

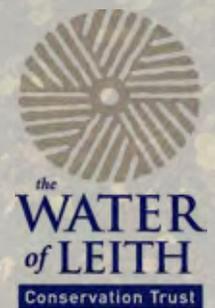


COALIE PARK

LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN

FOR STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

18. NOVEMBER 2021





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A PROJECT DEVELOPED BY



• EDINBURGH •
YOUR COUNCIL - YOUR ENVIRONMENT



REPORT PREPARED BY



PROJECT SUPPORTED BY



INTRODUCTION

COALIE PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

CONTEXT

At the end of the tidal flow of the river lay Coal Hill – a coal depot, railway yard and place for ship repair, regenerated in the 1980's the area it became known as Coalie Park. The area is an important 'blue and green space' and access route for the local community and home to a surprising variety of wildlife. But there is a great pressure on this dilapidated space and it is plagued by littering, graffiti and anti social behaviour. Leith is also the most densely populated area in Scotland and lacks quality greenspace for its residents and wildlife.

'COALIE CONVERSATIONS'

During this project we turned our attention on the 'blue and green space' and path network around Coalie Park and Leith, engaged with local people and interested groups to see what practical steps can be taken to improve the area in the short term people what improvements they would like to see in the area going forward. The aim was to give us a prioritised list of projects, which have been brought forward to inform these park improvement proposals ensuring they are truly wanted and needed by local people.

PARK IMPROVEMENT DELIVERY

There is no funding allocated and therefore the purpose of this report is to provide a holistic overview of the potential of the park and the process behind the decisions and design priorities. There is an overview masterplan and a package of discrete, thematic sub-projects which make up this whole.

Together, these interventions and improvements would make a significant impact to the quality of the space. The intention is to provide a package of information which can support future funding applications deliverable by different funds and partnerships.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The approach to the development of a landscape masterplan for the improvement of Coalie Park is described over three Stages, throughout the process weaving between design and community conversation and feedback.

Site analysis

Understanding the physical condition, opportunities, constraints and distinctive elements of Coalie Park. These should be celebrated; the park contains many landscape and heritage features which are locally significant and help connect local people and visitors to this place. This information guides the design of the park's spatial layout, and is a backdrop to the social and human experience factors which influence considerations for the park's design.

'Coalie Conversations'

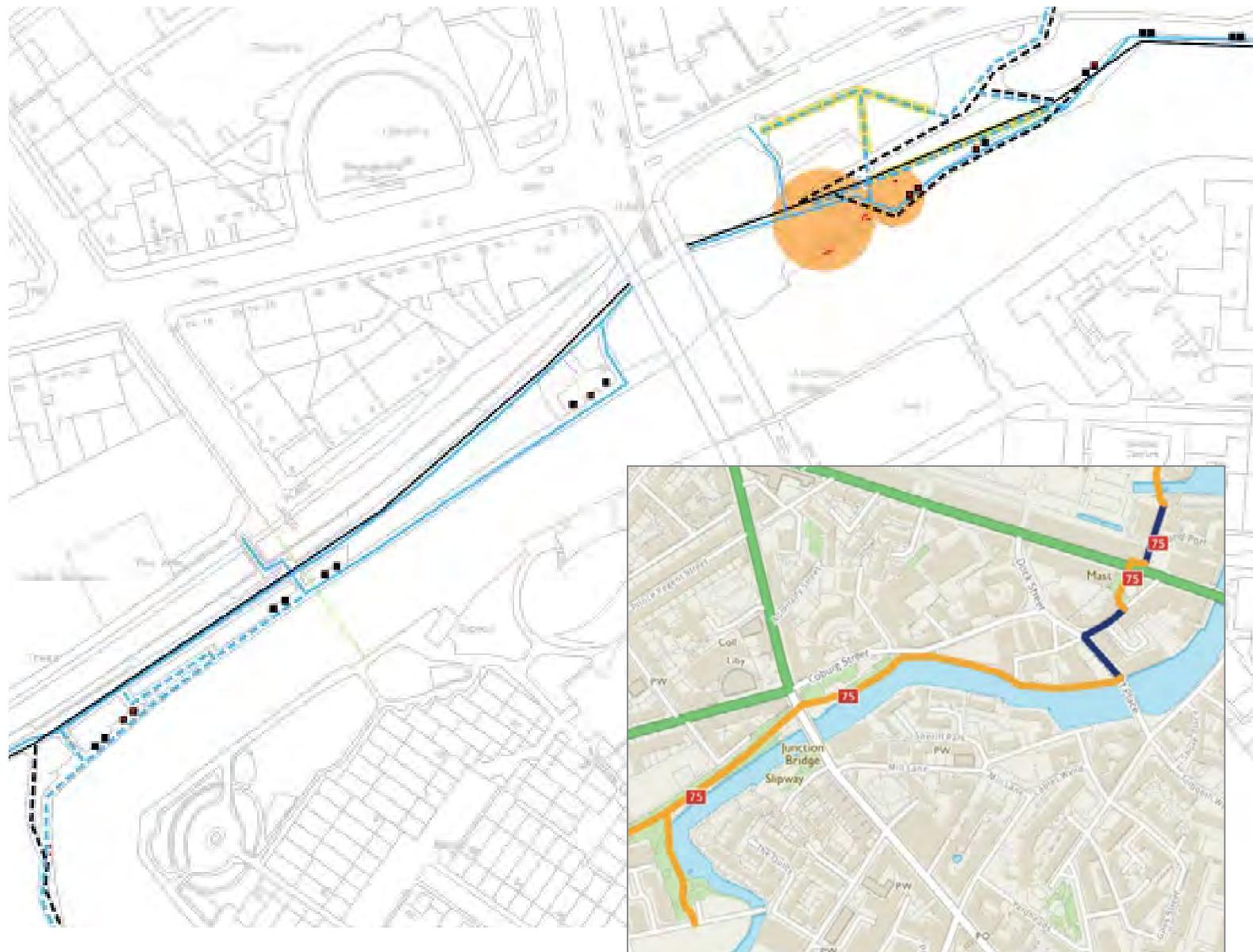
An ongoing process of community and stakeholder engagement and participation has been managed by Water of Leith Conservation Trust. This report describes the way a diversity of people have been involved in the realisation of a preferred option landscape masterplan, and how priorities were established. It is recognised that the conversation should continue beyond the drawing up of a park design plan to ensure this park is a meaningful, effective, well-loved greenspace for all. The project partners are mindful of avoiding gentrification of the space, and are keen that it captures the most genuine expression of local community interest.

