



OPEN SPACE 2021

Edinburgh's Open Space Strategy

December 2016

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YOUR COUNCIL - YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Foreword

Edinburgh is a capital celebrated for its greenspaces with the highest proportion of public parks and gardens of any Scottish city; a record matched by the number of Green Flag Award winning parks receiving annual recognition for their good management and active community involvement.

Our green network has formed the setting for successive eras of city growth, born out of the natural landscape of hills and valleys, adapted from private grounds, rail corridors and from the regeneration of the canal and former industrial sites.

Improving access to good quality green space for everyone across the city benefits health and wellbeing, supports urban wildlife and encourages investment in Edinburgh's economy.

This Strategy, Open Space 2021, establishes principles guiding the continued protection, management and expansion of our green network over the next five years. Key challenges ahead include the delivery of new parks and active travel connections as the city expands, creating inspiring places for new communities to socialise, grow food, play, keep active and experience nature, and which are resource efficient and climate-change ready.

In addition to sustaining the quality of existing green spaces, there are opportunities for people to come together to create community gardens and allotments, to re-naturalise our 'living landscape' and to enhance the city's historic cemeteries and burial grounds.

We would like to thank the local groups and organisations that helped shape Open Space 2021. Through our collective efforts, Edinburgh will continue to be justly proud of its parks, green spaces and natural heritage and help to make the vision of a Central Scotland Green Network a reality.



Councillors Ian Perry and Alex Lunn

Convener and Vice Convener of the Planning Committee

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Overview

What is the Open Space Strategy?

All councils across Scotland plan for the future open space needs in their area, usually through an Open Space Strategy.

An Open Space Strategy is a plan that can:

- help to guide and set standards for the care and improvement of existing open spaces;
- provide the context to community-led greenspace initiatives and planning decisions;
- predict where new parks, play areas and sports pitches will be needed in years to come;
- identify where links can be formed and improved between open spaces to support walking, cycling and wildlife; and
- help the city prepare for, and adapt to current and future impacts of climate change.

An Open Space Audit is a survey that helps prepare the Strategy, it can show:

- how much open space exists across the Council Area;
- what type of activities different spaces offer;
- how well they are maintained;
- how far they are located from people's homes; and
- patterns of use and trends at citywide level.

The Strategy has a co-ordinating and interdependent role in terms of a number of Council plans and strategies, including those relating to parks and gardens, allotments, play, sports facilities, active travel, climate change adaptation, sustainability and biodiversity.

This is the Council's second Open Space Audit and Strategy. It looks back at what has happened over the last 5 years and looks forward at the priorities for Open Space into the 2020s, whilst sharing inspiring examples from across the Council Area.

Benefits of Open Space

Greenspace can help deliver the Scottish Government's vision of a healthier, safer and stronger, wealthier and fairer, smarter and greener Scotland. The Scottish Government tracks progress of how access to local greenspace is being improved as part of the National Performance Framework.

Greenspaces are central to the Council's priorities to build excellent places, encourage economic growth and improve quality of life and by delivering multiple benefits, make an important contribution to the delivery of the **Central Scotland Green Network** (CSGN) in Edinburgh.

By 2050, CSGN aims to 'transform Central Scotland into a place where the environment adds value to the economy and where people's lives are enriched by its quality'.¹ The third National Planning Framework defines remediation of derelict land, action in disadvantaged communities and active travel as the three priorities for CSGN over the coming years.

82% of Edinburgh's citizens are satisfied with parks and greenspaces compared to 76% nationally and around 71% of residents have taken part in 30 minutes physical activity each week.²

Studies in Edinburgh and Dundee found that better availability of greenspace within deprived communities is associated with significantly lower levels of stress and improved mental wellbeing.³

A Social Return on Investment (SROI) study to measure the impact of services provided through the city's parks estimated that every £1 spent on Edinburgh's parks delivers £12 of social, economic and environmental benefits.⁴

Edinburgh's open space network includes an urban forest of almost 630,000 trees, which help to filter air pollution, intercept and soak up flood waters, slow global warming by storing carbon and provide natural cooling during warmer weather.⁵

Greenspaces can provide above ground storage for flood waters, reducing the need for costly defences. Along the Braid Burn, flood storage has been formalised at Firhill High School, Inch Park and Edinburgh University Playing Fields.

Many of city's greenspaces are designated for their nature conservation value. From wildflowers to bumblebees and bats, greenspaces host a range of important plants and animals, providing the opportunity to encounter wildlife on a daily basis.

1 Central Scotland Green Network. 2011. *The Vision*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org/>. [Accessed 13 April 2016].

2 City of Edinburgh Council. 2015. *Edinburgh People Survey Summary Results*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20029/have_your_say/921/edinburgh_people_survey. [Accessed 2 November 2016]. Physical Activity includes indoor and outdoor leisure activities. Data compared to Scottish Household Survey for 2014.

3 Ward Thompson, C., Roe, J., Aspinal, P., Mitchell, R., Clow, A. & Miller, D. 2012. *More greenspace is linked to less stress in deprived communities: Evidence from salivary cortisol patterns*. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 105, pp. 221–229, doi:10.1016/j.landurbplan.2011.12.015

4 The City of Edinburgh Council. 2014. *The Value of City of Edinburgh Council's Parks*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20064/parks_and_green_spaces/1300/the_value_of_city_of_edinburgh_councils_parks. [Accessed 13 April 2016].

5 The City of Edinburgh Council. 2014. *Trees in the City – Trees and Woodlands Action Plan*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20064/parks_and_green_spaces/256/trees_and_woodlands [Accessed 13 April 2016].

Allotments and community gardens provide locally sourced, affordable food supply to improve dietary health and help reduce the environmental impact of food miles, processing and packaging.

Cycling in the city has increased by over 50% in the last five years and almost one third of journeys in Edinburgh are on foot. Much of this activity takes place on the off-road network, passing through the city's greenspaces.

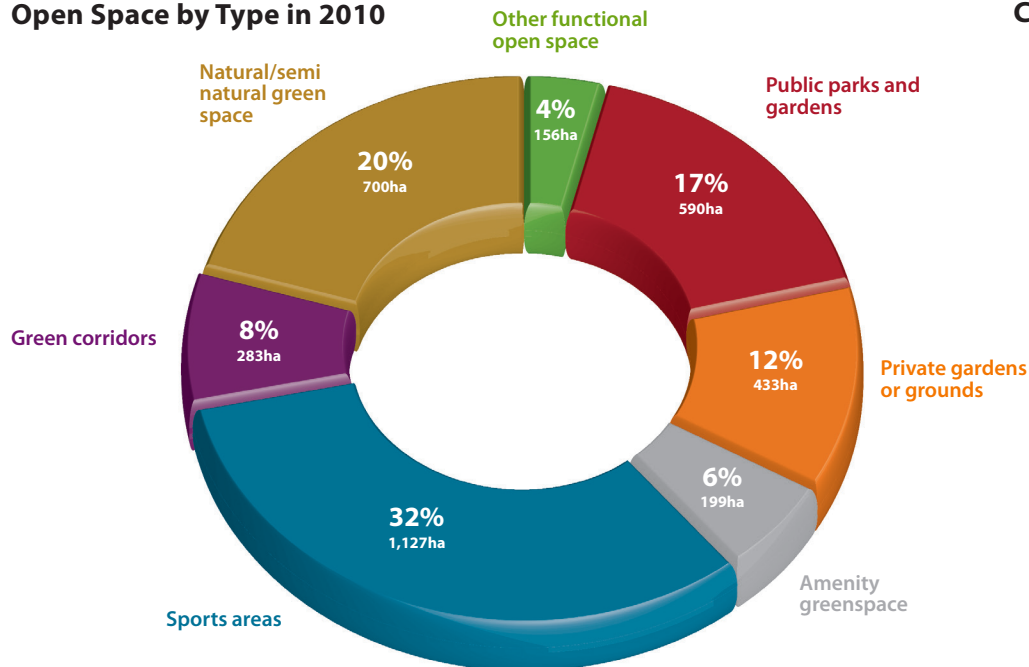
Over the next 5 years, it will be important for both existing and new open spaces to deliver a wide range of benefits and to do so in the context of reduced resources, as the Council seeks to make significant savings to its revenue budget.

Nonetheless, the establishment of four Localities brings together a range of Council services aligned with Community Planning partners, including integrated health and social care provision. This creates the opportunity for shared objectives and outcomes to be supported by cross-sector participation.

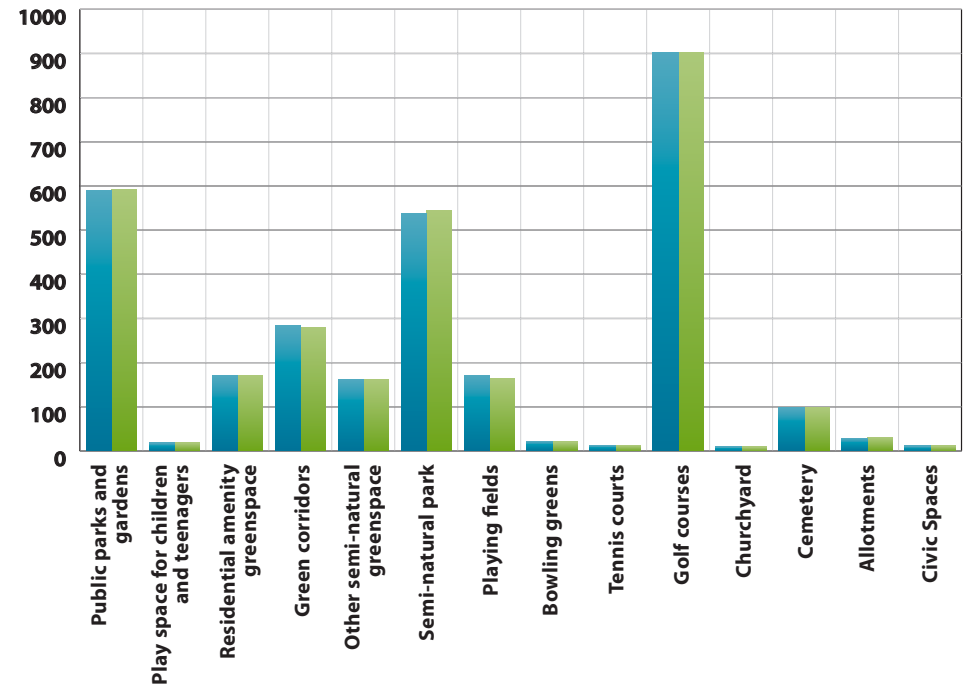
The Strategy seeks a co-ordinated and long-term approach to meeting Edinburgh's open space needs, evaluating efficiencies, whilst meeting citizen's expectations and Edinburgh's role as an international destination.

The Strategy will provide an important focus to target efforts and investment where this may have the best outcome in terms of people's health, biodiversity and supporting the local economy. By setting out minimum standards, this strategy encourages opportunity of access to quality greenspace for all.

Open Space by Type in 2010



Changes in Open Space by Type 2009 - 2016



How is Open Space in Edinburgh changing?

The first Open Space Audit mapped all open spaces over 500 square metres in size and graded their quality. This is equivalent to a space of approx. 20 x 25 metres. Travel times between homes and greenspaces were also measured. A full description of the scope of spaces included is set out in the Open Space Audit (2016).

This process has been repeated to review changes over the last 5 years, which reveal the following:

- The condition of the city's green network has been improved for wildlife, cyclists and pedestrians;
- 5 new public play areas and 22 improved through the Play Area Action Plan;
- Access to 'good' quality large greenspaces has increased from 70% of homes in 2010 to 79.3% in 2016;
- Over 30 new local greenspaces have been created within 400 m of homes;
- Edinburgh's parks achieved 30 out of the 70 Green Flag Awards in Scotland in 2016/17, a substantial increase upon 13 in 2010;
- A new multi-pitch venue is proposed at the Jack Kane Centre and Hunter's Hall Park;
- 2 privately managed golf courses have closed;
- 12 new allotment sites have been created; and
- Community growing is thriving in over 50 urban greenspaces and vacant sites.

Comparisons between the 2010 Open Space Strategy and 1969 Open Space Plan found that open space had increased by some 200 hectares over the 40 year period. In the last 5 years, there has been a less marked change in the overall quantity and composition of greenspace.

Across the types of open space quantified in the Open Space Audit (2016) there have been losses and gains since 2009. However, the overall amount of open space has remained relatively constant, with a net loss of under 2 hectares. This is illustrated by a bar chart overleaf.

Many of the gains are associated with new parkland and green corridors to serve the expanding communities of Ratho and Kirkliston and through the creation of over 30 new local greenspaces as part of new home building on brownfield land within the City.

Some spaces have changed type to reflect changes in management practices, such as designating Magdalene Glen as a Community Park or via the introduction of new outdoor sports facilities, allotments or community growing spaces.

Losses have tended to apply to bowling greens, playing fields, semi-natural greenspaces and residential amenity greenspace. In these cases, planning policy seeks to avoid losses which would impact on local character, recreational provision, biodiversity and green networks.

Where loss of open space is acceptable in principle, compensatory open space provision or an improvement to the quality of an existing greenspace may need to be provided. The Open Space Audit and Strategy provide the supporting information to these decisions as outlined under 'Achieving Outcomes'.

Edinburgh's Local Development Plan, seeks to implement some 50-60 ha of new, publicly accessible open space in order to provide new recreational opportunities, active travel routes and wildlife habitat as the city grows.

Based on an average household size of 2.00 persons, the city's expansion would provide between 3 – 4 hectares of open space per 1000 people for its new communities. This compares with approximately 4.15 hectares of accessible open space per 1000 people within the existing urban area and the Fields in Trust⁶ 'Six Acre Standard' of 2.4 hectares per 1000 people.

The scope of the **Open Space Audit (2016)** provides a like-for-like update in terms of the quantity of the following types of open space:

• Residential Amenity Greenspace;	• Natural/semi-natural greenspace;
• Play Space for children and teenagers;	• Allotments;
• Green corridors;	• Churchyards and Cemeteries; and
• Sports Areas;	• Civic space

These areas of open space are listed in the revised Open Space Audit schedules and will be available online as mapped updates on the Council's online **Open Space Map**.

It is anticipated that other primary and secondary types of open space e.g. Large Private Gardens and Grounds, Institutional Grounds, Business and Transport Amenity greenspaces, will be updated from 2017 onwards through the next generation of Scotland's Greenspace Map to be prepared by Ordnance Survey.

There are a number of developments creating new civic spaces in progress, such as New Waverley, Bristo Square and the St. James quarter. The Audit includes the new civic space in front of the National Museum of Scotland on Chambers Street and Sibbald Walk at New Waverley. A revised Public Realm Strategy will cover the management and development of civic spaces.

Whilst methods of comparing open space provision in different cities vary, one study⁷ by Greenspace Scotland found that Edinburgh had the highest proportion of public parks and gardens in Scotland, some 17% of all open space based on 2010 data. This compares with 13% in Glasgow and 8% across urban Scotland.

In 2015, Edinburgh was invited to join the **World Cities Culture Forum**, a network of global cities that share a belief in the importance of culture for creating thriving cities. This allows comparison with the proportion of public open space in other international cities. Approximately 16% of Edinburgh's built up area is publicly accessible open space. Despite obvious differences in the overall scale of each city, this proportion of greenspace can be benchmarked against 14.4% of public greenspace in Berlin and 14% in New York.⁸

6 Formerly The National Playing Fields Association.

7 Greenspace Scotland (2012) *The Second State of Scotland's Greenspace Report*. Available at: <http://greenspacescotland.org.uk/state-of-scotlands-greenspace.aspx> (Accessed: 25 May 2016).

8 Mayor of London (2016) *World Cities Culture Report 2013*. Available at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/file/2233> (Accessed: 25 May 2016).

Case Study: Restalrig Railway Path



This shared use path is part of a route that connects the Shore in Leith with Portobello in the East of the City. In the early 20th Century, the path formed part of what was the Leith Line that connected Granton to Leith Docks. As an action in the Council's Active Travel Action Plan, the path was upgraded with funding from The Scottish Government, Sustrans Scotland and Binks Trust and opened in 2012. This included resurfacing and lighting between Easter Road and Leith Links; access point improvements at Restalrig Rd, Findlay Gardens and Hawkhill Avenue; a new access at Seafield Street to link with redevelopment at the site of the former Eastern General Hospital; and a new ramp and bridge across Seafield Place, which replaces a set of steps at the east end of Leith Links. The Restalrig Railway Path is 2 ½ miles long and would take approx. 15 minutes to cycle.

The gateway to the route is marked by the welcoming community space of Leith Links Children's Orchard. The orchard was planted in April 2010 by Greener Leith - an independent charity that works to promote sustainability and improve Leith's public spaces. The orchard includes apples, pears, blackberries, blackcurrants and gooseberries. It is open for public access at all times and the local community is welcome to pick and enjoy the fruit.

Image: Restalrig Railway Path with Leith Links Community Orchard beyond.

Growing the City's Green Network

Edinburgh is fortunate to have a well established network of greenspaces, owing to its successive eras of growth. This has included:

- the laying out of new parks and gardens;
- building the city around important landscape features such as hills and river valleys;
- creation of sports facilities, school grounds, cemeteries and allotments;
- adaptation of former private grounds, disused railway lines and Canal for recreation; and
- regeneration of former industrial sites incorporating areas of new civic space and greenspace.

Edinburgh's first Open Space Strategy mapped all open spaces across the Council Area that are linked by local paths, Rights of Way and Core Paths. This network mirrors much of Edinburgh's semi-natural habitat, natural floodplain and locally important landscape features. It set proposals to extend the network and improve access for recreation and wildlife. This has involved the work of a range of Council services, charitable organisations, community groups and the development industry alike.

