

Overall design benefits - Make the park feel more welcoming to all members of the community

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	70	36.08%
Agree	70	36.08%
Neither agree nor disagree	28	14.43%
Disagree	15	7.73%
Strongly disagree	8	4.12%
Not Answered	3	1.55%

Overall design benefits - Provide benefits to nature and local ecosystems

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	84	43.30%
Agree	67	34.54%
Neither agree nor disagree	27	13.92%
Disagree	4	2.06%
Strongly disagree	7	3.61%
Not Answered	5	2.58%

Overall design benefits - Provide health and wellbeing benefits

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	81	41.75%
Agree	74	38.14%
Neither agree nor disagree	20	10.31%
Disagree	7	3.61%
Strongly disagree	7	3.61%
Not Answered	5	2.58%

Question: What other comments do you have?

There were 115 responses to this part of the question. Many used the comments to share support for the design, whilst several others used the comment section to offer other ideas or raise concerns about the features presented. Primarily, comments shared the following:

- Concerns about practicality, inclusivity, sustainability, and community engagement.
- Key issues include the need for long-term maintenance plans, dog-friendly areas, and teenage spaces, as well as specific amenities like water fountains, lighting, and a clubhouse with public toilets.
- Interest in retaining the space as a bowling green or other recreational space.
- Additional considerations involve addressing flooding, ensuring design clarity, and balancing the park's diverse needs with financial viability and sustainability, while incorporating community input and minimising potential disruptions from events.

5. Conclusions and Next Steps

In summary: the survey results show strong support for the proposed park design, which most respondents believe will make the park more welcoming and accessible, benefiting both people and nature. Key features with high support include a sensory garden (82%), improved surface water management (82%), tree planting (84%), and seating (81%). The updated proposals will now feature a social gathering area, sensory garden, community growing area with fruit trees, pétanque/boules area, swales to address flooding, and refurbishment of the building for community space and public toilets.

We would like to thank everyone who responded to the consultation. We have already considered the comments and how to reflect them in the design. Where this is not possible, we will explore how other areas of the park can be adapted to accommodate some of these suggestions.

The next steps involve developing detailed designs for St Margaret's Park and submitting planning applications to change the use of the bowling green. A funding plan will be created, and collaboration with local stakeholders will continue throughout the process. High-level cost estimates have been made for the scheme, with a mix of external grant funding, repayable finance, and Council budget allocations anticipated to fund the project.