Sub-project sheets

A suite of landscape enhancement projects are drawn out of the overall landscape masterplan, focusing on specific features, elements or functionality of the park.



USER EXPERIENCE OF EXISTING PARK



Extracted from the Sustrans National Cycle Network mapping

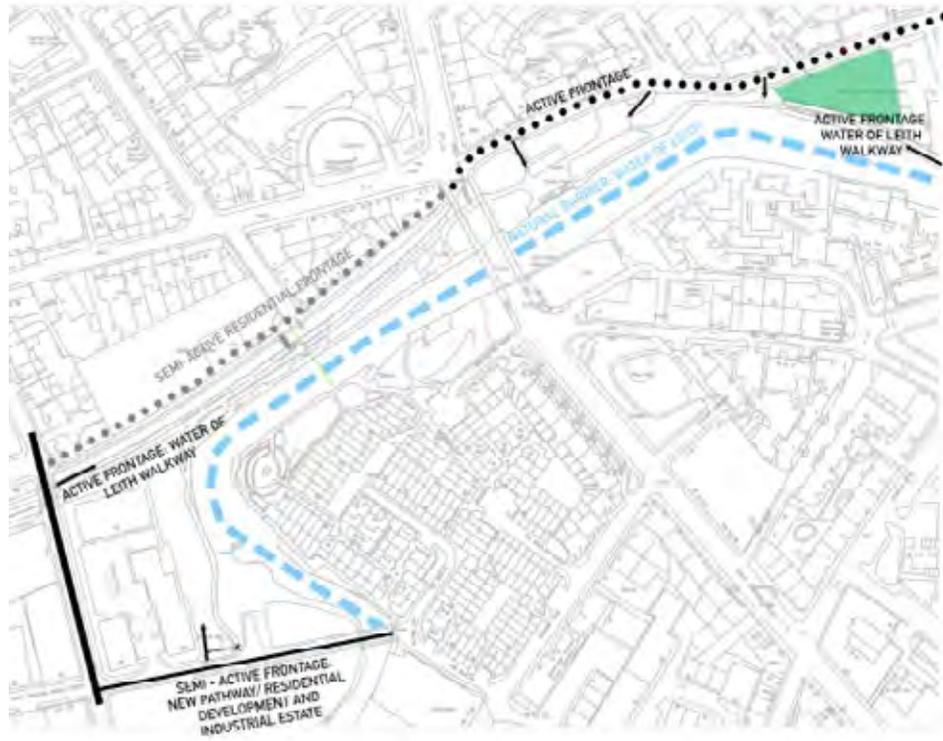
The Water of Leith Walkway, National Cycle Route 75 and the Roseburn to Leith Cycle route create the central backbone of Coalie Park; a well used cycle route linking neighbourhoods across the city.

This route is well used by both cyclists and pedestrians, resulting in it being heavily used throughout the year. Two paths run roughly parallel, one by the water's edge which is part of the Water of Leith footpath, and the upper NCN75 route which takes the course of the dismantled railway.

Users mainly interact where the park is more open, and where there are seating opportunities - both formalised at the benches, and informally on the steps leading down to the water's edge.

SITE DESCRIPTION

FRONTAGES / BOUNDARIES



To the east, Coalie Park is bordered by North Leith Burial Ground, and to the west is enclosed by the South Fort Street Bridge and a small industrial estate. The area to the north is defined by Coburg Street and residential housing, while the southern boundary is formed by the Water of Leith and newly built residential property.