Over the last 5 years, the following green network improvements have been achieved:

- Re-surfacing and lighting to Core Path CEC 7 between Easter Road and Leith Links, improvements to entrance points from local streets and new bridge across Seafield Place through Scottish Government funding administered by Sustrans;
- Planting of 3500 new trees along the North Edinburgh Paths by Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust and clearance of invasive non-native species;
- The naturalisation of standard amenity grassland across 78 greenspaces and creation of 73 meadow areas through the Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative;
- Improving the quality of greenspace by the Canalside at Wester Hailes;
- Access and woodland management improvements carried out at Covenanters' Wood and new linear park created through development at Dreghorn Polofields;
- Access and woodland management improvements from Colinton Mains Drive through Redford Woods through development of a new care home on grounds of former Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes store;
- Edinburgh Waterfront Promenade between Cramond and Granton. The re-allocation of part of Leith Docks for industrial use will mean that sections within Leith Docks will become a long-term prospect;
- Phase 1 of the Niddrie Burn restoration (de-culverting works); and
- Upgrading to the 'Innocent Railway' Core Path CEC 5 alongside the Brunstane Burn through dedication of the John Muir Way, a 134 mile coast-to-coast route between Dunbar and Helensburgh.

Steps towards delivering other projects are also underway:

- Master planning of the open space framework for the International Business Gateway near Edinburgh Airport;
- Feasibility and design proposals for a key section of the proposed Roseburn to Union Canal link, including a new bridge across Dalry Road and upgrade of Dalry Community Park;
- Master plan design for the Little France Parkland (South-East Wedge) on behalf of the Council's Parks and Greenspaces team prepared by Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust. The park is now reduced in extent following two Planning Appeal decisions allowing residential development on the area allocated as Open Space in the Edinburgh City Local Plan. The first section of a new multi-user path linking Craigmillar Castle Road, Greendykes Rd and Little France Drive has recently been completed with funding from Transport Scotland, via the Sustrans Community Links Fund;
- Shared use path adjacent the South Suburban Railway in progress at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital;
- Restoration of Craigpark Quarry for use as a country park; and
- Proposals have been approved to form a new events space/public square at Chesser Avenue.

Other proposals have yet to be progressed.

Often this has occurred where land ownership or the timeframe for development proposals coming forward are not in the control of the Council and includes the following:

- Leith Links Seaward Extension (reduced in extent through Examination of the Local Development Plan);
- Extension of the River Almond Walkway due to uncertainty over expansion of Edinburgh Airport;
- Redevelopment at Port Edgar and Granton waterfront;
- Access to Charlotte Square outwith the Edinburgh International Book Festival is subject to the proprietors' agreement;
- Access to Canal at Yeaman Place, subject to redevelopment of relevant land;
- Rail corridors from Abbeyhill to Lochend and Lochend to Powderhall remain in control of Network Rail; and
- Newcraighall Parkland has been amended through the Local Development Plan to provide a cross-boundary green network link to Musselburgh.

Green Network Proposals towards 2021

As part of the growth of the City, which is set out through the Edinburgh Local Development Plan, further proposals to extend the green network have been identified (Figure 1), including:

- Providing off-road green networks within the city between Edinburgh International Airport, Edinburgh Gateway Station and Cammo in West Edinburgh; linking Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park and Mortonhall in South East Edinburgh; and in Queensferry linking up different parts of the settlement.
- Green network links beyond the Council boundary include: to Musselburgh from Brunstane and Newcraighall; from Burdiehouse to Straiton in Midlothian; and the potential to realise a link between the Water of Leith and Kirknewton in West Lothian.

In addition to these proposals, where appropriate in non-residential developments, Local Development Plan Policy Env 20 - Open Space in New Development, seeks provision of and extensions to the green network.

The second **Strategic Development Plan** for South East Scotland, which applies to West Lothian, Scottish Borders, Midlothian, southern Fife, East Lothian and City of Edinburgh, has identified priority areas for green networks at the City Region level and will lead to the preparation of cross-boundary frameworks for green networks to be prepared as Supplementary Guidance.

Edinburgh's **Active Travel Action Plan 2016** continues to improve connections between destinations within the City and surrounding towns, including relevant actions for the off-road network.

The Edinburgh Adapts Vision and Action Plan confirms the importance of green infrastructure in supporting the city to adapt to the impacts of climate change, including flood risk and the need to support nature to adapt. This Strategy supports further use of open space to provide above ground flood storage, where amenity and biodiversity benefits can be achieved.

The Edinburgh Design Guidance sets out spatial and quality considerations for new Blue Networks, Green Corridors and Green Streets based on successful examples within the City, including the Water of Leith Walkway, North Meadow Walk and Forrest Road.

Name	Action
a) Dalmeny to Echline, Queensferry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDP site brief for South Scotstoun and Builyeon Road • Crossing to existing A90 • Upgrading of existing footways
b) Edinburgh Gateway Station to Maybury and Cammo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDP site briefs for Maybury and Cammo • Link via SASA land and improvements to Cammo Walk
c) Newmills Rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link Water of Leith Walkway and form first section of alternative off-road route to Kirknewton, West Lothian
d) Mortonhall, Burdiehouse and Gilmerton to Straiton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDP site briefs for Broomhills, Burdiehouse and Gilmerton Station Road. • Upgrading of former Edinburgh-Loanhead Railway line
e) Brunstane to Musselburgh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link Edinburgh Core Path network with East Lothian Core Paths via site briefs for Brunstane and Newcraighall
f) International Business Gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic landscape framework providing setting to IBG and including active travel routes
g) Leith Links Seaward Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linear greenspace including sports pitches, allotments and active travel route (reduced in extent through Examination of LDP)
h) South East Wedge (Little France Parkland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-functional parkland, woodland and country paths linking with parallel developments in Midlothian

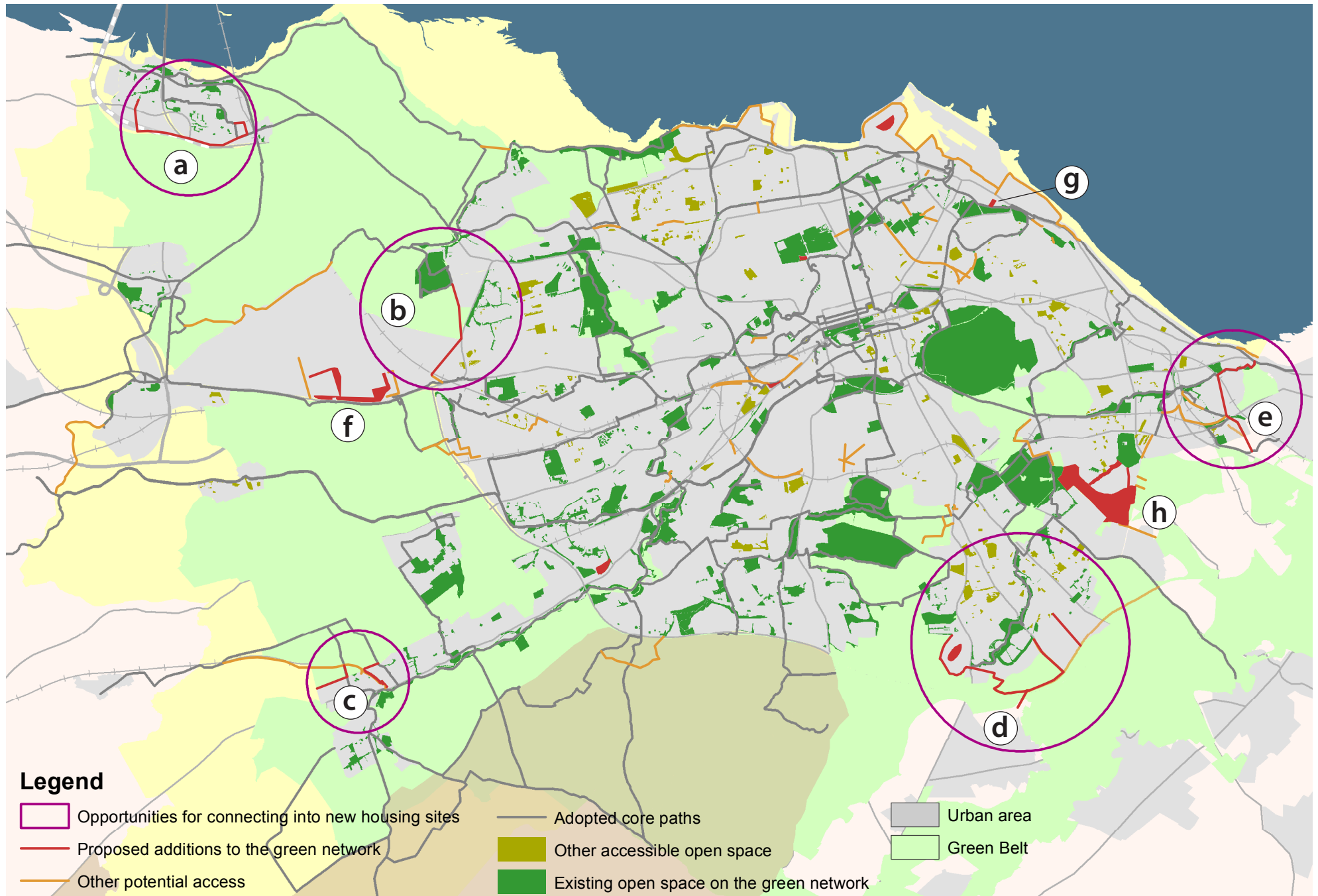


Figure 1: Edinburgh's Green Network. Extensions to the city's Green Network as set out in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan.

A Network for Nature

Green networks are essential for wildlife. Well connected greenspaces and corridors create a permeable landscape for wildlife, allowing species to spread and move through the city and for people to experience nature as part of their daily lives.

The focus of current nature conservation initiatives is at the ecosystem or landscape scale, looking at how different habitats are linked. Maintaining a green network will help wildlife cope with the future impacts of climate change and helps to create a more resilient natural environment in Edinburgh.

At a City-region level, *The Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership* supports green network activity, working with Councils and country landowners to improve access to greenspace in and around towns.

Since 2000, the *Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan* has sought to improve and connect green areas of the city. A recent project which supports delivery of this aim is the *Edinburgh Living Landscape* initiative, a partnership involving the Council, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh and GreenSurge.

The project aims to restore and connect green areas of the city to make attractive and biodiverse landscapes, enjoyed by residents and visitors. Landscapes will be healthy, nature rich and resilient to climate change. 58% of the Council's greenspace estate is classified as standard close-mown amenity grassland, the Living Landscapes approach will help to increase native habitats within greenspaces, their structural diversity and connections with surrounding habitats, specifically by:

- Increasing the area of wildflower meadows in Council greenspaces by 10%; and
- Increasing woodland cover from 17% to 20% and an increase of 1500 street trees over the next decade.

Changes in management practice will involve ongoing engagement with existing Friends of Parks Groups and local stakeholders and bring opportunities to provide interpretation promoting both the new management approach and the flora and fauna it will support. This could involve changing mowing practice on steep banks and under groups of trees, where longer grass would not impact on recreational use. At the same time, there may be savings in terms of time spent cutting grass, which could be diverted to caring for shrubs, hedges, flower beds and those grassed areas which require more frequent cuts.

As illustrated in figure 2, research carried out on behalf of GreenSurge by Forest Research is seeking to identify strategic ways in which to connect habitats, using data from pollinator species to predict the movement of a range of species, enabling communities of flora and fauna to coalesce into a more resilient system at a landscape scale.

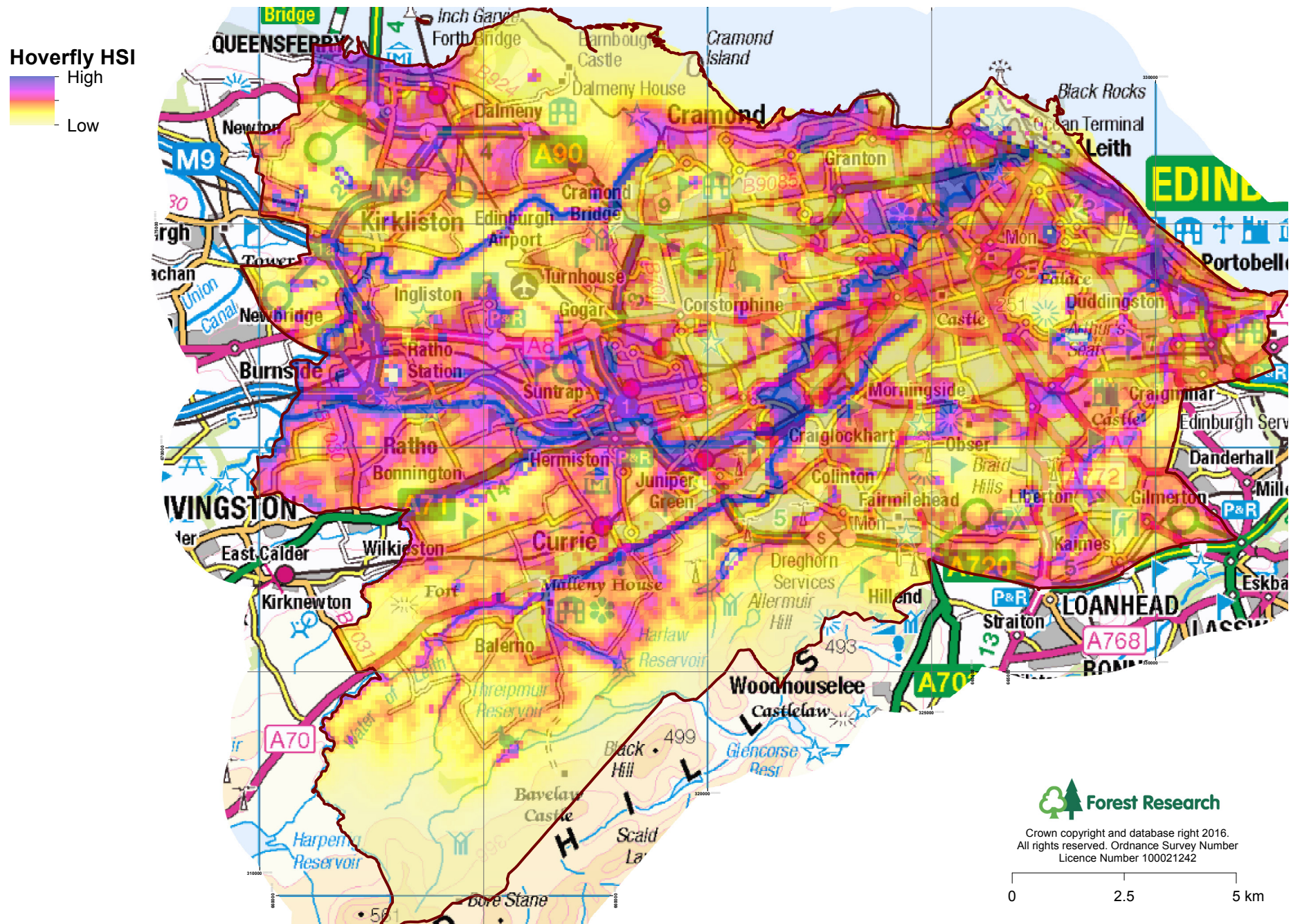


Figure 2: Predicted habitat suitability for hoverflies in Edinburgh. Results from a model developed by Forest Research using data from The Wildlife Information Centre to examine how species might use green networks to move across the city.

Edinburgh's Open Space Standards

The 2010 Open Space Strategy set out three standards to make sure that all communities in and around Edinburgh have access to quality open space in the following ways:

- Large Greenspaces – greater than 2 hectares;
- Local Greenspaces – greater than 500 square metres; and
- Equipped children's play areas.

For each kind of open space listed above, the standards crucially include the quality of the space and its distance from homes. These distances were based upon surveys which examined how people in Edinburgh use open space.

In addition to these standards, in more built up and flatted areas of the city, density represents an additional factor to be taken into account where development proposals involve a loss of open space or where enhancements or improved access to open space is proposed.

The following sections consider the improvements achieved through the introduction of these principles and how they should be refined and reaffirmed for the next 5 years.

Large Greenspace Standard

Every neighbourhood should benefit from a large park to provide the space for the whole community to enjoy their free-time. It's the place to play sports and informal games; walk the dog or go for a run; come together for local events; watch wildlife and scenery through the seasons; and experience natural open space.

For this reason, Open Space 2021 sets out a Large Greenspace Standard, which applies to the management of existing greenspaces and also provision to meet the needs of new developments.

All homes should be within 800m walking distance of an accessible large greenspace of at least 2 hectares

- **All newly created large greenspaces should be of 'good' quality regardless of type**
- **Council managed large greenspaces should be of 'good' quality for City Parks, Community Parks and Recreation Grounds and 'good+' for Premier Parks and Natural Heritage Parks.**

The foundations of this principle are Edinburgh's large public parks, which cater for a range of activities at the neighbourhood scale. Parks and Gardens are categorised into five groups by the Council's ***Parks and Gardens Strategy***⁹:

- Premier Parks – six large and diverse parks serving international and national visitors as well as local and citywide needs
- City Parks – providing citywide and local needs
- Natural Heritage Parks – large semi-natural greenspaces managed as public parks including hills and woodlands
- Community Parks – serve local needs
- Gardens – generally smaller ornamental areas with flower borders, shrubs and seating

Each year a ***quality assessment of public parks and gardens*** and a number of recreation grounds is carried out by Council officers, representatives from the local community and organisations with an interest in the natural environment.

The purpose of measuring the quality of Edinburgh's parks and gardens is to achieve:

'A quality parks system worthy of international comparison; accessible, diverse and environmentally rich; which fulfils the cultural, social and recreational needs of the people.'¹⁰

In 2010, the medium-term aim was for all relevant sites to attain a Parks Quality Assessment (PQA) score of 'good' or better. Premier Parks and City Parks must achieve a higher score, which reflects their role as destinations for residents and visitors across the city and in 2012 the standard was increased to 'good+' for Premier Parks and Natural Heritage Parks.

PQA provides a robust quality management system, which can identify standards based upon location, criteria and over time. It is based on the ***Green Flag Award***, which is the national quality benchmark for parks and greenspaces, administered in Scotland by Keep Scotland Beautiful.