HABITAT CORRIDORS

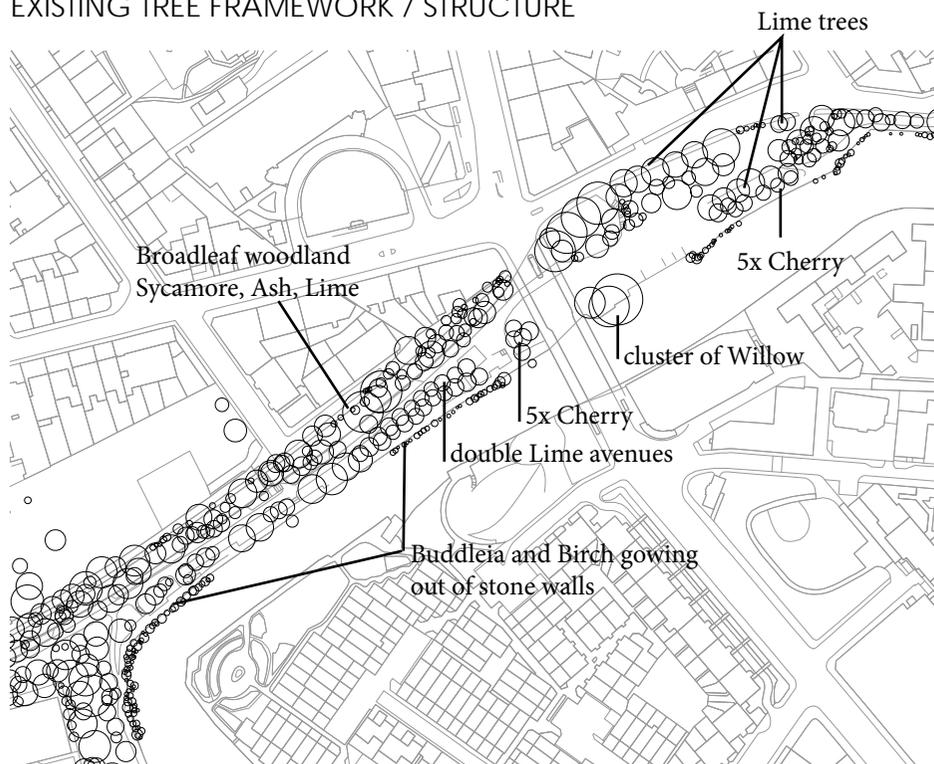


Coalie park is a vital asset to the green wildlife corridor that runs through the North of Edinburgh. The area has woodland habitat, meadow areas and blue infrastructure making it an ideal location to improve biodiversity.

Potential LBAP (Local Biodiversity Action Plan) species:

- Bat
- Otters
- Swift
- Northern Brown Argus Butterfly
- Maiden Pink Flower

EXISTING TREE FRAMEWORK / STRUCTURE

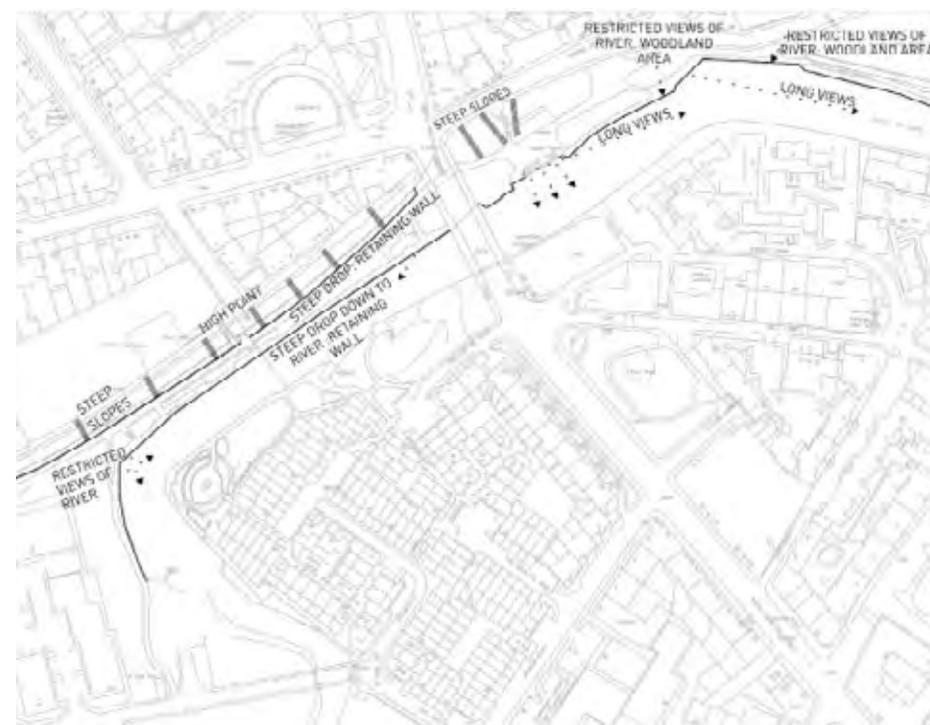


There is a well established band of broadleaf woodland defining the northern / north western slopes of Coalie Park, consisting of planted Lime trees and self seeded Ash and Sycamore. The understorey is predominantly brambles and self seeded scrub including Elder and Hawthorn.

Along the path routes there are mature Lime and Cherry trees projecting a strong arboreal character and visual structure. These trees offer a canopy of foliage, however limited variety of understorey planting due to the deep shade.

There is a large cluster of Willow spp. to the east of Great Junction Street bridge, congested with brambles and scrub. In the more open areas, the grass is close mown with some longer grassland being allowed to establish.