The PQA criteria include: safe and welcoming access, provision for health, safety and security, standards of cleanliness, maintenance of grounds and infrastructure, sustainability, conservation and heritage, community involvement and marketing.

Recommendations from the annual PQA are turned into management actions for each park, which reflect community-led proposals driven forward by the City's ***Friends of Parks Groups***. Recent changes in quality have resulted from improvements to grounds maintenance, litter management, signs and information, conservation of flora and fauna and reduction in dog fouling.

⁹ *Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy (2006)*

¹⁰ *Op. Cit. p.49*

Changes in Large Greenspace Quality between 2010-16

Large greenspaces which have improved to meet the Standard since 2010, include:

• Braid Hills	• Gilmerton Park (The Dell)	• Jewel Park
• Colinton Mains Park	• Gypsy Brae Park and Recreation Ground	• Kingsknowe (Dovecot) Park
• Curriemuirend Park	• Hunters Hall Park	• Muirhouse Linear Park
• Drum Park	• Inch Park	• Paties Road Recreation Ground
• East Pilton Park	• Inverleith Park	• Redhall Park

Across the entire Parks and Gardens estate, which includes a number parks and gardens falling within the local greenspace category covered later in the Strategy, 136 parks met or exceeded the Edinburgh minimum quality standard of 'good', a substantial increase from 81 in 2009. These improvements are reflected in Edinburgh's widespread success in the national Green Flag Awards. In 2016/17, Edinburgh's parks achieved 30 out of the 70 Green Flag Awards in Scotland, a substantial increase upon the 13 awards held in 2010.

Map analysis using actual path routes to trace distances between residential address points to 'good' quality large greenspaces compares access to large greenspaces between 2010 and 2016. In 2010, 70% of homes were served by the Large Greenspace Standard (Figure 3).

The areas in dark grey show residential properties beyond 800m from a large greenspace meeting the standard or within 800m of a large greenspace falling below the standard. By 2016 (Figure 4), 79.3% of homes were served by the standard, an increase of almost 10% across the City. The areas in purple show the change in extent of residential areas benefitting from improved access to large greenspaces.

Since publication of the draft Strategy based on the 2015 PQA results, Redford Woods has improved to meet the 'good' standard. King George V Park, Eyre Place and Muirwood Park, Currie, have also been added as contributing to the standard, falling only slightly below the 2 hectare threshold.

A number of other large greenspaces remain very close the quality threshold to meet the Large Greenspace Standard and continued effort is required to maintain the standards expected by residents and visitors to the City.

Although Portobello Park was originally identified as a large greenspace improvement action in 2010, it was subsequently confirmed as the site of the new Portobello High School, now under construction. Proposals are in progress for a new 2 hectare greenspace, to be called Treverlen Park, on the site of the existing High School.

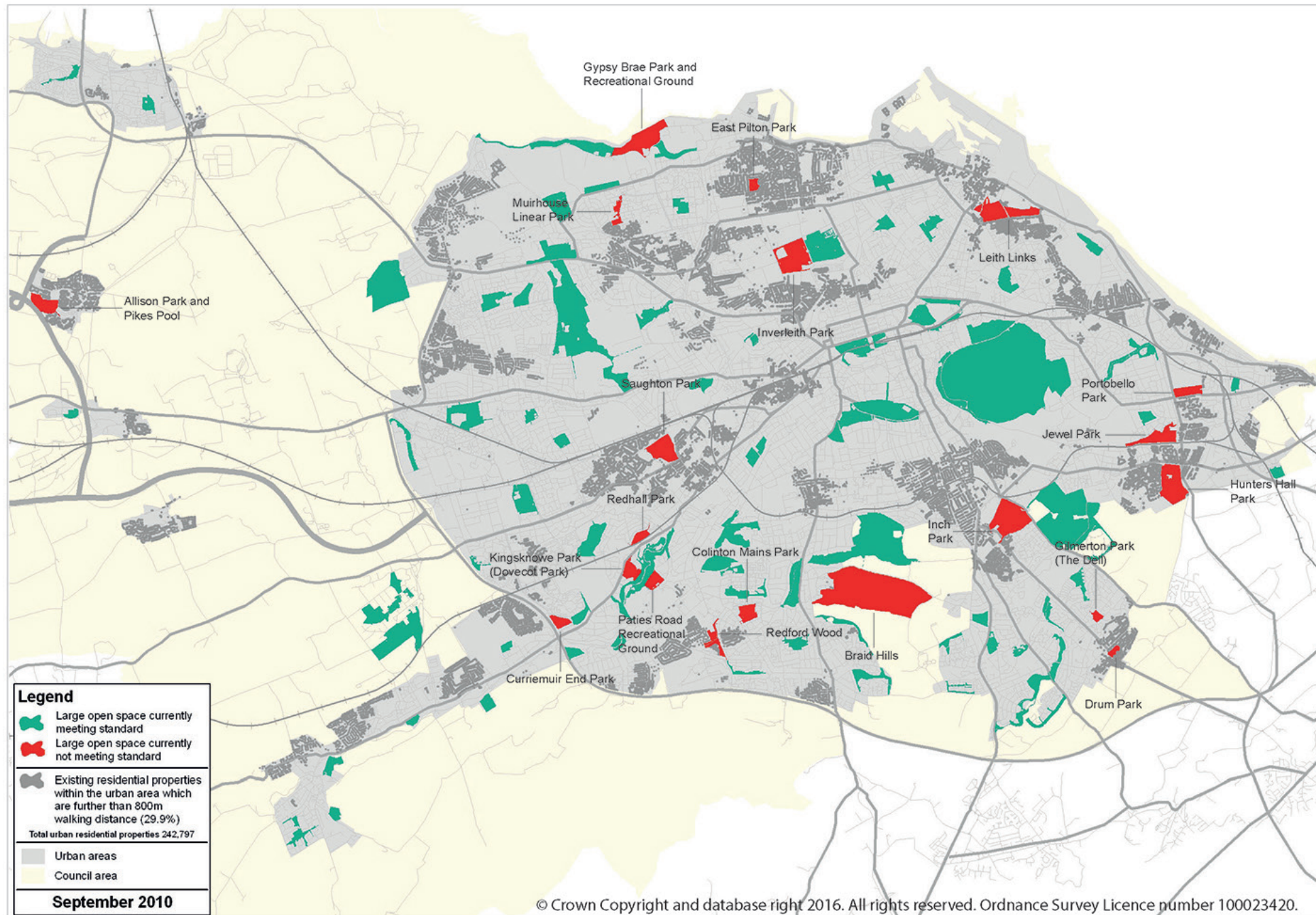


Figure 3: Access to Large Greenspaces in 2010

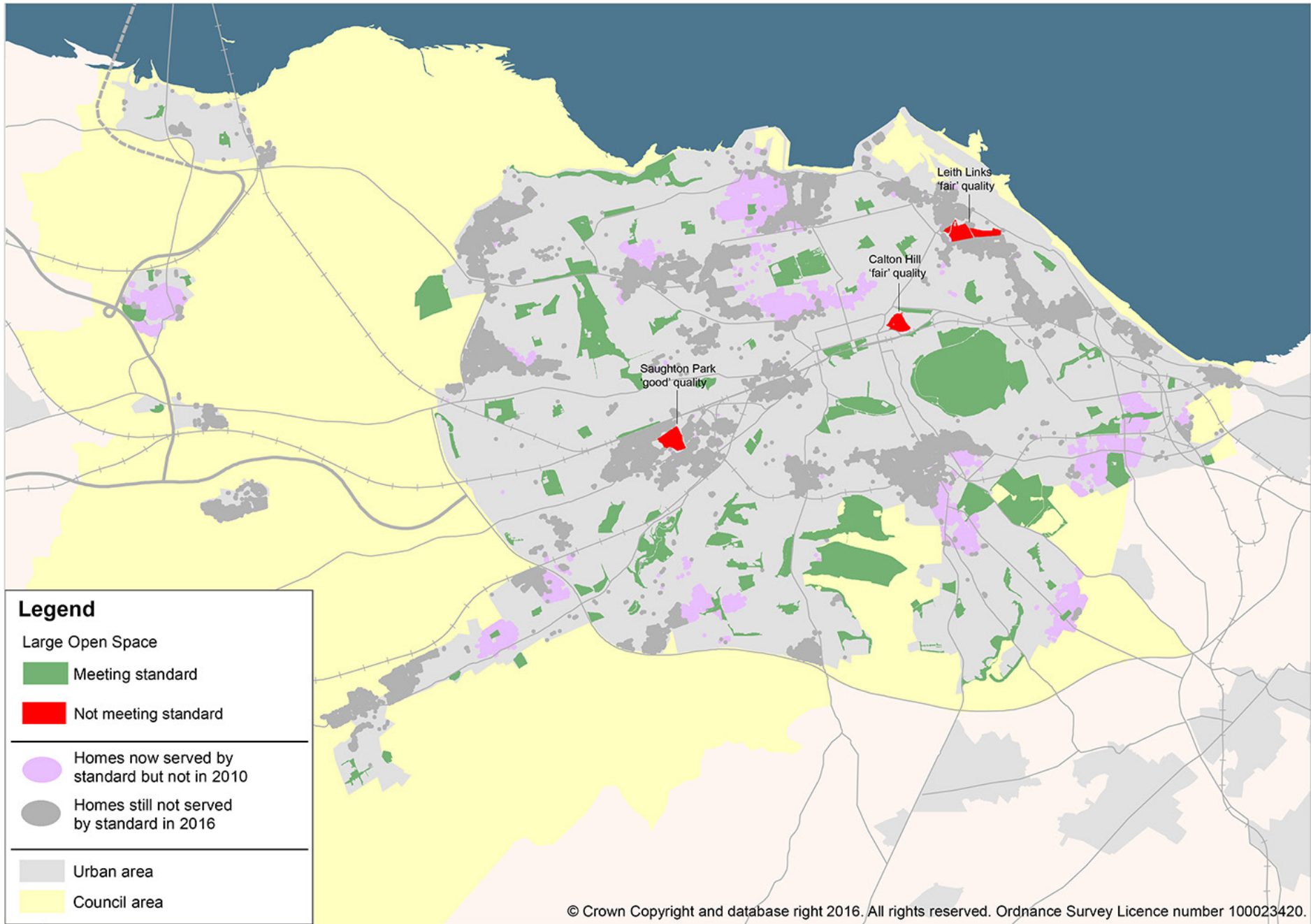


Figure 4: Access to Large Greenspaces in 2016

Large Greenspaces created between 2010 - 2016

In 2014, the Council opened Buttercup Farm Park, a new public park on the site of the former Drumbrae Primary School playing fields. The park is named after the poultry farm that once occupied the land, which was owned by the founder of the Buttercup Dairy Company.

Opportunities to create new greenspaces over 2 ha in size are generally restricted to major areas of urban redevelopment and development of greenfield housing sites on the edge of the City. In recent years, due to the effect of the economic downturn on the pace of new development and home building, fewer new large greenspaces have been created through private sector development than originally anticipated in the 2010 Open Space Strategy.

Since the last Open Space Audit, Forth Quarter Park in Granton has fully opened and two publicly accessible parks have been created in north Kirkliston. The Council, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust and the Lothians and Fife Green Network Partnership are currently progressing proposals to put in place an important citywide greenspace proposal at Little France in South East Edinburgh to serve new residential areas at Greendykes and existing communities in Craigmillar. It will link the new Shawfair development in Midlothian to the Royal Infirmary and Edinburgh BioQuarter. The restoration of Craigpark Quarry, Ratho, to create a new country park is also in progress.

Leith Docks Community Park is no longer a large greenspace proposal due the designation of the northern part of Leith Docks for industry.

Large Greenspace Proposals towards 2021

Continuing to ensure that inequalities in access to 'good' quality large green spaces are addressed and creating new landscape scale greenspaces as the city grows, remain essential to meeting the needs of Edinburgh's current and future communities.

Calton Hill has declined from 'good' quality in 2009 to 'fair' by 2016 and whilst Leith Links has improved from 'Poor' in 2009 to 'fair' by 2016, both remain short of the necessary quality for a Premier Park. These outstanding actions will be more challenging to address; involving upgrades to paths, event infrastructure and other park facilities that reflect their importance to local residents and visitors to the City.

In these cases, management plans will require to be prepared in dialogue with communities of interest to identify priorities for change. External funding bids will be submitted to eligible funding programmes. If successful, the terms of any grant funding are likely to require the Council and other partners to fund a specified proportion of the overall costs.

This approach to funding significant greenspace regeneration works has been particularly successful in the case of [Saughton Park](#), where £392,000 was secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Parks for People programme to develop a fully costed master plan for the park. This led to a successful stage two award for 73% of estimated project delivery costs of some £5.2 million.

Saughton Park has already improved from 'fair' quality in 2009 to 'good' quality by 2016. As a requirement of its Heritage Lottery Fund 'Parks for People' funding, Saughton Park must achieve a Green Flag Award on completion of the regeneration works. The potential also exists for its play facilities to be upgraded to reach 'excellent' play value.

Premier Park	Action	Estimated Cost
Calton Hill	Preparation of a new management plan and engagement on site improvements. Quality to be raised from 'fair' to meet quality standard for Premier Park.	£5 m - unfunded
Leith Links	Preparation of a new management plan and engagement on site improvements. Quality to be raised from 'fair' to meet quality standard for Premier Park. Includes delivery of a second 'Magnet' Play Area.	£2m - unfunded
Saughton Park	Restore the park to its former glory as a visitor destination which showcases horticultural excellence and offers exceptional recreational and visitor facilities, opportunities for learning and volunteering and engenders a sense of pride in the neighbouring communities.	£5.2 m. 73% costs funded by Heritage Lottery Fund 'Parks for People'. Remainder of costs to be met by Council and other external funding.

Case Study: Saughton Park



Saughton Park and Gardens is a hidden gem in the South West of Edinburgh. Due to the variety of facilities on offer at the park, it provides a heritage asset and facility for the local community and the city as a whole. Its facilities include; floral displays, rose gardens where 13,000 roses bloom, community woodlands, a Skateboard and BMX Park and football pitches. In July 2013, the park received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a fully costed master plan to regenerate the park. The master plan was developed in partnership with stakeholders and the local community by landscape architects Ironside Farrar Limited and architects Sutherland Hussey Harris and Richard Shorter. In January 2016, the park secured stage two funding, a vital step towards restoring the park to its former glory as a major visitor destination, showcasing horticultural excellence and providing exceptional recreational and visitor facilities. These activities will create opportunities for learning and volunteering, engendering a sense of pride in the neighbouring communities.

Image: Overview of the Park Hub and Cafe



LOTTERY FUNDED

The Edinburgh Local Development Plan sets out new planned large greenspaces which are linked to Edinburgh’s Green Network to improve connections across the city. These include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leith Western Harbour Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newmills Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leith Links Seaward Extension (reduced in extent) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broomhills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Business Gateway (A8 Parkland, Central Park and Archaeology Park) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gilmerton Station Road
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maybury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brunstane

Other housing allocations in the LDP make provision for open space but their location has not been specified in the site development principles e.g. Maybury and Cammo.

Additionally, the redevelopment of open space to the south and west of Saughton Prison for housing will lead to the creation of a new 2 ha semi-natural greenspace adjacent to the Water of Leith.

Figure 5 shows the potential effect upon access to large greenspaces across the city as a consequence of achieving improvements to quality at Calton Hill, Leith Links and Saughton Park and through the creation of new large greenspaces as allocations within the Edinburgh Local Development Plan and other consented developments are implemented. This could result in a 6% increase in access to large greenspaces from 79.3% of homes in 2016 to 85.3% of homes by 2021.

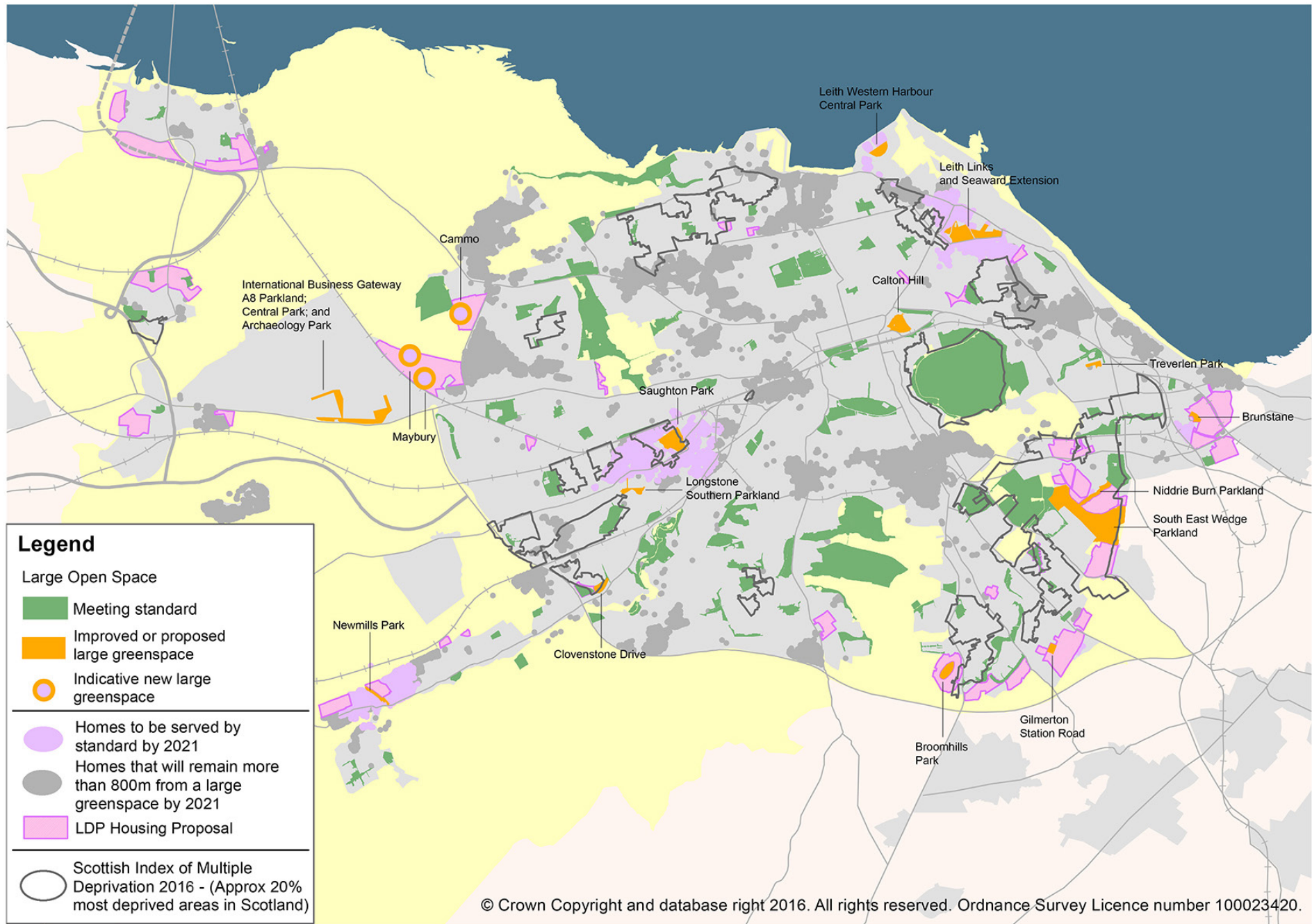


Figure 5: Potential Access to Large Greenspace by 2021

Case Study: Broomhills Park



This 30 hectare housing site is identified in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan to meet strategic housing land requirements. The proposals by Barratt East of Scotland Ltd were approved by Planning Committee in June 2014 and developed through participation at the Architecture & Design Scotland Forum, a series of workshops with an expert panel providing design review.

Open space is proposed in the form of a 3 hectare central park and radiating green wedges which retain the existing knoll within the site and responds to views to and from the site.

Equipped play areas will be provided to 'good' standard to serve all homes within 800m of their location, in addition to paths and an artwork feature.

Pedestrian and cycle connections through the site will link with Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park (including improved crossings) and to the path networks to the west and northwest at Mortonhall and Morton Mains.

The site provides for 633 residential units (including 25% on-site affordable provision of 158 homes) and land for a new primary school. Units for commercial use are to be provided within the ground floor of flats near to Old Burdiehouse village.

Image: Aerial View of Masterplan, including from Broomhills Park.

Reflecting comments from stakeholders during the preparation of this Strategy, the Edinburgh Design Guidance will set out how new large greenspaces can be delivered through the planning process to better meet the needs of users, encouraging health and well-being and enhancing the natural environment. Measures shall include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level areas for community events, informal ball games and outdoor exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured walking and running circuits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for new woodland and forest scale trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edinburgh Meadow Mix in naturalised grassland areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community gardens, orchards, allotments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of sustainable urban drainage to enhance amenity and biodiversity e.g. swales and permanent ponds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectivity with the wider green network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locating spaces not only in relation to homes but new schools and commercial units to put greenspaces at the centre of community life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-spaces and seating areas to provide meeting places for all ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of local built, cultural and natural heritage interests

Play Access Standard

Large greenspaces most often form the venue for high quality publicly accessible play areas.

The city has experienced one its highest births rates in recent times and consequently ongoing provision should be made for play, which is essential for children’s healthy physical and emotional growth. Play allows social and behavioural skills to be gained and supports educational development. Studies have also shown that children who use greenspace are more likely to keep up this habit as an adult.¹¹

Edinburgh’s Play Strategy¹² has long recognised that children and young people of all ages have a right to quality play environments, which offer stimulation and challenge. Freedom to play is recognised as a fundamental right of every child under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Scottish Government’s Play Strategy promotes the daily value of play in the home, schools and nurseries and the local community, supported by positive leadership. Through its Play Strategy Vision, Edinburgh aims to be ‘a play friendly city where all children and young people can enjoy their childhood.’

The Council’s Open Space Strategy sets out the following requirements to help meet the need for equipped play areas within the existing built up area and to provide for new developments. All houses and flats should have access to at least one of the following:

A play space of	good play value (51 – 70) within 800 metres walking distance
	very good play value (71 – 100) within 1200 metres walking distance
	excellent play value (101 +) within 2000 metres direct distance

The principles were based on surveys with parents and children, which found that the average walk or cycle trip to a play area was 750 metres but that people would go further to higher quality play destinations.

Play Value¹³ measures the quality of play area design and layout, together with range of play activities on offer.

Play Value	Score
Excellent	101 +
Very good	71 – 100
Good	51-70
Fair – does not contribute to the Play Space Access Standard	50 or less

¹¹ Ward Thompson, C., Aspinal, P. and Montarzino A. (2008) *The childhood factor: Adult visits to green places and the significance of childhood experience. Environment and Behavior*; 40(1):111-43.

¹² *Play in Partnership: a Play Strategy for the City of Edinburgh* was first adopted in 2000 and reviewed in 2009 and 2014

¹³ Play Value is based on the former National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) PlaySafe System. The NPFA became Fields in Trust in 2007.

Improvements to Edinburgh's play areas between 2010-16

In 2010, the Open Space Strategy mapped where existing play spaces met the Play Access Standard. Residential areas shown in grey lay more than 400 m from a play area meeting 'good' Play Value.

The 2016 version of this maps shows that Edinburgh's *Play Area Action Plan* (2011-16) has helped increase access to play across the city from 67% of homes in 2009 to 76% in 2016, an increase of 9%.

The purple areas show the difference between 2010 and 2016, where creation of new play areas and upgrades to existing facilities have improved the number of play areas meeting the Play Access Standard.

The mapping also shows access to play against data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2016) - indicating the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland, where future improvements in play could improve equality of access.

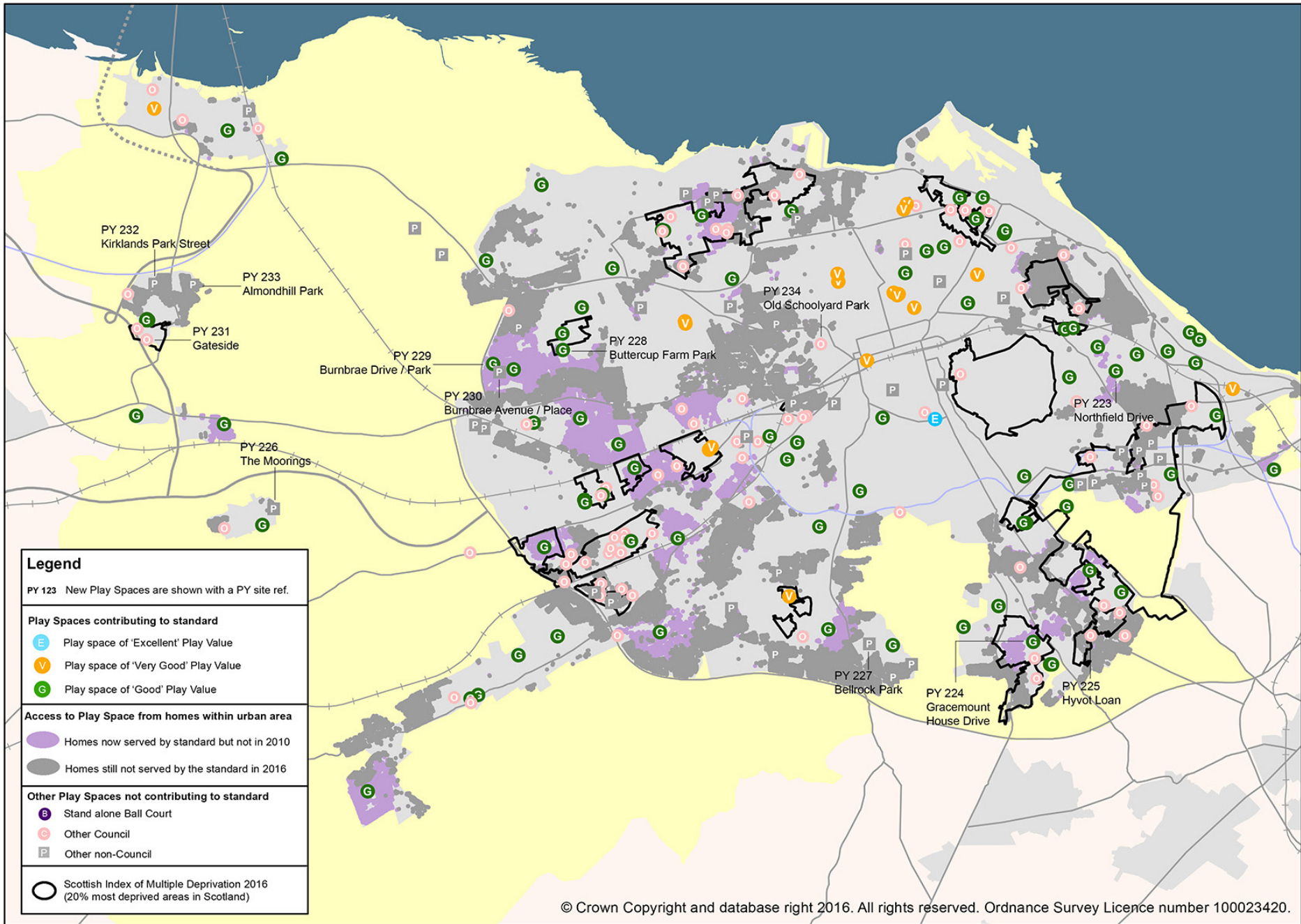


Figure 6: Play Area Access in 2016

Between 2011/12 and 2015/16 the Council has invested some £715,548 in play area improvements. A 'good' value play area costs upwards of £80,000 to install and the upkeep of equipment is an ongoing cycle of repair and renewal. Investment is needed to halt wear and tear, which has resulted some play areas declining over the last 5 years.

Since 2010, 5 new play areas have been built by the Council. These include: Gateside - Kirkliston, Gracemount House Drive, Northfield Drive, Buttercup Farm Park in Drumbrae and Old Schoolyard Park in Dean Village.

Thirty four play areas have also been refurbished or supplied with extra equipment. This has achieved the following steps to meet the Play Access Standard:

- 19 play areas were improved from 'fair' to 'good' Play Value
- 3 play areas were improved to meet 'very good' Play Value. These were: Colinton Mains Park, Saughton Park and King George V Park, Eyre Place.

The Magnet Play Area at the East Meadows retains a Play Value of 'excellent'.

5 play areas were removed due to housing renewal¹⁴ and vandalism¹⁵. Local residents were consulted on the changes. Three play areas planned for removal were kept open in response to community views¹⁶. In Ratho, the local Friends of Park Group is actively raising funds to improve the play area previously identified for removal. In line with the 2016 Play Area Action Plan, play areas at Baillie Place, Milton Road and Dolphin Gardens West, Currie, remain to be phased out when the equipment reaches the end of its lifespan.

Thirty one privately owned and publicly accessible play areas were mapped in 2010. Though the Council is unable to influence their upkeep, these sites add to the supply of play areas across the city.

The target set for March 2016 by the Play Area Action Plan, was to achieve target of 80% of homes served by the standard.

A number of Play Area proposals from the 2011-16 Play Area Action Plan remain to be completed. Equally, a number of community led projects and fund-raising initiatives are seeking to upgrade further play spaces across the city.

Play Area	Action	Estimated Cost
Loaganlea Avenue	Improve toddler play to 'good' play value. Developer contribution (£20,000) secured via Loaning Rd development.	£50,000
Fauldburn Park	Improve to 'good' play value	£50,000
Roseburn Public Park	Improve to 'good' play value. Consultation undertaken and play area plan agreed with local community.	£70,000
Spylaw Park	Raised from 'fair' to 'good'. Working with community to seek additional external funding to raise play value to 'very good'.	£30,000
Glenvarloch Crescent, Inch	Improve to 'good' play value	£80,000

¹⁴ Two play areas were removed due to housing renewal at Leith Fort and Gracemount.

¹⁵ Brown Street, The Pleasance and Dumbryden Gardens, Wester Hailes.

¹⁶ Forth Terrace by Dalmeny Station, Craigpark Crescent, Ratho and to the east of Balfour Street at Pilrig Park.

Leith Links	Magnet Play Area (excellent play value) – possibly including a skate facility. Edinburgh and Lothians and Greenspace Trust appointed to consult and fundraise for the project.	£400,000* Refer to Large Greenspace Standard
West Pilton Public Park	Improve to 'good' play value	£140,000
Morningside Public Park	Improve to 'good' play value	£70,000
Newcraighall Public Park	Developer contribution (£25,000) secured via new housing at Newcraighall North. Funding application submitted to WREN for £47,000.	£70,000
Niddrie House Square	Improve to 'good' play value. Consultation undertaken.	£60,000

There is currently no capital budget remaining to deliver these outstanding actions and a new Play Area Action Plan will be prepared in order to review how existing and new facilities will be managed, explore sources of external funding and set out actions to help achieve the Play Access Standard. These actions will provide the basis for the direction of developer contributions where there is insufficient space on site to provide a new play area meeting the play value criteria and it is necessary to contribute to the improvement of facilities off-site.

Since 2010, 7 new play areas have been built in private sector housing sites, these include:

- North Kirkliston (2)
- The Moorings, Freelands Rd, Ratho (1)
- Burnbrae Drive and Burnbrae Place, East Craigs, Edinburgh (2)
- Hyvot's Loan, Edinburgh (1)
- Former water treatment works, Fairmilehead, Comiston Rd, Edinburgh (1)

The Play Area at Burnbrae Drive, East Craigs, is the only example which meets 'good' play value. In order to correctly understand the range of play activities that are crucial for child development and wellbeing, the 'play value' of all new play areas should be assessed early on in the planning process. This approach was taken for the new residential led development at Broomhills and will result in a play area which will meet 'good' play value.

Play Access towards 2021

There are no proposals to change the Play Access Standard. Through its implementation by the Play Area Action Plan, it has been instrumental in supporting the right of all children to access quality opportunities for play, avoiding duplication of low value play equipment and establishing stimulating play provision in the most accessible locations.

Over the next 5 years, the target for both the management of existing play areas and planning of new provision will be to reach and sustain a figure of 80% of homes served by the Play Access Standard but to aspire to bringing coverage to 85% of the urban area. Potential measures to reduce inequalities across the city include:

- upgrading key play areas around the city to 'very good' play value;
- rationalising clusters of low value equipped play to provide fewer but better quality facilities;
- meeting play value in other ways, through more creative landscape design including natural play elements; and
- taking into account the impact of provision to be delivered by private-sector development as the city grows.

Figure 7 shows the possible effect of both potential play area upgrades and the creation of new play areas through implementation of housing land allocations in the Local Development Plan. Access to play could rise from 76% of homes in 2016 to 83% of homes by 2021, an increase of 7%. Should the redevelopment of Saughton Park lead to its play area achieving 'excellent' play value, access would rise again to 86% of homes being served by the play access standard.

Equally, through further application of national design policy, which requires streets to consider 'place before movement' and by promoting distinctive landscape design, new local streets and greenspaces should provide for safe and stimulating unequipped play.

This Strategy complements the wider work of the Play Strategy for the City of Edinburgh and Edinburgh Play Forum, led by the Council's Play Champion. This considers the role of play in the wider community, including:

- Temporary resident-led 'Playing Out' events in streets
- Events in public spaces with activities led by Play Forum partners
- Opening up access to play in school grounds outside of teaching hours, as determined locally by Head Teachers

In some parts of the Council Area, primary school playgrounds represent the nearest accessible public asset. Access to grounds out of teaching hours can enhance opportunities for play in the community with sources of funding for play available to parent teacher associations that cannot be applied for by the Council.

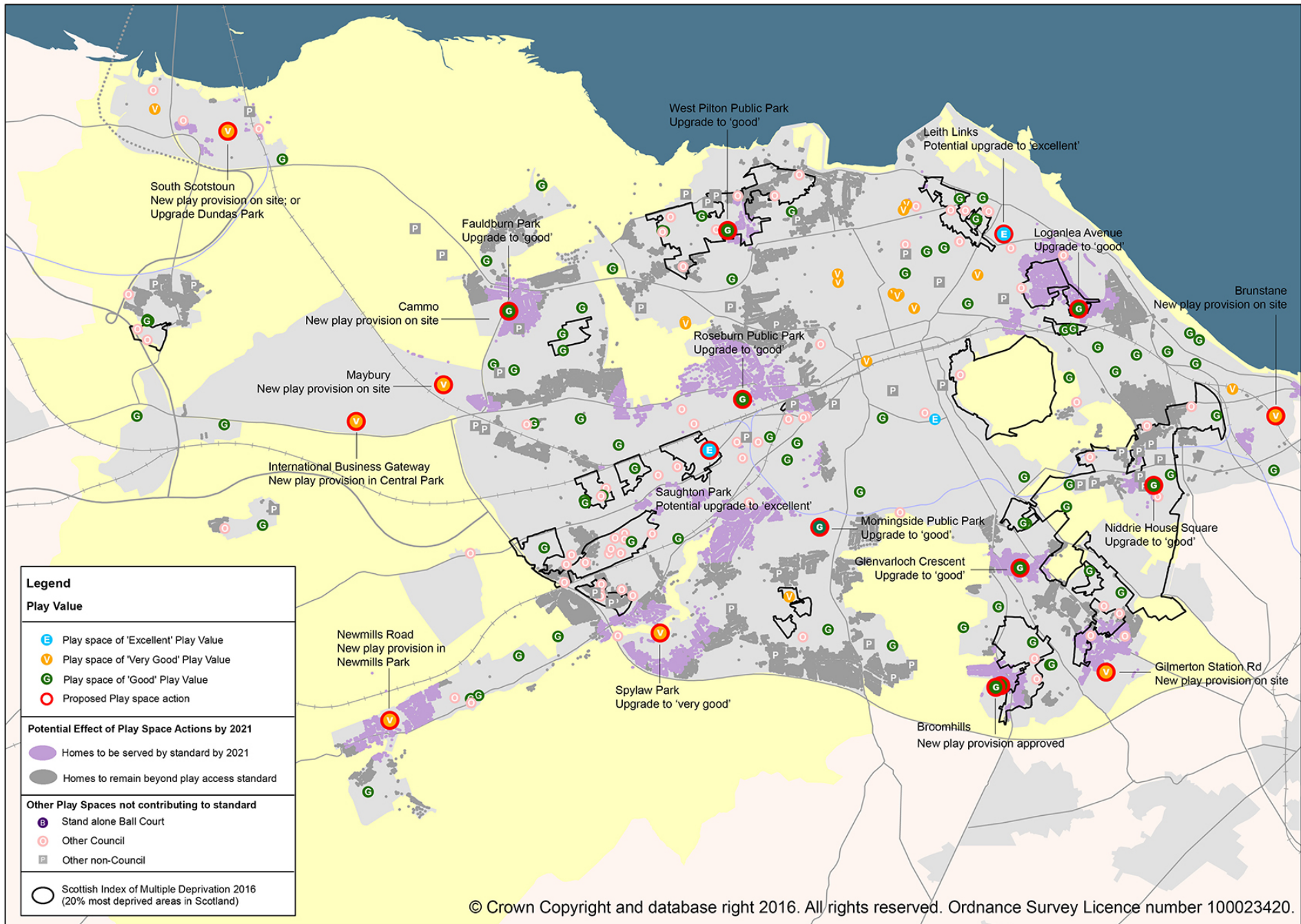


Figure 7: Potential Access to Play by 2021

Case Study: Our PLACE, Learn Outdoors - Cramond Primary



At Cramond Primary, Commonwealth Games Legacy funding matched by Parent fund raising, supported extensive natural play facilities to be installed in 2014. The design by HarrisonStevens landscape architects has transformed muddy, grass slopes into challenging, fun, play space.