TOPOGRAPHY, ASPECT AND VIEWS



The site generally falls from the North/North West boundary of the park down towards the River of Leith through a series of level changes. These level changes above the river provides a number of viewing opportunities down and across the water.

The steepest area of the park is located to the West where the only access is by a series of stairs from Largo Place. More accessible entrances can be found to the North/North eastern side of the park from Coburg street.

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Looking east to Coburg Street entrance and car parking



The existing concrete steps leading to the Water of Leith water's edge



*"Is this a good spot
for nature play?"*

Looking west along the Water of Leith towards Junction Bridge



*"...What about a community
growing space here?"*

Existing brick structure on west side of Junction Bridge



"How can we manage this space better?"

"Without the brick structure, what could this be?"

Looking both ways along the Lime tree double avenue (Sustrans active travel route)



"Could this become a circular route?"

Footway connecting to West Bowling Green Street, and towards bridge connecting with The Quilts

VISUAL DESCRIPTION OF PARK USE / CONDITION

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Artwork embedded in paving | 9. Rubbish |
| 2. Old sewage structure | 10. Waterway |
| 3. Mallard duck | 11. Walk/cycle way |
| 4. Bike attached to post | 12. Steps leading down to water |
| 5. Access to park | 13. Poorly maintained bench |
| 6. User groups | 14. Underpass |
| 7. Signage | 15. Entrance to Coalie park and car park |
| 8. Desire line (cycling) | |



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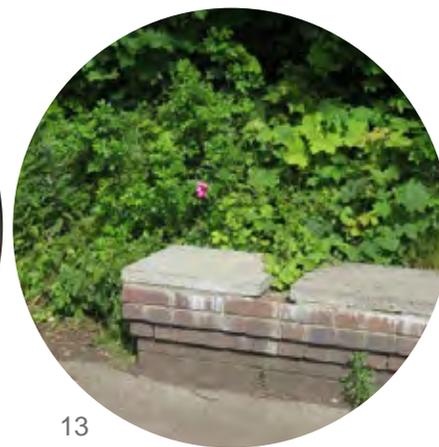
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PLANNING POLICY AND CONTEXT

POLICY / CONSTRAINT	DESCRIPTION	DESIGN IMPLICATION / POTENTIAL
Notable Habitat - A1.1.1	Notable habitats - Woodland, Broadleaved, Semi-natural	Greenspace corridor and linkages, wider infrastructure and management of habitat type. Active and positive woodland management, including potential for a replanting programme.
Within 50m Of A Public Right Of Way	Public Rights of Way	Part of an important active travel network. Consider how this route could be made safer, more inclusive; better sign posting and lighting.
Core Paths	Within 50m of a core path	Review core paths plan to identify any aspirational links being promoted, foster links with adjacent greenspaces and active travel routes. Fully develop potential of the Sustrans route (National Cycle Route 75) and work in partnership with Sustrans on placemaking objectives.
The Water Of Leith LBS	Local Biodiversity Site	Review LBS for species / habitats which the park design proposals could support or enhance.
Open Space Audit	Classification in 2009 Open Space Audit: green corridors	Highlights the importance of the nature of linear greenspaces
Proposed Linear Local Biodiversity Site	Proposed Linear Local Biodiversity Site	Integrate with adjacent greenspaces at Keddie Park and the Quilts, to connect habitats and contribute to the wider green infrastructure network.
Radon Potential Class 1	Radon Potential, as identified in the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and British Geological Survey (BGS) data	Ground likely contaminated, impact on uses of site for community growing, productive planting (orchards, edible hedgerows etc.). Soil analysis required if these are part of the design proposals taken forward.
SEPA flood mapping	High to medium risk of river flooding	No risk of surface or coastal flooding as identified on the SEPA flood maps; some areas at risk of medium or high risk river flooding. Design finishes and surface treatments accordingly to allow water levels to rise and fall. Potential to use vegetation to slow surface water run off, and roots to stabilise slopes and embankments.

TREES AND WOODLAND



Sycamore



Lime



Cherry



Willow



Overhang



Buddleia

The trees and woodland at Coalie Park are part of the special landscape character, and offer something unique and valuable in this dense urban neighbourhood. The sense of ‘wildness’ and escape which the mature trees lend is described repeatedly by many different user groups as a key feature and to be protected as the park is improved.

ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- The diversity of the broad-leaf woodland is limited due to the self-seeded species which dominate with heavy canopy cover; Sycamore and Ash shade the woodland floor.
- The Ash at Coalie Park is at risk of removal as part of positive management for Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, a chronic fungal disease of ash trees characterised by leaf loss and crown dieback in infected trees). Trees are being removed to avoid spread and costly removal of affected trees. Approach and best practise should be discussed with the relevant Council Officer.
- The Lime avenue is very mature, casting a dense shade and thereby reducing potential for species diversity and habitat mosaic.
- There are clusters of planted cherry trees, forming attractive stands but which would benefit from sensitive management to lift / thin crowns.
- A cluster of Willow to the east side of the bridge offers a valuable habitat, however it is choked with brambles and weeds.
- There are a lot of overhanging branches around the car park, in places blocking street lighting and negatively affecting the sense of safety.