Our PLACE (Play Landscape Active Children's Experience) includes a giant slide, tunnel, wild grass and rocks for climbing, a wooden Roman Galleon with a rope bridge walk way and sunken sand pit. There is also a large 'loose parts' construction area to complement the existing trim trail and football pitch.

The facilities value, promote and support play for all children and realise the importance of play on each child's personal health, social and emotional well being. Positive social skills are learned and encouraged by the school's Pupil Support Assistants. The grounds also support rich learning opportunities during class time. Outside of teaching hours the play ground is accessible by the local community and has been treated with respect by all.

Children and adults happily spend hours here, creating, building, jumping, building, climbing, running and simply hanging out. Playtime incidents have been reduced and pupils return to the classroom after break times invigorated and ready to learn.

Image: Our PLACE, Cramond (HarrisonStevens)

Local Greenspace Standard

Local greenspaces close to homes play an important role in how people feel about their neighbourhood and offer convenient spaces for everyday enjoyment of the outdoors.

To provide for these needs, the Open Space Strategy sets out the following requirements which apply to the quality of existing greenspaces and level of open space provision in new developments:

All homes should be within 400 metres walking distance of a 'good' quality, accessible greenspace of at least 500 sq.m.

This principle seeks to provide all homes with a minimum of 500 square metres of greenspace within 400 m of people's homes. This is the distance nearly 50% of people would walk to access their nearest greenspace and roughly equivalent to a 5 minute walk.¹⁷

Spaces typically contributing to this standard include over 700 residential amenity areas, semi-natural spaces such as woodlands and green corridors across the city. Roughly half of these spaces are Council managed with the remainder managed by property factors on behalf of residents. In many cases, Edinburgh's public parks and playing fields lie within this distance from homes and therefore cater for both local needs and wider community activities. A number of parks and gardens under 2 ha also fall into the Local Greenspace category.

Edinburgh's local greenspaces were assessed over the period 2015/16 by Parks, Local Environment and Planning teams. Between 2010 – 2016, the quality which local greenspaces had to meet was 'good' for parks and gardens and 'fair' for other types of greenspace. In 2010, 84% of homes were served by the local greenspace standard, by 2016 provision had improved to 89% - an increase of 5%. This compares favourably to some 69% of adults in Scotland who live within a 5 minute walk of their local greenspace¹⁸.

Figure 8 highlights access to local greenspace meeting quality standards within 400 metres of homes by 2016. The areas in purple show where improvements have occurred.

¹⁷ City of Edinburgh Council. 2009 Audit Questionnaire Findings

¹⁸ <http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/indicator/greenspace>

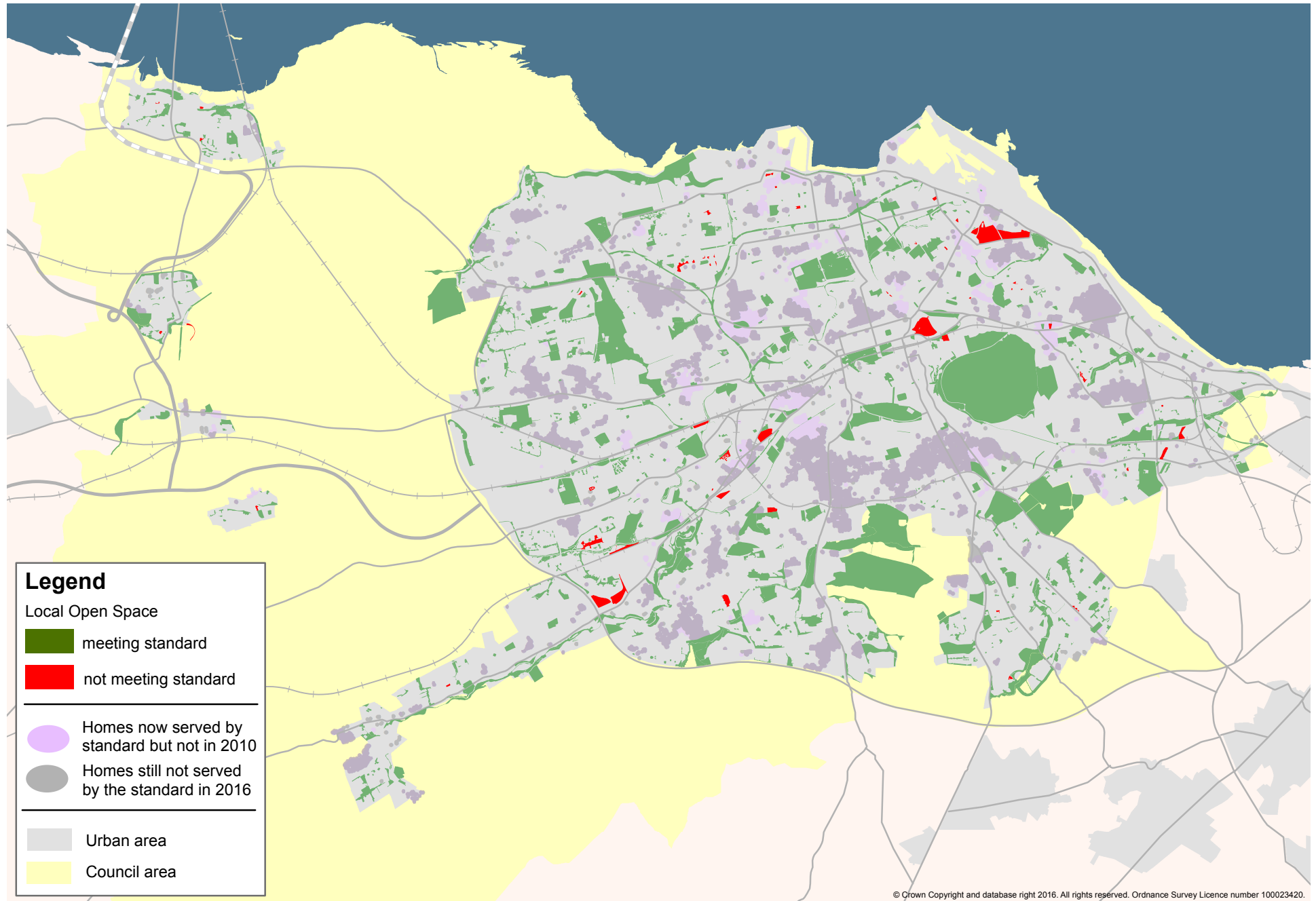


Figure 8: Access to Local Greenspace in 2016

Edinburgh's [Local Green Space Map](#) provides an online comparison of access to local greenspace between 2000 and 2016

Due to the number and diversity of local greenspaces across the city, it is not possible to show a trend. Some spaces have declined, whilst others have improved and many have remained the same. Some improvements in quality and access are the result of improvements to large greenspaces, others are down to initiatives such as community growing.

The 2010 Open Space Strategy set out actions to improve 8 local greenspaces, in addition to actions to improve cemeteries set out in the next section. A progress update is set out below:

Completed		Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baronscourt Park, 'very good' in 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Granton Crescent, 'very good' in 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harvester Way – low quality in 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dalry Community Park, 'good' in 2015 (also to be improved via the Roseburn-Union Canal Green Network) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orchard Brae Park North and South, 'very good' in 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piershill Square East – low quality in 2015. Quality has declined following improvements in 2010.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easter Drylaw Park, 'good' in 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piershill Square West, 'fair' in 2015 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratho Station Park, 'good' in 2015 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piershill Square West, 'fair' in 2015 	

Over 30 new local open spaces have been provided through new housing and other developments and these tend to be of good quality from the outset. This includes local parks alongside the Union Canal at Ratho and Fountainbridge Green, in addition to linear parks created at the former Fairmilehead Water Treatment Works and Dreghorn Polofield, Colinton.

Local Greenspaces towards 2021

The Scottish Government has included improvement in access to local greenspace as a National Indicator to measure progress towards delivery of the National Outcomes of a healthier, safer and stronger, wealthier and fairer, smarter and greener Scotland. The Open Space Strategy provides a useful update in terms of meeting this objective within the Council Area.

Whilst a more equitable standard in terms of access to quality large greenspaces now exists across the City, the challenge for the next phase of the Open Space Strategy is to promote better quality greenspaces within 5 minutes of people's homes.

In addition to large greenspaces, local greenspaces play an important role in people's perceptions of their neighbourhood, providing space for physical activity for those of all abilities, offering space for play which can be supervised easily by parents and generally improving wellbeing by encouraging more time to be spent outdoors.

Local greenspaces are the starting point for initiatives to get people more active, such as 'Couch to 5K'. They also have a crucial function in improving access to nature on a day-to-day basis and helping to counteract the fragmentation of habitats within built up areas, a key objective of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan and the Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative.

Over the next 5 years, to support these outcomes it is proposed to work towards a target of a 20% increase in local greenspaces achieving 'good' quality, currently 64% of all spaces. The overall quality standard for local greenspace has accordingly been raised to 'good' for all types of open space.

Figure 9 indicates spaces of low quality which should be prioritised for improvement but reveals that approx 30% are of 'fair' quality with scope to be improved to better meet local needs.

The map shows data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2016) – indicating the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland, where improvements to local greenspace could improve equality of access and align with Council and CSGN priorities. This approach will be supported by community-led initiatives and priorities for publicly managed greenspaces as agreed through Locality Improvement Plans.

The citywide Open Space Action plan will include further mapping to show the potential improvement in access to local greenspace resulting from the following:

- improvements to the quality of Saughton Park, Leith Links and Calton Hill;
- the creation of new large greenspaces through the Local Development Plan;
- improvements to parks and gardens under 2 hectares; and
- cemetery improvement actions.

Future updates of the citywide Action Plan will include greenspace initiatives arising through the Locality Improvement Plans.

Feed-back from stakeholders during the preparation of this Strategy suggested further ways in which local greenspaces in new housing developments could deliver multiple benefits. Good practice advice on these issues below will be set out in updates to the Edinburgh Design Guidance.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paths crossing the space to enable use in winter and access for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheltered, social spaces to congregate and meet neighbours with seating or walling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edinburgh Meadow Mix in naturalised grassland areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide spaces for community growing and fruit trees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A design that complements local streets by providing safe but stimulating unequipped play for children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complement sustainable urban drainage through location alongside swales, rain gardens.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include space for a diversity of larger growing trees to renew Edinburgh's canopy cover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In larger spaces, a layout with sub-areas to minimise conflict between users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage links to the green network and active travel network.

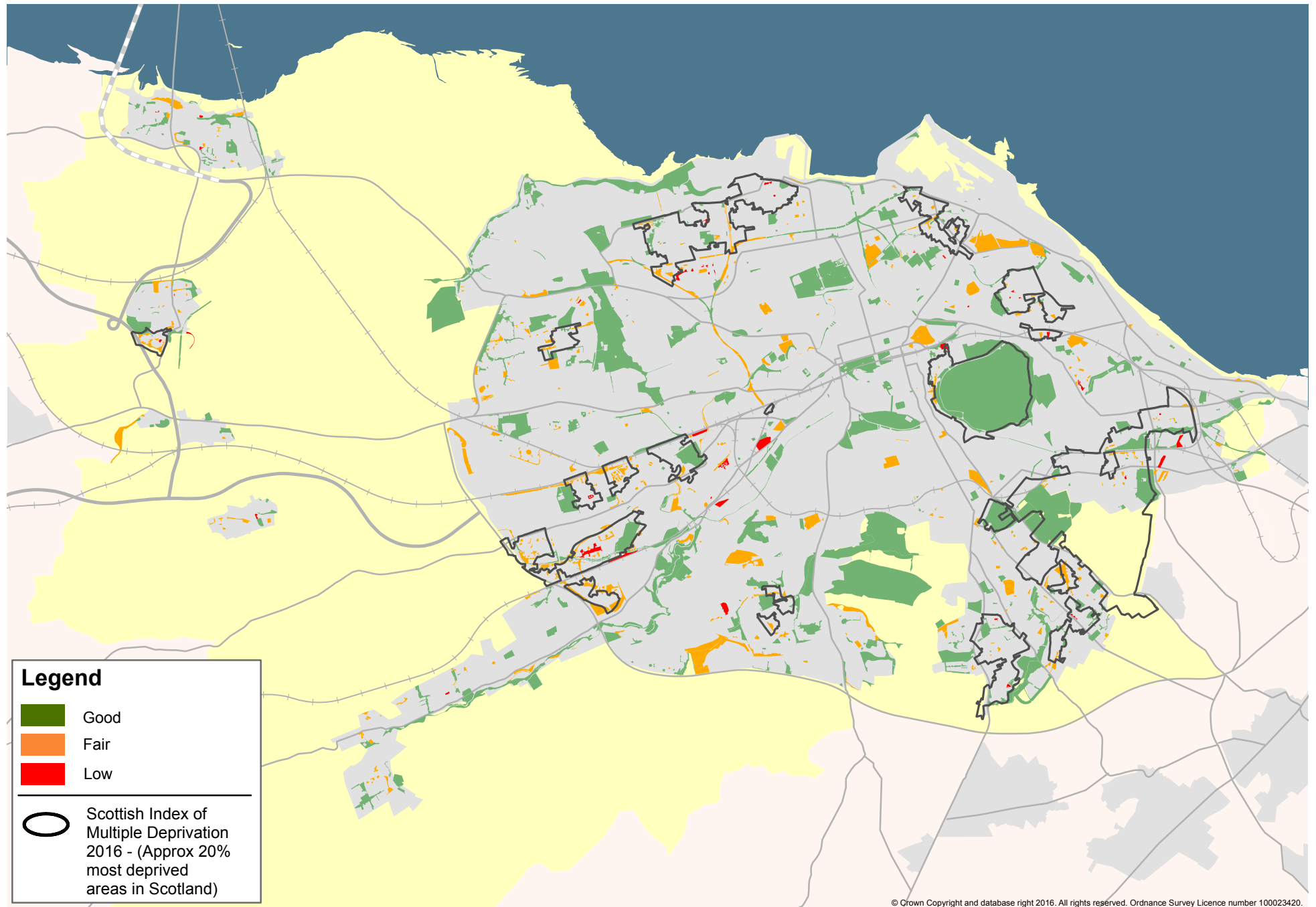


Figure 9: Access to Local Greenspace 2016 by quality grade

Case Study: Dreghorn Polofields



The development of 77 dwellings (including 25% affordable homes) by Miller Homes on agricultural land between Colinton Conservation Area and the City Bypass was granted planning consent in 2011 to maintain Edinburgh's housing land supply. A linear park was master planned by Optimised Environments as a local greenspace to retain a recreational route through the development which links under the A720 to Bonaly Country Park and the Pentland Hills Regional Park. The space is overlooked by the homes and runs along the edge of the Bonaly Burn and existing gardens, responding to local landscape features. The design incorporates views to the northern slopes of the Pentlands, surface water storage under grassed areas, new tree planting, bulbs and wildflowers, seating, informal play and a cairn pointing out the nearby hills. As part of the development, management has also been carried out to improve the adjacent Covenanter's Wood for public access.

Image: View northwards along the linear park.

Cemeteries, Burial Grounds and Churchyards

Cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds also contribute to the Local Greenspace Standard. Those in active use for burials firstly provide an important role in the commemoration of loved ones for the bereaved.

As urban greenspaces, cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds also contribute to the attractiveness of the urban scenery, Edinburgh's biodiversity and its cultural interest, particularly the city's historic burial grounds, where many infamous figures are laid to rest.

The 2009 Open Space Audit recorded that in the Council area there were 11 churchyards, of which 6 are Council-owned, 20 Council cemeteries and further 10 cemeteries in private ownership.

The 2010 Open Space Strategy noted the long-term capacity of the new Craigmillar Castle Park Cemetery, which opened in 2006 and set out actions to improve local greenspace quality in the following locations:

- Old Calton Burial Ground
- New Calton Burial Grounds
- North Leith Churchyard
- Dalry Cemetery
- Newington Cemetery

These actions were not progressed as originally intended due to the priorities of managing memorial stability, many of which are protected for their special architectural or historic interest, alongside features such as stone walling, iron railings and gates.

The Council's transformation in 2016, places cemeteries and burial grounds in the same service area as parks and greenspaces, which creates better opportunities to enhance their social, cultural and biodiversity potential.

A number of initiatives to improve the city's burial grounds are already underway. To conserve and enhance built heritage of international acclaim and improve access to greenspace in the city centre, [Edinburgh World Heritage](#) have been leading the [Edinburgh Graveyards Project](#).

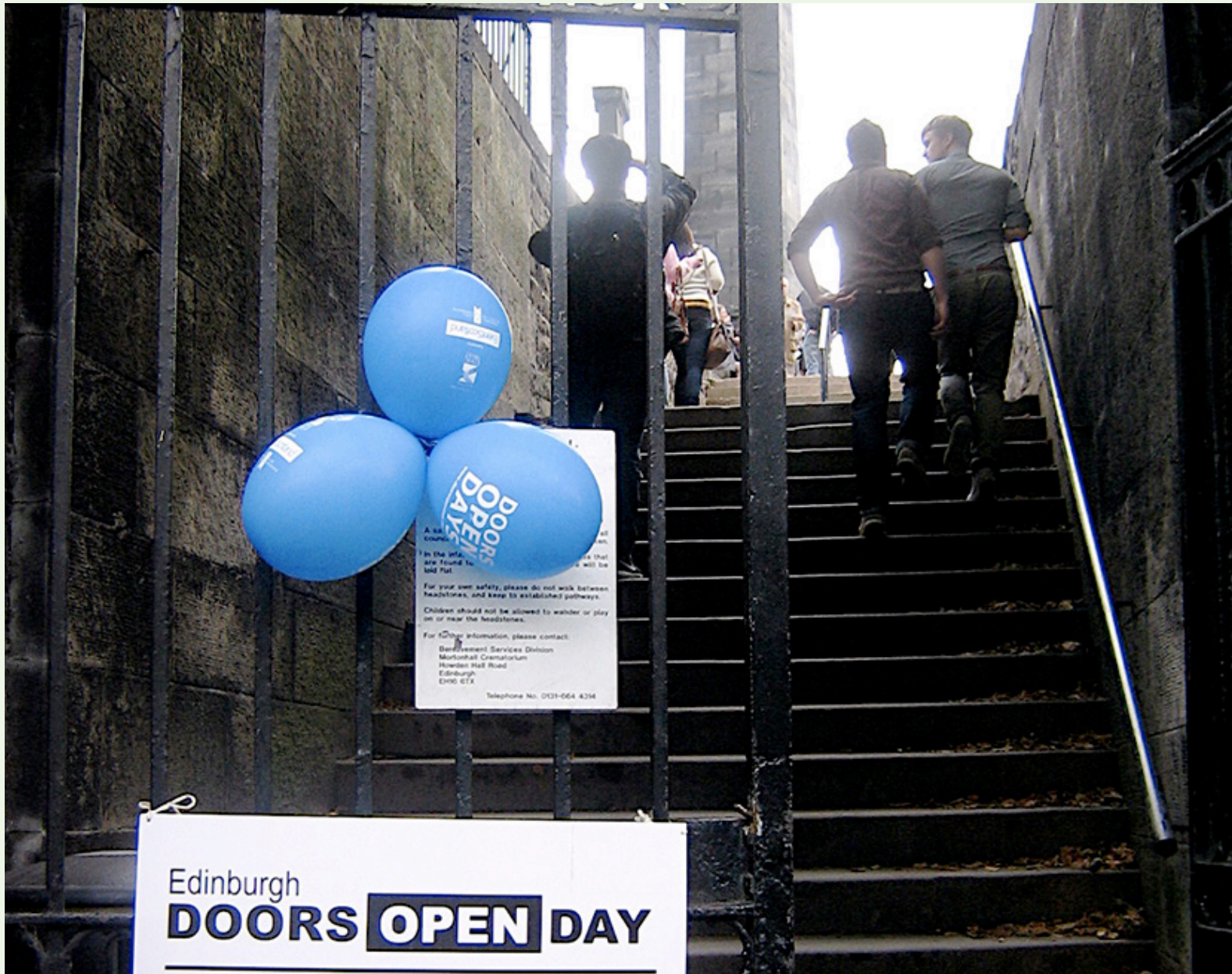
Beyond the World Heritage Site, Friends of Groups at both Warriston and Morningside cemeteries have been championing these monuments to local culture and history and carrying out voluntary works to improve landscape management for public access and wildlife benefit.

Cemeteries and Burial Grounds towards 2021

Over the next five years, priorities for Cemeteries and Burial Grounds include:

- Reviewing greenspace quality through the Parks Quality Assessment programme
- Supporting the development of a Friends of Group network
- Working with others, in particular, Edinburgh World Heritage to deliver improvements forming part of the World Heritage Site Management Plan.

Case Study: Edinburgh Graveyards Project



This project led by Edinburgh World Heritage, involves five greenspaces within the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh: Greyfriars, Canongate and St Cuthbert's Kirkyards and Calton Old and Calton New Burial Grounds. These sites are the resting place of some of Edinburgh's most famous figures including; economist Adam Smith, poet, Robert Fergusson; inventor Robert Stevenson, and philosopher David Hume. Each of these sites is at risk; suffering not only at the hands of weathering and erosion but also from limited resources, anti-social behaviour and a lack of awareness of their value as local green open spaces. The project is co-ordinating a joined-up approach to revitalising these places so that they become well-loved community resources as well as 'must-see' visitor attractions.

Image: Doors Open Day Old Calton Burial Ground.

Playing Fields and Other Sports Areas

*Edinburgh's Physical Activity and Sport Strategy*¹⁹ encourages everybody to keep active as a way of life. This follows the Scottish Government's strategy for physical activity 'Let's Make Scotland More Active'²⁰.

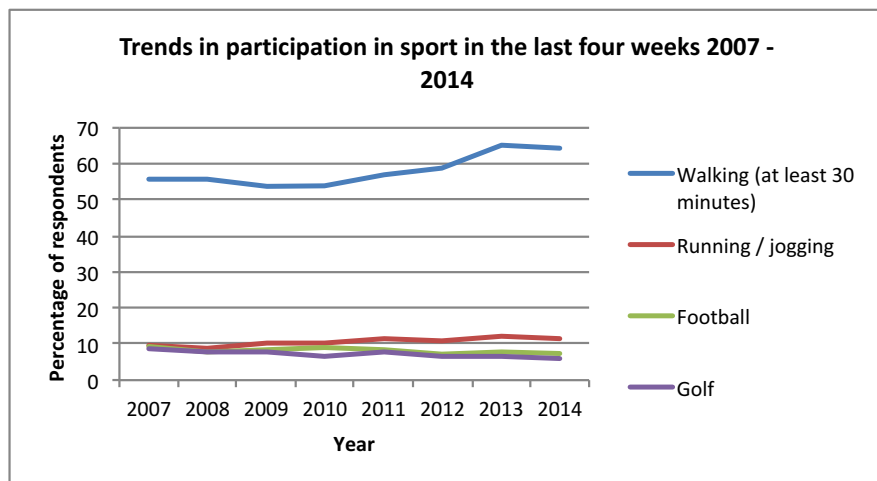
Physical inactivity remains a major challenge to improving health within Scotland. It is recommended that in a week, children should be active for an hour each day and adults, for 30 minutes on most days.

On average, Edinburgh residents report undertaking physical activity on two or three days of the week, however, 29% of residents still manage less than half an hour of physical activity.²¹

National trends indicate that participation levels in pitch sports remain steady but that walking for at least 30 minutes at least once per month is on the increase.²²

The Council aims to raise the profile of physical activity and sport in Edinburgh, encourage lifelong participation for all and support local clubs and community-led initiatives.

Although physical activity can take many forms, including play, dance and housework, a key objective is to encourage greater use of Edinburgh's greenspaces and sports facilities, including those in schools.



Playing Fields

Across the City, the Council owns 109 full size football pitches, 29 artificial pitches, 57 7x7 pitches, 30 rugby pitches and 24 cricket pitches.

The 2010 Open Space Strategy found there were enough pitches across Edinburgh to meet demand but that by improving their quality, greater use and levels of participation in sport could be supported.

Investment was to be concentrated in multi-pitch venues, such as the Meggetland Sports Complex, which opened in 2006.

¹⁹ City of Edinburgh Council, 2014. *Edinburgh's Physical Activity and Sports Strategy*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/directory_record/683866/edinburghs_physical_activity_and_sports_strategy [Accessed: 3 May 2016].

²⁰ The Scottish Government, 2003. *Let's Make Scotland More Active - A Strategy for Physical Activity*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2003/02/16324/17895> [Accessed: 3 May 2016].

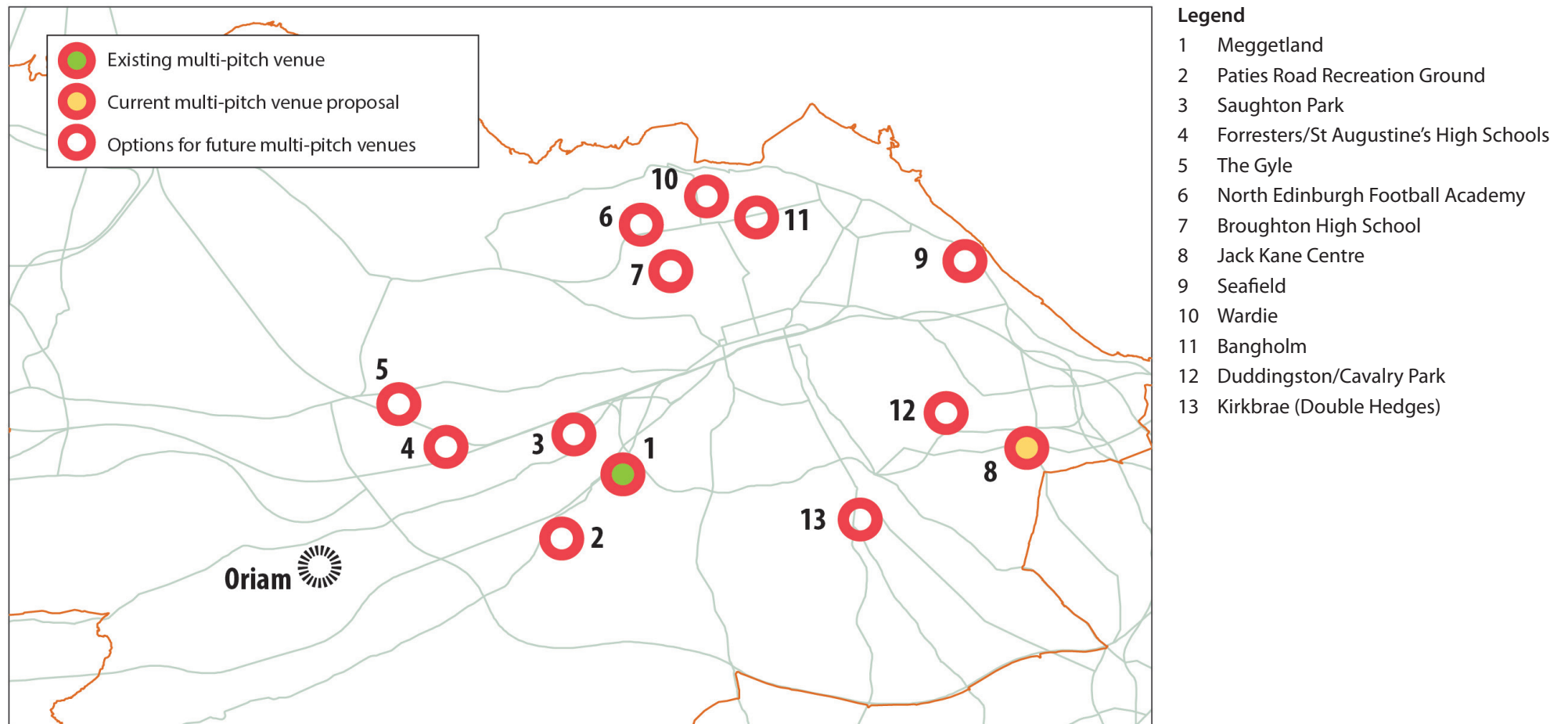
²¹ City of Edinburgh Council, 2015. *Edinburgh People Survey Summary Results*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20029/have_your_say/921/edinburgh_people_survey. [Accessed 2 November 2016].

²² Scottish Government, 2015. *Scottish household survey - publication summary - annual report*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/16002/PublicationAnnual> [Accessed: 5 May 2016].

Criteria defining a multi-pitch venue are:

- One semi-final/final pitch (essential)
- At least two A or B quality supporting pitches (essential)
- At least one floodlit synthetic grass full size pitch (essential)
- Grade 1 changing facilities (essential)
- Facilities fully open to public use (essential)
- Social facilities (desirable)

The locations identified were spread around the city, where sufficient space existed to avoid restricting access to greenspace or impacts on the character of the city's Conservation Areas.



Location of existing, proposed and future multi-pitch venues

A long timeframe for delivery was identified, between 2010-2020. Whilst further venues have not been progressed in the last 5 years, the Council plans to refurbish the Jack Kane Centre and improve the pitches in Hunter's Hall Park.

This upgraded venue will include new and refurbished all weather pitches, alongside an outdoor velodrome and a bmx track. Subject to planning approval, re-opening is anticipated in Autumn 2017. The Council is also embarking on the redevelopment of Meadowbank Stadium, which will comprise indoor and outdoor athletic tracks, and all weather pitches.

Whilst investment in further multi-pitch venues remains a long-term goal for the Council, due to reduced resources, further multi-pitch venues beyond those already planned are unlikely to materialise in the next 5 years.

Nonetheless, grass pitches can become unplayable until the next growing season if damaged by ongoing wet weather and heavy use from repeat fixtures. Use of grass pitches is generally kept to 2-3 games per week.

In 2013/14 £500,000 was allocated to improve grass pitch drainage in a number of existing parks, including Inverleith Park, Roseburn Park, Seven Acre Park, The Meadows, Seafeld Recreation Ground, Ravelston Park, Drumbrae Park, Dundas Park, Davidsons Mains Park, Inch Park, Silverknowes Park and Leith Links.

Through a review of its sports pitches, the Council is exploring reducing maintenance costs and spreading wear and tear by transferring some bookings to existing all weather pitches and school grounds. This will potentially deliver further multi-pitch venues at the schools shown in the map above.

The Local Development Plan sets out policy which controls loss of playing fields in order to maintain or improve a citywide resource to meet the needs of local communities. For example, the policy allowed development on a playing field at the former St Margaret's School campus at East Suffolk Road.

To compensate for the loss of a grass pitch for residential development, a financial contribution of £130,000 was required from the developer to upgrade the public playing fields at Kirkbrae/Double Hedges.

The Kirkbrae/Double Hedges playing fields were originally identified as important community resource with long-term potential to convert into a multi-pitch venue in the 2010 Open Space Strategy.

In 2016, the National Performance Centre for Sport, called **Oriam**, opened at Heriot-Watt University's Riccarton campus. This £30 million facility is designed to support Scotland's elite athletes whilst also offering gym membership and bookable pitches for the public.

The facility was funded by £25 m from the Scottish Government and £2.5m each from Heriot-Watt University and the City of Edinburgh Council. Oriam includes an indoor spectator full-sized 3G football pitch, a full sized spectator grass pitch, a synthetic 3G pitch, goalkeeper training areas, two grass rugby pitches, five grass football pitches, three outdoor tennis courts and a nine-court sports hall.

Playing Fields towards 2021

A new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy is expected to be prepared shortly and will examine the capacity and demand for sports facilities across the city.

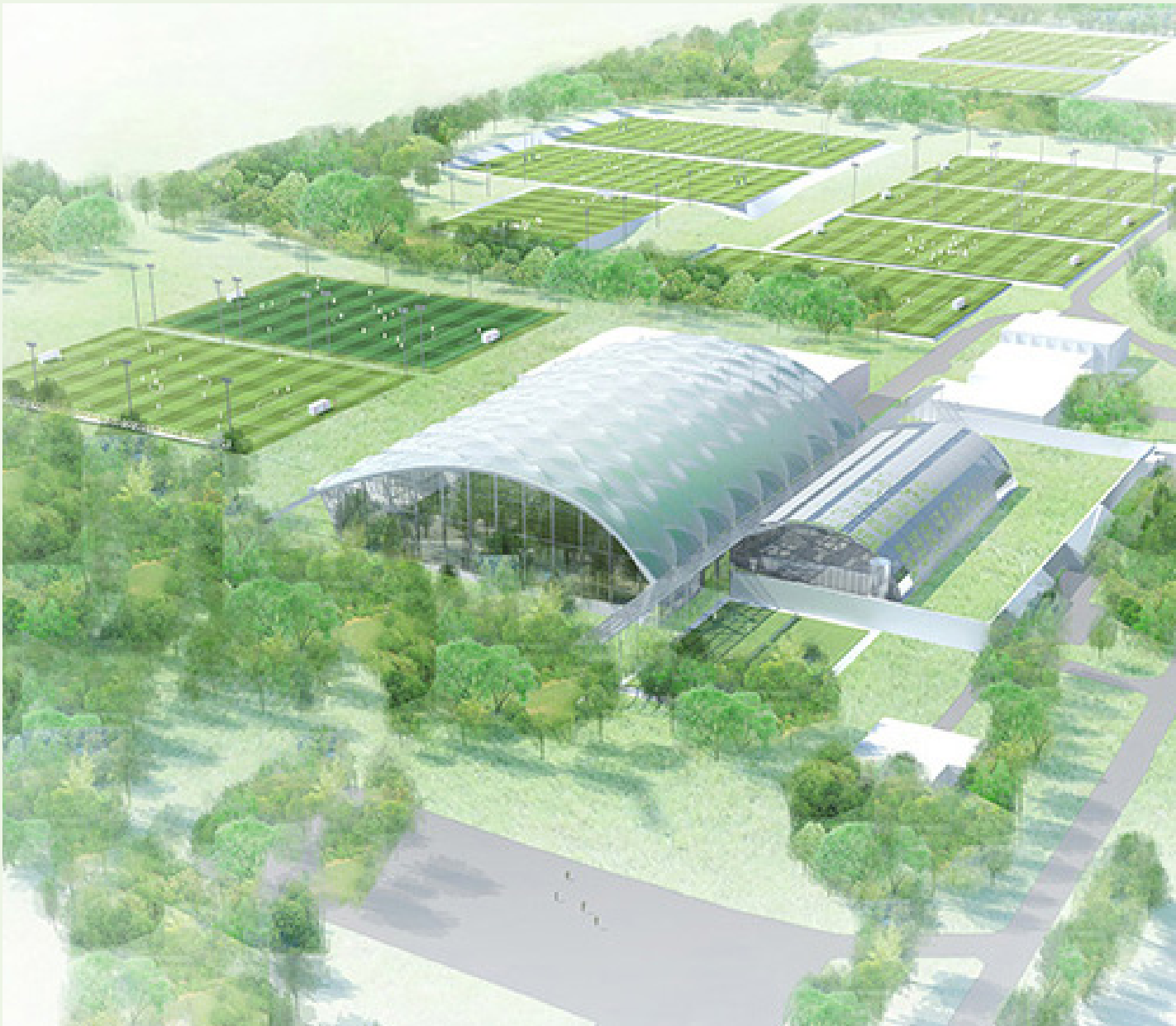
Analysis of existing access to playing fields, reveals that most homes are within a 15 minute walk of a playing field in a park, leisure facility or school. Whilst the current supply of playing fields appears to be sufficient, as the City expands, it will be necessary to ensure that new communities benefit from equivalent access to sports provision.