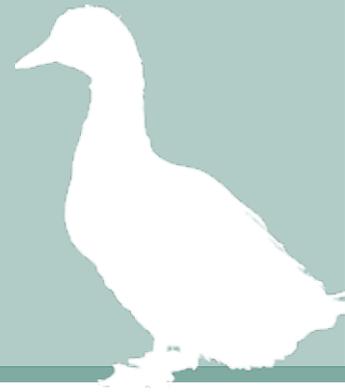
IMPROVE THE FLOW OF USER MOVEMENT

The current layout of Coalie Park blocks the natural flow of users. Is there an opportunity to develop a continuous route that enables free pedestrian and cyclist movement both along the waters edge and down to the river? Could a new routing transform the park and mirror the movement of the water?



RE-ESTABLISH THE CONNECTION WITH THE WATER OF LEITH

The Water of Leith was an important resource in the development of the city during industrial times. However, recently the peoples' connection with the water has been forgotten and its value lost. There is an opportunity to develop the park's existing features, for example by adding new viewing platforms and seating areas. Perhaps new features like this could encourage users to reconnect with the river, while also offering new educational and wellbeing opportunities?



ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY

The existing greenspace resources of Coalie Park would greatly benefit from enhancement and diversification of vegetation. How could the existing vegetation be better managed for habitats and biodiversity? It is important that these enhanced areas directly connect with the wider green corridors across the city, for people and nature.



CONSTRAINTS

EXCLUSIVE ACCESS

The park responds to a slope on the far side. This results in a series of steps as entrances and steep banks with heavy vegetation cover. Pathways vary in width with some sections of the park being very narrow as a result of the slope and river which is a particular problem in areas where there is a high number of users.

PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

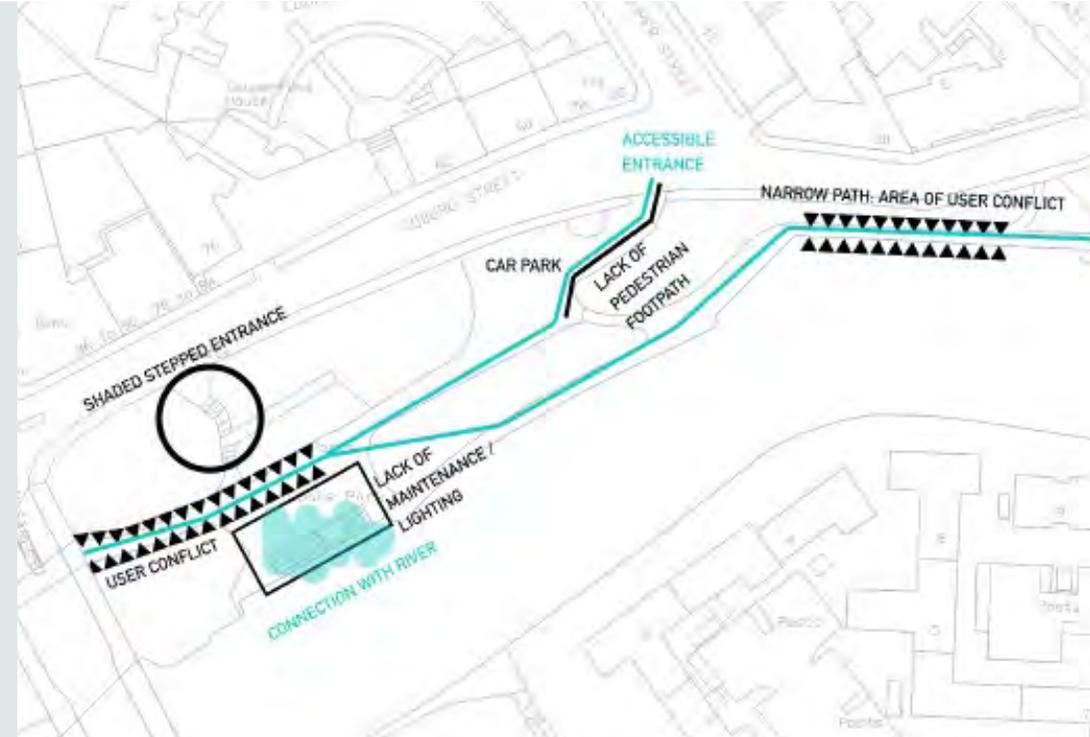
Shade, darkness, lack of lighting and small hidden spaces are present within Coalie Park. It has been noted by members of the public that the park does not feel like a safe space to visit at night.

CONFLICT BETWEEN USER GROUPS

There is conflict between pedestrians and cyclists, most notable in speed of travel. This stems from narrow pathways that are present in some areas of the park, particularly the Eastern side.

MAINTENANCE

There is an overall lack of maintenance of both hard and soft landscaping. This is obvious when observing the structures, facilities, vegetation, and environmental cleanliness of the park.



A PROCESS OF ONGOING

ENGAGEMENT

COALIE CONVERSATIONS

A PROJECT PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATORY PLACEMAKING

WHY ARE WE CONSULTING?

Consultation is an ongoing process - a deeply rooted part of this project. The Water of Leith Conservation Trust initiated an engagement and consultation process, which ran throughout the project and design development, informing and guiding the decisions made at each stage.