Provision of a multi-pitch venue at Hunter's Hall Park will serve the expanding population in South East Edinburgh Strategic Development Area. In the West Edinburgh Strategic Development Area, provision for outdoor sports facilities may need to consider options, such as:

- Upgrading of South Gyle Park to a multi-pitch venue
- Meeting needs by providing public access to sports facilities within school grounds

As noted earlier, large greenspaces should also provide space for informal ball games and keeping active.

Case Study: Oriam



Oriam is Scotland's new sports performance centre, located at Herriot-Watt University in the south west of Edinburgh, six miles from the city centre. It provides Scotland's current and future sporting stars with the facilities, access and support services that will be essential for achieving international success, whilst also providing access for the local community, including the health and fitness suite.

In 2012, the Scottish Government committed £25 million of funding towards a new sports performance centre and Herriot-Watt University and the City of Edinburgh Council were successful in bidding to host and operate the centre and contributed £2.5m each towards the project. The two organisations have worked with SportScotland and partner sports bodies to deliver a world class performance facility designed by Architects Reiach and Hall and Landscape Architects Rankin Fraser.

The centre includes a full size indoor 3G pitch; full size outdoor 3G pitch; twelve court sports hall; five outdoor grass football and two grass rugby pitches; hydrotherapy pool; café, conference and meeting facilities and world class facilities for sports science and medicine as well as coaching.

Image: Oriam - aerial view from north east (Reiach and Hall Architects)

Bowling Greens and Tennis Courts

Since 2009, a number of bowling greens have closed, this includes:

- Tipperlin Bowling Club – part of the re-development of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital;
- Caledonian Bowling Club, Russell Road – now a builder's yard; and
- Ferranti Bowling Green, Inverleith - now a children's nursery.

At Broughton Road, two bowling greens have been converted to school playing fields for Broughton Primary. At Leith Links, one of the four bowling greens has been replaced with a tennis court and at Victoria Park, one bowling green has been converted to provide allotments.

Two new tennis courts were opened in 2015 at Victoria Park on the site of redundant tennis facilities and new a tennis court and mini-tennis court were established at Warriston Playing Fields.

Golf Courses

In 2010, the Open Space Strategy observed a number of changes in participation in golf as follows:

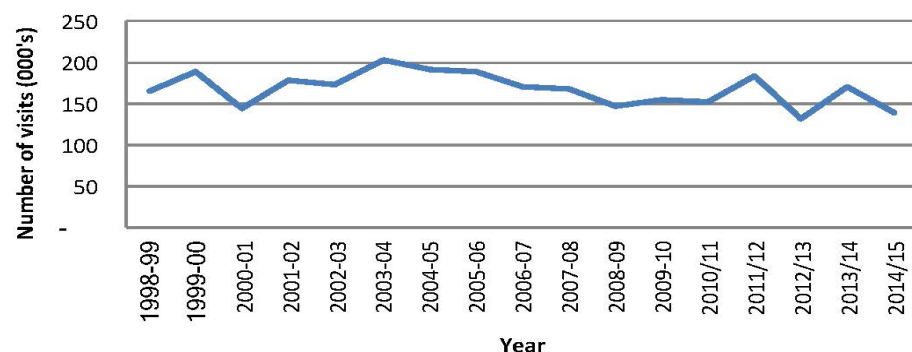
- A decline in club membership and rise in 'pay-and-play'
- Growth in youth participation through the 'clubgolf' programme
- Concern that some of Edinburgh's private clubs may go out of business due to falling membership and higher maintenance costs resulting from wet summers.

In recent years, the number of people playing golf across the UK has been decreasing, however, in 2014, levels of golf participation stabilised.²³ Some reasons for fewer people playing golf include: the overall cost of the game, the time it takes to play a round of golf, family and work commitments and taking up new sports²⁴.

²³ Source: 2014 Golf Participation in Great Britain, Sports Marketing Surveys Inc.

²⁴ Source: Growing Golf in the UK, Syngenta 2014.

Changes in visitor numbers to municipal golf courses 1998/99 - 2014/15



There are six municipal golf courses in Edinburgh, managed by **Edinburgh Leisure**, these are:

- Braid Hills – 18 holes
- Carrick Knowe - 18 holes
- Craigentenny – 18 holes
- Portobello – 9 holes
- Silverknowes – 18 holes
- Wee Braids – 9 holes

Annual members can play all six courses, which are also available to non-members on payment for a round of golf through 'pay-and-play'.

Whilst the total number of visits to municipal courses has remained broadly stable since the 1990s at between 150,000 - 200,000 visits per year, in recent years, the total number of visits has fluctuated between highs of 182,000 in 2011/12 and 169,000 in 2013/14 to lows of 130,000 in 2012/13 and 139,000 in 2014/15.

To promote youth participation in the game, 'Firstclubgolf' introduces primary school pupils to golf. In 2015, almost 3500 pupils took part in the introductory programme compared to around 3000 pupils in 2009²⁵. Eighty one schools in Edinburgh are now involved in delivering additional 'clubgolf' coaching to support long term participation.

Golf continues to make up about one quarter (26%) of all urban open space in Edinburgh. In 2010, 20 of the 26 courses in the Council Area were located in the Edinburgh Green Belt.

However, since 2010, two private hill courses in the green belt have closed, Lothianburn in 2013 and Torphin Hill in 2014. Anecdotal evidence suggests remaining members have joined nearby courses.

Understanding changing trends in golf, including diversification to provide other leisure pursuits, therefore has a bearing on the green belt's landscape setting and recreational value.

No data is available on levels of participation at Edinburgh's privately managed golf clubs. However, 'Edinburgh Golf' has been recently launched as a promotional initiative by a working partnership of 14 privately managed golf courses in and around the city²⁶.

To encourage local residents and visiting golfers to play more golf, 'Edinburgh Golf' offers online booking facilities, a newsletter and discount visitor fees to participating clubs.

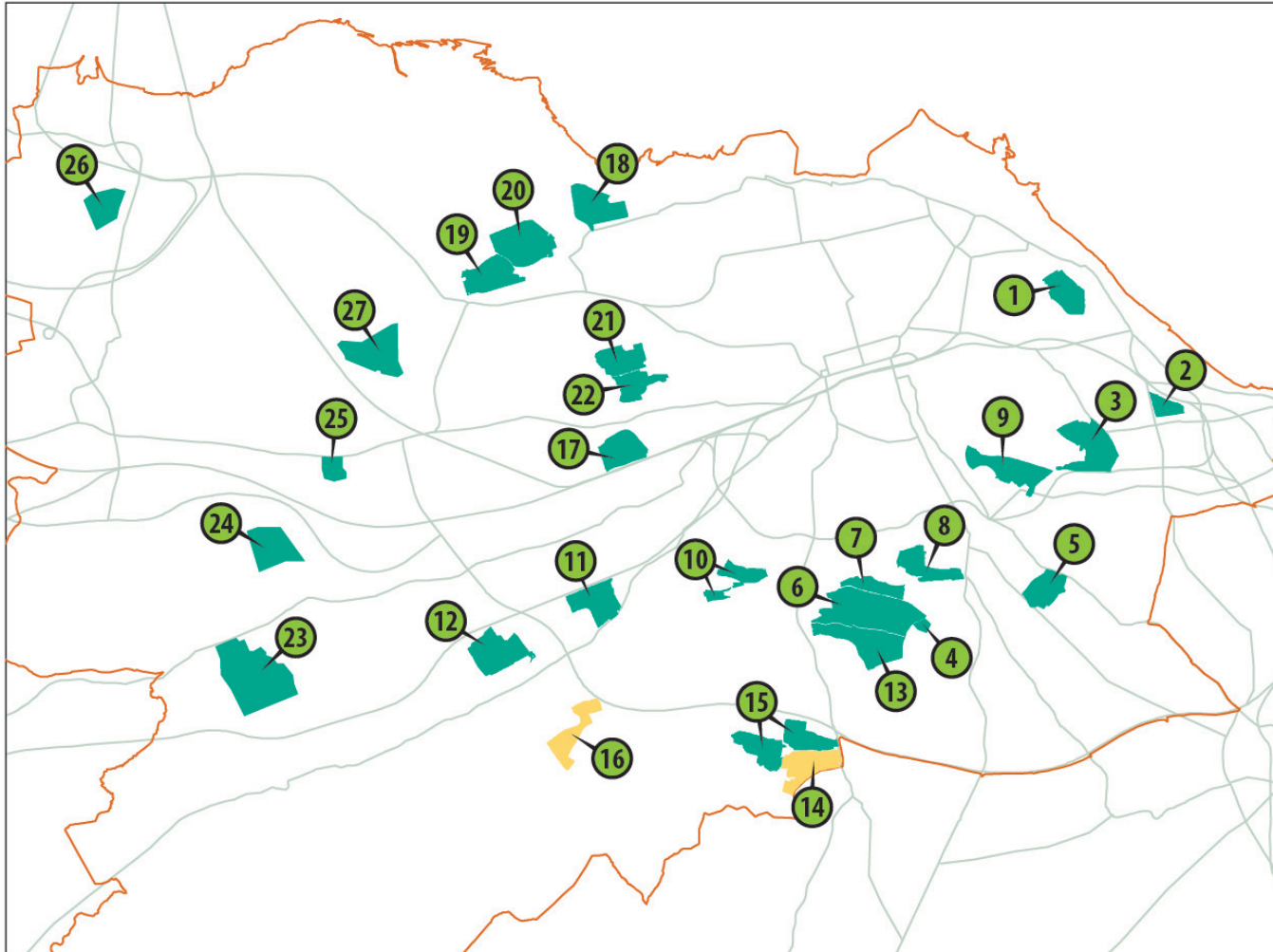
With the exception of the Braid Hills, which is traversed by path routes offering opportunities to spot wildlife and enjoy views across the City, most courses are not counted as fully accessible by the Open Space Audit. However, it is recognised that the margins of many courses are enjoyed informally through the Outdoor Access Code.

²⁵ Source: Sports and Outdoor Learning Unit, City of Edinburgh Council.

²⁶ Musselburgh Golf Course in East Lothian and Broomieknowe Golf Course in Midlothian are included in addition to the following in Edinburgh: Baberton, Craigmillar Park, Duddingston, Kingsknowe, Liberton, Merchants, Prestonfield, Ratho Park, Swanston New and Turnhouse.

Location of Golf Courses

1	Craigentinny	7	Hermitage	13	Mortonhall	19	Royal Burgess	25	Gogarburn
2	Duddingston	8	Craigmillar	14	Lothianburn - Not in active use	20	Bruntsfield	26	Dundas Park
3	Portobello	9	Prestonfield	15	Swanston	21	Ravelston	27	Turnhouse
4	Braid Hills (Golf Range)	10	Merchants of Edinburgh	16	Torphin - Not in active use	22	Murrayfield		
5	Liberton	11	Kingsknowe	17	Carrick Knowe	23	Dalmahoy		
6	Braid Hills/Princes	12	Baberton	18	Silverknowes	24	Ratho Park		



Allotments and Community Growing

Allotments and community growing provide a great way to keep active outdoors, socialise and grow healthy, locally sourced fruit and vegetables. Providing access to land to grow food contributes to the objectives of *Edible Edinburgh*, a cross-sector approach to promote a sustainable local food economy, celebrate food culture, improve health and reduce food poverty and waste.

Allotments

In 2010, the waiting list for a Council allotment plot stood at some 2,367 people. Taking account of existing plot holders, demand stood at over three times the supply of 1,233 plots. The waiting time for a Council plot, depending on the area of the city, was between four and seven years.

In recognition of this level of interest, the Council's *Allotment Strategy*²⁷ set out to provide one new allotment site per year over the next 5 years, as well as to improve the facilities and administration of existing allotments.

This target has been met and 12 new sites have been created since 2010, through both public and private sector action. Capacity at existing allotment sites has been increased, whilst half-plots and raised beds have been created for those who don't need a full 20 x 10 m plot.

A number of longer-term site options for Allotments were also explored through the Open Space Strategy. However, these have not been progressed in the short-term due to issues of land ownership, soil quality and loss of open space for other uses such as sports.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 introduces new requirements for councils, including: to manage waiting lists and report on allotment provision each year; to take reasonable steps to address high demand; and to prepare food growing strategies. The Act also introduces new protection against allotment closure.

The Council in partnership with the Allotments Steering Group²⁸ is in the process of preparing a new Allotment Strategy due to be approved in early 2017. This will call for new sites to be put forward by interested parties and for these to be agreed through the four Locality Areas.

In 2015, the waiting list for allotments stood at 2510 for the 1425 plots managed by Parks and Greenspaces. Including allotments owned by other organisations, the total supply across the Council Area is 1,690.

As in 2010, any new locations suggested for allotments should be evaluated against the Open Space Strategy's standards to ensure that new sites will not impact on the availability of greenspace for other recreational uses, particularly in areas of high density housing.

²⁷ City of Edinburgh Council, 2010, *Cultivating Communities: A Growing Challenge – An allotments strategy for the City of Edinburgh (2010-2015)*

²⁸ The Allotments Steering Group includes representatives from the Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Garden Associations (FEDAGA) and Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS), allotment holders, those on the allotment waiting list as well as the City of Edinburgh Council Parks and Greenspaces Service.

The Local Development Plan has a role in safeguarding sites for allotments and will continue to do so through the Open Space Strategy, where sites with longer-term potential to meet demand are identified, such as at Midmar.

Equally, the requirements for a number of proposed housing allocations set out in the Local Development Plan, indicate several sites with potential to increase the supply of allotments. These include:

- Leith Links Seaward Extension;
- Newmills Park;
- Moredunvale Road;
- Curriemuirend; and
- Brunstane.

Through residential expansion of Newcraighall village to the north of Newcraighall Road by some 220 homes, the Council has secured provision for 16 full size allotments to be adopted and managed by the Council.

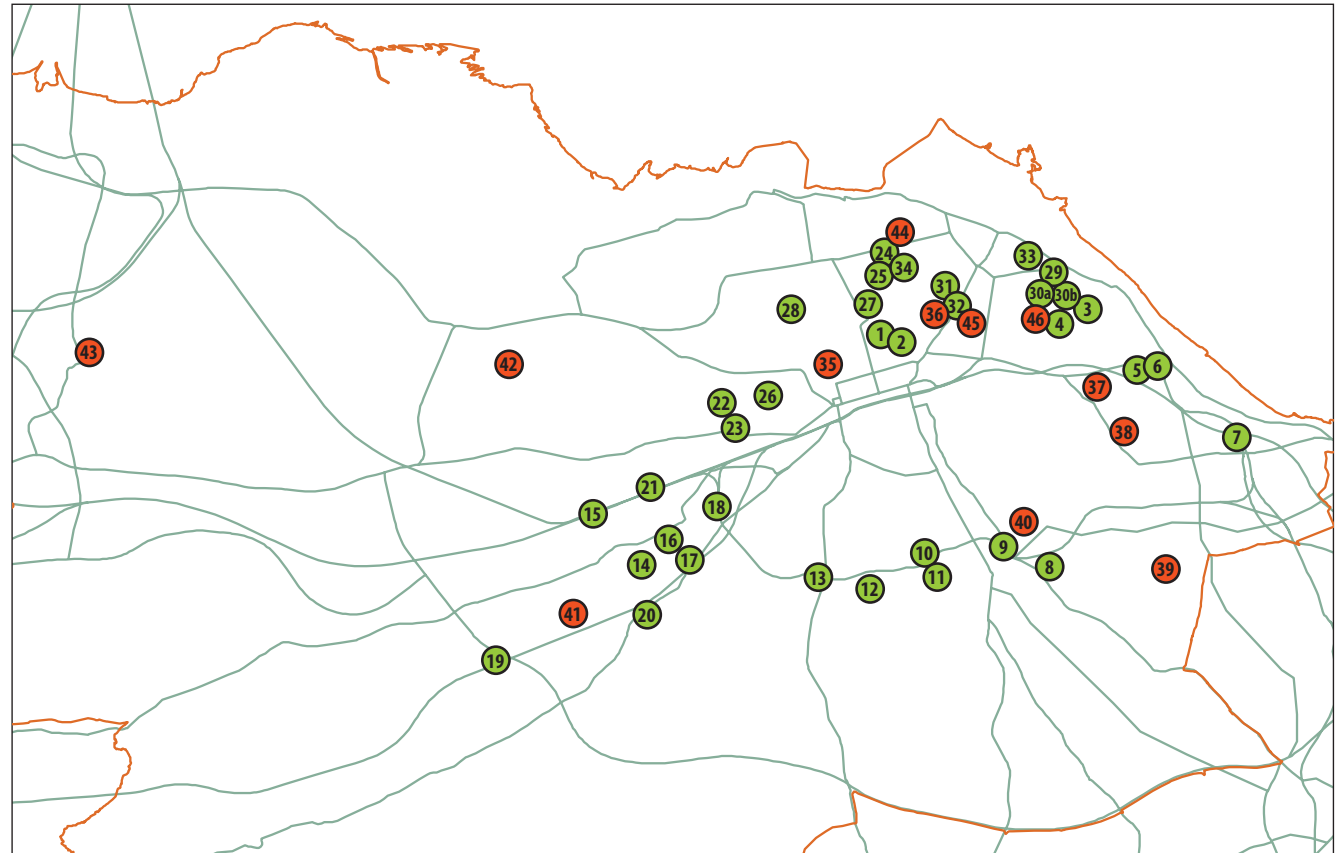
Allotment Provision 2009 - 2015

Allotment Sites in 2009

- 1 East Scotland Street Lane North
- 2 East Scotland Street Lane South
- 3 Craigentenny
- 4 Findlay Avenue/Sleigh Drive
- 5 Telferton
- 6 Telferton
- 7 Portobello East
- 8 Bridgend Farm
- 9 Lady Road
- 10 Relugas Place
- 11 West Mains
- 12 Midmar
- 13 Morningside
- 14 Saughton
- 15 Stenhouse
- 16 Chesser Crescent
- 17 Hutchison Loan
- 18 Slateford Green
- 19 Wester Hailes
- 20 Redhall
- 21 Carrick Knowe
- 22 Succoth Gardens
- 23 Roseburn Cliff
- 24 Ferry Road
- 25 Warriston
- 26 Dean
- 27 Warriston Crescent
- 28 Inverleith
- 29 Claremont Park
- 30a Restalrig
- 30b Prospect Bank
- 31 Pilrig Park
- 32 Cambridge Avenue
- 33 Leith Links
- 34 Warriston

Allotment Sites 2015

- 35 India Place
- 36 Inchkeith Court
- 37 Baronscourt
- 38 Northfield Drive
- 39 Greendykes
- 40 Prestonfield
- 41 Dumbryden
- 42 Drumbrae
- 43 Klrkliston
- 44 Victoria Park
- 45 Albert Street
- 46 Hawkhill and Nisbet



Case Study: India Place Allotments



The City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership helped fund the creation of 27 Allotments as part of the Neighbourhood Environment Programme.