The project is based on the discussions and findings from this process of engagement with local people and interested groups. It provided the basis for deciding what practical steps should be taken to improve the area in the short term people and identified what improvements people would like to see in the area going forward.

The aim behind this collaborative, user-led approach is to give the project development team a prioritised list of actions and activities we can take forward to this improvements plan, which are truly wanted and needed by local people.

AIM

By talking and engaging with the local community and users of Coalie Park, we believe the resulting design for the park is one celebrates its history, heritage and natural environment assets. The aim is to create a space local people want and need.

TIMELINE : PROJECT PROCESS

- 1 SUMMARISE LANDSCAPE FEASIBILITY STUDY (2019)
 - Prepare materials for consultation and feedback, based on the feasibility study report.
- 2 'COALIE CONVERSATIONS' (SPRING 2021)
 - Initiate 'Coalie Conversations' with social media, local poster campaign, and an online survey.
- 3 SURVEY FINDINGS (SUMMER 2021)
 - Review and analyse findings from survey and comments, to produce a list of actions and project priorities.
- 4 'COALIE COLLECTIVE'
 - Form a partnership group of local organisations and landowners to drive the project forward.
- 5 UPDATED LANDSCAPE DESIGN
 - Revised park proposals to reflect Coalie Conversations process and findings, and incorporate partnership projects.
- 6 FUN DAY - ENGAGEMENT EVENT
 - Fun Day in Coalie Park, with exhibition of ideas and activities, to discuss the updated park design ideas.
- 7 PARK DESIGN PLAN
 - Plan recording aspirations and priorities for the enhancement and design of Coalie Park.
 - Record of project process, engagement, and participatory placemaking events and activities.
 - Park design plan identifying themes and sub-projects to realise a holistic improvement plan
- 8 FUNDING APPLICATIONS
 - Make applications to funders, for thematic projects or stand-alone features.

1. COALIE CONVERSATION ONLINE SURVEY

Open from February to March 2021, the 'Coalie Conversation' was a simple online Survey Monkey consultation on the park enhancement and improvement proposals originally developed for the Landscape Feasibility Study (prepared 2019).

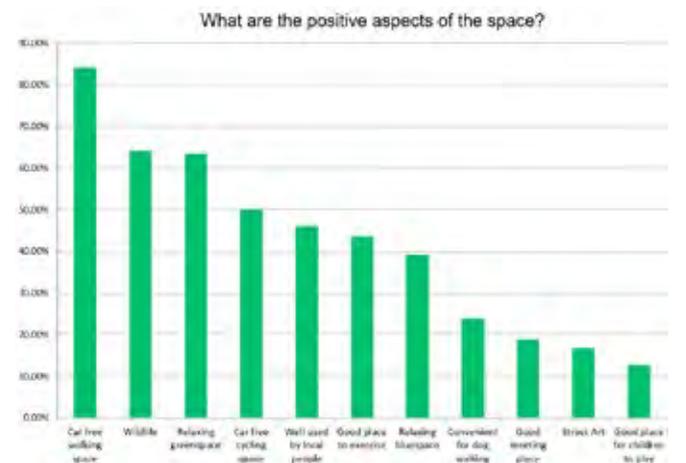
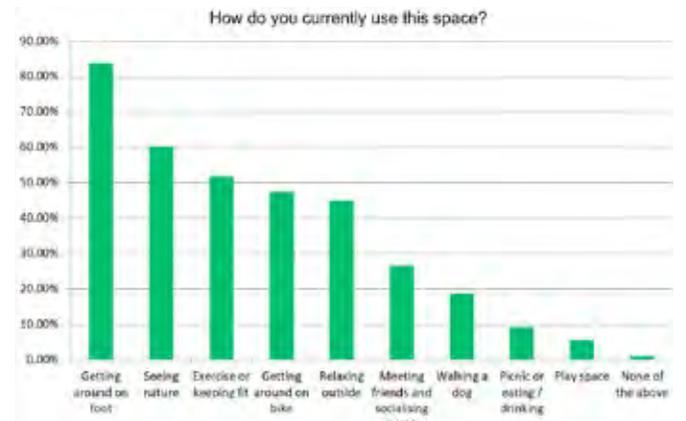
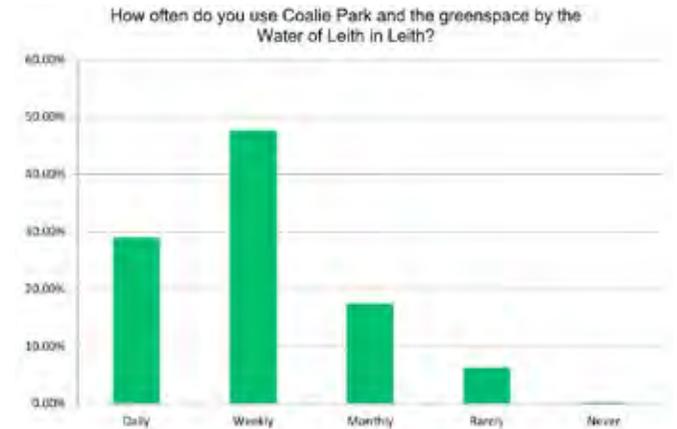
A summarised version of the landscape feasibility study was presented, and questions to explore these ideas were designed to provide priorities to take a park design forward.