The idea was initiated on a walk about the local area with residents who wanted 'urban allotments' for people living in the city who did not have the time to manage a large plot, but wanted to enjoy growing their own food and spending more time outdoors. The plots are therefore smaller than the standard 10 x 20m Edinburgh allotments. There are 21 raised beds with some being half plots and nearly all the plot holders are new to organic growing and gardening.

The site's history has been reflected in the design of the space. It was once the location of tenements that were demolished in 1961. Now, the old tenement coal bunkers are used as tool sheds for plot holders after Edinburgh World Heritage funded the repair of the back wall and timber cellar doors.

Furthermore, an Appearance Matters budget from the neighbourhood funded the cost for the design of the gatehouse entrance, known as "the hut", which was designed by Sutherland Hussey Architects. The grand opening of the allotments was in May 2013.

Community Growing

In 2009, the Open Space Audit recorded relatively few community gardens. Some of the best known examples at the time were Redbraes Community Garden in Leith, Dr Mackay's Wood in Juniper Green and Corstorphine Hill Walled Garden, which has had repeated success in the Green Flag Award community category.

Over the last 5 years, community gardens and growing projects have expanded to more than 50 sites. Edinburgh and the Lothians Greenspace Trust maintain a [map of community gardens](#) across the city. There has also been increased interest in the use of stalled development sites and derelict land following the success of Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Housing Association's '[Stalled Spaces](#)' project.

Successful examples of temporary greening include the Grove Community Garden, where the local community have been working with developers of the former brewery site at Fountainbridge to grow their own fruit, vegetables and herbs since 2012. This has transformed an unused gap site into a temporary community hub with Grove 2 re-locating to Harrison Park as Fountainbridge is re-developed.

By contrast to other parts of the Central Belt, Edinburgh has a much lower proportion of derelict land and as the economy has picked up following the recession, a faster turnaround of vacant land. Whilst opportunities for stalled spaces on previously developed land may be more limited, this temporary use is supported in principle.

However, in Edinburgh, many more community gardens are springing up in under-utilised amenity greenspaces within residential areas and delivering permanent improvements to make the city's parks and greenspaces ever more vibrant places, whilst complementing the resources available to the Council for grounds maintenance.

In 2015, 50% of tenants responding to the Council's housing investment strategy, expressed support for the development of community gardens. The use of Council land to support tenants to grow fruit and vegetables would reduce food bills, and provide wider social benefits, such as taking an active role in local community life and improving physical and mental health.²⁹

Examples of community gardens which have been established since 2010 include: the Calders community garden in Wester Hailes, which has transformed an area of low quality grassland adjacent the Union Canal; Leith Links has benefitted from the introduction of a community orchard at its east end, close to the entrance of the Restalrig Railway Path; and at its west end, Leith Community Crops in Pots are making good use of redundant tennis and putting facilities to inspire a future generation of gardeners.

Allotments and Community Growing towards 2021

Site options arising from the draft Allotment Strategy will in turn be included in the citywide Open Space Action Plan.

This Strategy supports further expansion of community gardens, in particular to continue to deliver the benefits of Edible Edinburgh and in recognition of its health and well-being value to local communities. A template lease is available and interested groups can get further advice from the [Council website](#) and the [Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens](#).

To ensure community gardens are inclusive of all open space users and do not result in reductions in access to greenspace, all proposals relating to existing greenspaces should be agreed through Neighbourhood Partnerships.

Through changes to encourage the multi-purpose nature of new local and large greenspaces to be delivered as the city expands, the Strategy will encourage spaces suitable for community gardens within new developments.

Permanent and advance delivery of green infrastructure within Strategic Development Areas will also be encouraged to create the setting for investment and new neighbourhoods.

²⁹ City of Edinburgh Council. 2015. *Invest to Save Consultation*.

Case Study: Grove Community Garden



The idea for the Grove Community Garden was initiated by the local community to provide a community garden that is making temporary use of vacant land close to Edinburgh City Centre, following closure of the Scottish and Newcastle Fountain Brewery.

The first community garden, Grove 1, opened to the north of Dundee Street in 2013 with the agreement of the landowner, Grosvenor, establishing a temporary garden that has become a thriving community hub. In spring 2014, the project expanded to a second unused development site, Grove 2, adjacent to the Union Canal, owned by the Council.

The aim of the project is to grow an active community as well as growing food. One part of the garden is dedicated to pallet bed units giving local people the chance to grow their own fruit, vegetables and herbs in inclusive and supportive surroundings. The plots are mobile, constructed from recycled pallets and are capable of being moved by a forklift. The rest of the garden is a shared communal space, providing the ideal place to accommodate social, cultural and environmental activities. The site is also equipped with welfare and storage facilities. The garden relies completely on the gardeners and Friends of the Garden for its upkeep and maintenance. As the redevelopment of Fountainbridge progresses, Grove 2 is being relocated to Harrison Park East.

Image: Grove 2

Achieving Outcomes

Strategic Actions and Themes

This Strategy seeks to ensure access to good quality greenspace for all and to deliver multiple benefits from greenspace that contribute to placemaking by enhancing: quality of life; health and wellbeing; biodiversity; resilience to climate change; and supporting Edinburgh's economy.

By setting out a holistic approach to greenspace planning and management, the Strategy can help to co-ordinate the efforts of the Council, communities, charitable organisations and the private sector, towards a common set of goals.

Over the last 5 years the Council has invested approximately £4.5 million in improving Edinburgh's parks, including over £700,000 on play area improvements. However in the period up to 2021, it is likely that investment and maintenance will reduce, reflecting the resources available to local authorities.

The Strategy therefore takes a pragmatic approach to addressing how the city protects, manages and expands its green network, as follows:

- Open space and green network proposals relating to Local Development Plan housing and business-led allocations will be subject to the rate of private sector delivery and monitored by the LDP Action Programme;
- New developments require to meet the three open space standards on site, or provide a financial contribution to meeting the standards off-site. This could be through improvements to quality to an existing greenspace or providing new green network connections, where deficiencies in access to open space or play areas meeting quality standards exist;
- Targets to further improve equality of access to play areas are based on the rate of progress achieved by the 2011-2016 Play Area Action Plan. This will be considered in further detail by a review of the city's Play Area Action Plan. As the city expands, new developments will also have positive impact on the distribution of play provision;
- Improvements to the Premier Parks of Leith Links and Calton Hill will rely on securing external funding and if successful, match funding by the Council and other partners;
- Improvements to Edinburgh's parks and greenspaces equally rely on active community involvement. Edinburgh's Friends of Parks network complements the work of Council parks staff, contributing many hours of volunteer time to planting sessions, clean ups, fund-raising events, driving forward improvements and securing external funding that is not available to the Council;
- By continuing to make maintenance more responsive to feedback from park users and annual quality monitoring. Many improvements to greenspace quality in recent years have not required substantial investment but have focussed on changing management practices;
- The Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative will lead to some reduction in the costs of intensively maintained areas of grassland over time, whilst improving biodiversity and the amenity value of greenspaces through the introduction of wildflower meadows and woodland;
- Quality monitoring and the Friends of Group network will be extended to Council cemeteries and burial grounds, working with Edinburgh World Heritage to realise the social and cultural value of these historic assets;
- Recognising and supporting the growing interest by local communities to adopt, maintain and improve under-utilised local greenspaces in order to establish new community gardens, orchards and woodlands; and
- Seeking new ways for the Council to meet its obligations under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act to provide adequate allotments. This may include transfer or lease of land to communities who wish to establish local food-growing facilities.

This Council's transformation into four Localities aligns service delivery with community planning partners, including health and social care provision, and seeks to develop further joined up ways in which to deliver local services.

Locality Improvement Plans will be prepared in 2017 to address social and environmental inequalities, which may include community greenspace initiatives. Locality greenspace profiles will be prepared for use in locality planning activities from the citywide mapping.

The Scottish Government's new National Performance Indicator to improve access to local greenspace was introduced in March 2016 and this will be an important driver for local greenspace projects and funding initiatives.

The Strategy will be taken forward through a citywide Open Space Action Plan to capture cross-sector actions which will contribute to the development and improvement of the city's greenspaces over the next five years. Through periodic updates, the Action Plan will incorporate priorities established by the new Locality Improvement Plans and other relevant Council strategies, enabling progress towards achieving the aims of the Strategy to be monitored.

Use of the Strategy to Inform Planning Decisions

Planning decisions affecting a loss of, or need for new, open space provision will be determined in accordance with the following LDP policies:

- Open Space Protection;
- Playing Field Protection;
- Open Space in New Development;
- Private Greenspace in Housing Development; and
- Public Realm and Landscape Design.

The 2015 Open Space Audit data and Open Space Strategy standards will inform these decisions. To provide greater clarity on this process and assist in making decisions which support the strategy's objectives, a decision tree is set out at the end of this section.

A number of other local planning policies may also serve to protect open space, including those relating to: Conservation Areas, the setting of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments, Gardens and Designed Landscapes; flooding, trees and woodland, nature conservation and local landscape designations.

Open Space can also be afforded legal protections through restrictive conditions where it is held in the Common Good or where it has been registered through the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge to celebrate the 2012 Diamond Jubilee and Commonwealth Games.

Where it is necessary to meet the needs arising from a new development in terms of the Open Space Standards off-site, by improving access to and/or upgrading an existing greenspace or play area, LDP Policies on Developer Contributions and Retrospective Developer Contributions will apply. Where there is no deficiency in terms of the standards, then there is no planning justification to seek such a contribution.

The Council's [*Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing Guidance*](#) provides further information on open space matters including contributions to improvements and arrangements for adoption.

Updates to the Edinburgh Design and Street Design Guidance will include further good practice advice on the design and layout of open space in new developments, how to achieve local and large greenspace quality standards and how to support informal play in greenspaces and residential streets.

Meeting the Open Space requirements in New Developments

The following options should be evaluated using the Council's online Open Space Map data.

Type of development:	LDP Policy and Design Guidance	Meeting the 3 Open Space Strategy Standards			
Mixed housing/flatted development (LDP Policy Hou 3a)	10 sq. m communal open space per flat (excluding any units which are to be provided with private gardens) Where private back gardens adjoin communal open space they should be at least 3 m deep A minimum of 20% of total site area should be useable greenspace. Meet each of the 3 Open Space Strategy Standards	Local Greenspace Standard Is your site within 400m of a local open space of 500 sq. m of 'good' quality (typologies include parks and gardens, residential amenity greenspace, semi-natural greenspace, green corridor, accessible playing field or cemetery)	No	Provide a new local greenspace on site of good quality Or Provide a new path link to an existing local greenspace of good quality and/or a financial contribution to upgrading a publicly owned greenspace to meet this standard.	
			Yes	No requirement to provide Local Greenspace on-site. Provide quality residential streets that allow for unequipped play	
		Large Greenspace Standard Is your site within 800m of a large greenspace of 'good/good+' quality. (typologies include parks and gardens, residential amenity greenspace, semi-natural greenspace or accessible playing field)	No	Provide a new large greenspace on site Or Provide a new path link to an existing large greenspace meeting 'good' quality and/or a financial contribution to upgrading a publicly owned greenspace to meet this standard.	
			Yes	No requirement to provide Large Greenspace on-site.	
		Play Standard Houses and flats should have access to at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a play space of good play value within 800m walking distance a play space of very good play value within 1,200m walking distance A play space of excellent play value within 2,000 metres direct distance. 	No	Provide new space meeting appropriate 'play value' (either 'good' or 'very good' depending on scale of development). Or Provide financial contribution to an upgrade a public play area in line with the Play Strategy Action Plan.	
			Yes	No requirement to provided equipped play on site. Local space for unequipped play should be allowed for within the development through street and open space design.	
All other new development (LDP Policy Env 20)	Provision of new publicly accessible and useable open space in new development will be determined by the scale of development proposed and the needs it will give rise to. In particular, the Council will seek the provision of extensions and/or improvements to the green network.				

Summary

Open Space 2021 will continue to improve and extend the city’s network of open spaces in order to improve quality of life, support economic vitality and build excellent places by pursuing the following principles:

Type of Open Space	Existing Open Spaces Land Management and Community Planning Objectives	New Provision Land Use Planning Objectives
The Green Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to manage existing green corridors for active travel, biodiversity and climate change resilience potential, in particular through Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative. Improve links between greenspaces via the Active Travel Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the planned extension of the Green Network through the Local Development Plan and Action Programme, following principles set out in the Edinburgh Design Guidance. Create links to existing greenspaces where the opportunity arises through redevelopment.
Large Greenspace Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor annually through Parks Quality Assessment and LDP Action Programme. large greenspaces to be of ‘good’ quality for City Parks, Community Parks and Recreation Grounds and ‘good+’ for Premier Parks and Natural Heritage Parks. Remaining large greenspaces below standard to be improved to ‘good+’, including: Saughton Park, Calton Hill and Leith Links Lower scoring sites to be monitored to avoid slipping below standards. Diversification of open space to meet Allotment needs where no reduction in access to greenspace for other recreation needs. Continue to support measures to improve health e.g. outdoor gyms, exercise circuits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new large greenspaces to be of ‘good’ quality, regardless of type. <p>Promote multi-functional large greenspaces, which in addition to the local greenspace functions should seek to deliver the following wider benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level space for events, informal games and kick-about Measured walking and running circuits Space for woodland and larger growing native trees to renew Edinburgh’s canopy cover. Gathering spaces with seating within wider layout Complement sustainable urban drainage through location alongside swales, rain gardens and wetlands and ponds that hold back flood waters In addition to providing natural surveillance from homes, relate new open space to proposed local centres, schools and compatible non-residential land uses to allow potential for access to toilets, changing facilities and food and drink outlets. Interpretation of local built, cultural and natural heritage interests. <p>Large greenspaces will generally be the most suitable locations to provide equipped play to ‘good’ or ‘very good’ value. Design quality should enable the space to be capable of adoption by the Council in the case of significant new public parks</p>

Play Access Standard	Reach and sustain 80% of homes with access to equipped play areas across the Council Area and aspire to 85% target.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remaining 2011-2016 work programme to be completed. • Extend access by raising play value in key locations to 'very good' 1200 m walking distance. • Rationalise clusters of low play value equipment to provide well located play areas of 'good' play value. • Greater use of natural play elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure delivery of new publicly accessible play areas meeting play value standards through implementation of LDP housing allocations. • Encourage unequipped play through creative layout of streets and local greenspaces.
Local Greenspace Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor to reflect the Scottish Government's National Performance Indicator; and • Increase target to ensure all local greenspace is of 'good' quality regardless of type. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support establishment of further community gardens where this makes use of under-utilised greenspace. • Support naturalisation of local greenspaces. • Improve historic burial grounds for cultural heritage value by bringing into PQA assessment and extend Friends network. 	<p>Promote multi-functional local greenspace as part of landscape and street design in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage unequipped play; • Create social and accessible spaces with seats and paths crossing the site; • Create space or raised beds for community growing/fruit trees; and • Linked to the wider green network.
Playing Fields and Other Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support long-term aim of focussing investment in multi-pitch venues. • Delivery of Jack Kane Centre upgrade and multi-pitch venue at Hunter's Hall Park. • Preparation of a new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy to determine demand for sports facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New large greenspaces to provide level grassland suitable for informal ball games.
Allotments and Community Growing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community groups to identify and raise funds to provide new allotments. Consider implications on Open Space Strategy standards in areas of higher density. • Support community growing in under-utilised greenspaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to contribute to strategic allotment provision by incorporating allotments within site briefs and masterplans. • Local and large greenpaces to make provision for accessible community growing spaces.

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بمسعدنا توفير للترجمة MOŻEMY PRZETŁUMACZYĆ 很樂意翻譯

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