The survey was promoted on social media, via local groups and using on-site posters (no face to face due to Covid restrictions at the time). A range of images, posters and outline proposals supported the survey, which received 454 responses.

Almost all responses were from local people due to lock down. An infographic of the discussion and key findings was drawn together, based on analysis of all the responses received.

IDEAS + SUGGESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Outdoor play, sport and active travel improvements which are more than the usual playparks, skateparks or exercise machines.
- Plan for park improvements which work day and night for users and local residents.
- Connections to Sandport Place, Keddie Park, The Quilts, North Leith Burial Ground.
- How do we engage all park users including those considered 'antisocial'?
- How to improve the space under the Bridge and at the brick structures, while keeping the wild-ness, habitats, and peaceful setting?



2. COALIE COLLECTIVE STAKEHOLDER WALKABOUT

A gathering of representatives identified by the WoLCT as the 'Coalie Collective' stakeholders got together at an afternoon event. The organisations attending included:

- City of Edinburgh Council (Natural Heritage, Parks and Greenspace)
- Scottish Water
- Friends of the Water of Leith Basin
- SOSLeith
- LeithLate
- Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council
- Citadel Youth Project.

The aim was to identify and form a 'Coalie Collective', a group of stakeholders and representatives who would be involved in the formation of the improvement plan and the implementation of the resulting park design proposals.

At this first collective meeting, held at Custom House on the 31st August 2021, the results of the 'Conversation' (online survey) were presented by the Water of Leith Conservation Trust, and a discussion followed of the issues raised. After a reflective feedback and formative comments by the Collective, a site walkover helped to see first-hand some of the issues and inform further discussions.

Overall the Collective was supportive of the proposals as they were developing, but some specific comments were made which in turn helped inform the updated design plan to be shown at the October engagement event and Fun Day.

"The project should value and protect the special qualities of wildness and nature in the heart of the city.

"History and interpretation of Coalie Park's heritage shouldn't be lost, but the project should link in with the Spirit of Leith and the Living Memories initiatives.

"There is an opportunity for visual continuity in the palette of materials, and spatial continuity in the linking of other nearby greenspaces and active travel connections.

"Citadel's use of the green and blue spaces as part of their programme of youth activity is supported, and a permanent site for their equipment storage should be integrated to the park enhancement proposals

"The woodland canopy, mature trees and sitings of wildlife are invaluable and at the core of Coalie Park in the 21st Century.



3. COALIE CONVERSATION 'FUN DAY' EVENT

On 3rd October 2021, WoLCT hosted their first event at Coalie Park in Leith – to raise awareness of this project to improve the area, gain feedback on the plans so far from local people and have some fun.

With a 'Coalie Conversation' tent, WoLCT presented ideas for the future. There was lots of interest and dozens of suggestions and feedback ideas were collected to be reviewed and incorporated in the designs. Citadel Youth Centre and Edinburgh Wheels project were also on hand to explain how the area could be used by young people on land and in the water.

The WoLCT practical volunteer team was on hand to make the day fun too. With wildflower bulb planting, a river clean-up game and guess the weight of the litter challenge (collected in the park that morning). HMS Litterpicker was also cruising the basins collecting litter. The fundraising volunteers did a great job with a Plant Sale, Mystery Bottle tombola and book sale – all raising £300. Outdoor learning was also featured with a gazebo of natural objects for children to explore and a fun treasure hunt which 40 families used to explore the park. Finally the heritage of the area was explored with a display of old photos and two guided walks.

It is tricky to tell how many people took part and its a busy area of the walkway, but project partners estimate that around 300 directly engaged in the activities and presentations with a further 300 taking a passing interest.

The reaction was overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the park improvement project.



Very interesting plans. The idea of mixed uses is essential to create a safer, more accessible space for everyone. There is a good balance of exercise (skateboarding, walking and cycling routes) and relaxation without replacing the history of the place

I'd love to see the space even more animated. Events taking place with a real sense of community.



// *The idea of mixed uses is essential to create a safer, more accessible space for everyone*

// *There is a good balance of exercise and relaxation without replacing the history of the place.*

// *I'd like there to be more planting of pollinator friendly flowers and bulbs to encourage nature and biodiversity*



// *I'd like to see art installations*

// *Work with local social enterprises*



// *More lighting to allow safe dog walking in dark evenings, and consider women's safety issues*

COALIE PARK MASTERPLAN

DESIGN

DESIGN OBJECTIVES

SUMMARISED FROM CONSULTATION

The participatory place design and planning process has allowed the project team to identify clear objectives which guide the park design. These are overarching commitments in the approach to the improvement plan, and which inform the proposals presented on the following pages.

- To bring the vegetation into active, positive management for biodiversity, and for a sense of safety, wayfinding and park placemaking.
- To make this place work for as many people as possible, by installing new benches, bins and improving the path surfacing.
- To bring together the existing spaces scattered along this linear 'park' by giving them functions as a series of sub-projects, celebrating local heritage, wildlife and activity.
- To promote and encourage active travel by waymarking and improving the loop route (railway and riverside routes linked) and light routes where appropriate.

SUMMARISED FROM POLICE FEEDBACK

Key messages from site visit with the police:

- Lighting is a bonus, with low level and ground light considered suitable to enhance the existing lighting provision. Recommend trimming back trees in areas around existing lights.
- Poetry Corner is a difficult spot to manage, but has potential due to sightlines from car park. Recommend new seating and to make the space visible from the road.
- Improvements to the brick structures would make the area feel less threatening. Include new replacement seating, trellises/ planting up the walls to change the atmosphere and character to a more natural greenspace. Low level lighting could also improve sense of safety, and the walking route should perhaps avoid the narrowest sections.
- At the Great Junction Street bridge the hole at the side of the bridge could be blocked up, and there shouldn't be benches here. Positive feedback on a mural at this location, to inspire art rather than tagging.
- Install more bins.



Site plan as existing <N

COALIE PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

PLACEMAKING

- ① Car park and entrance space
- ② Gathering space
- ③ Nature play area
- ④ Community garden with skate / teen space
- ⑤ Community orchard

ART AND INTERPRETATION

- ⑥ The Story of Water
- ⑦ Largo Place seating and art
- ⑧ LeithLate lighting installation
- ⑨ Poetry Corner project

NATURE RESTORATION

- ⑩ Woodland management
- ⑪ INNS management
- ⑫ Biomatrix
- ⑬ Biodiversity planting

MOVEMENT AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

- ⑭ Slow space & seating
- ⑮ Moving through Coalie Park



Site plan as proposed <N

DESIGN RATIONALE

A LOOP WALKING ROUTE

A measured walking route within Coalie Park, marked by public art installations at either end, and with thermoplastic paint applied directly to the bituminous macadam sections of path showing distance, marking features, and interpreting the walking experience.

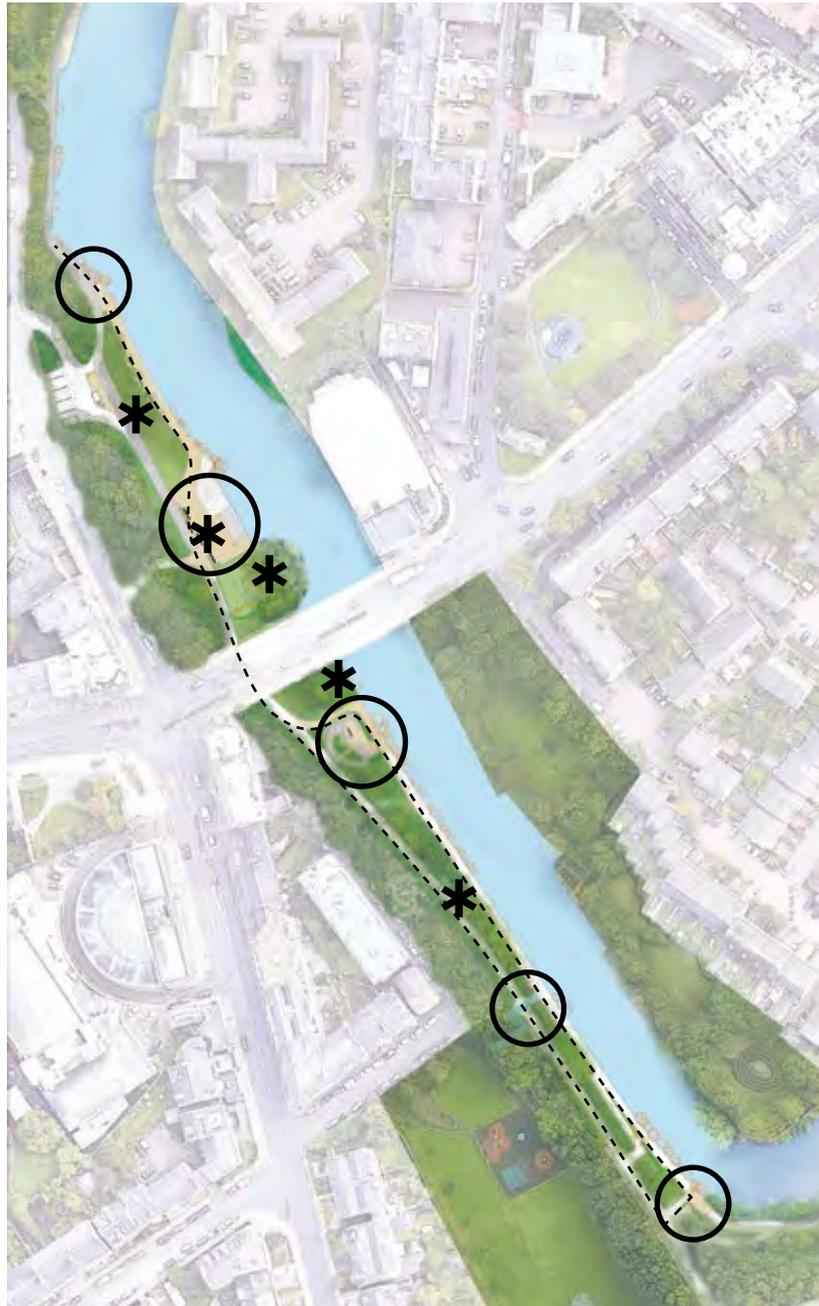
BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT / CONNECTIONS



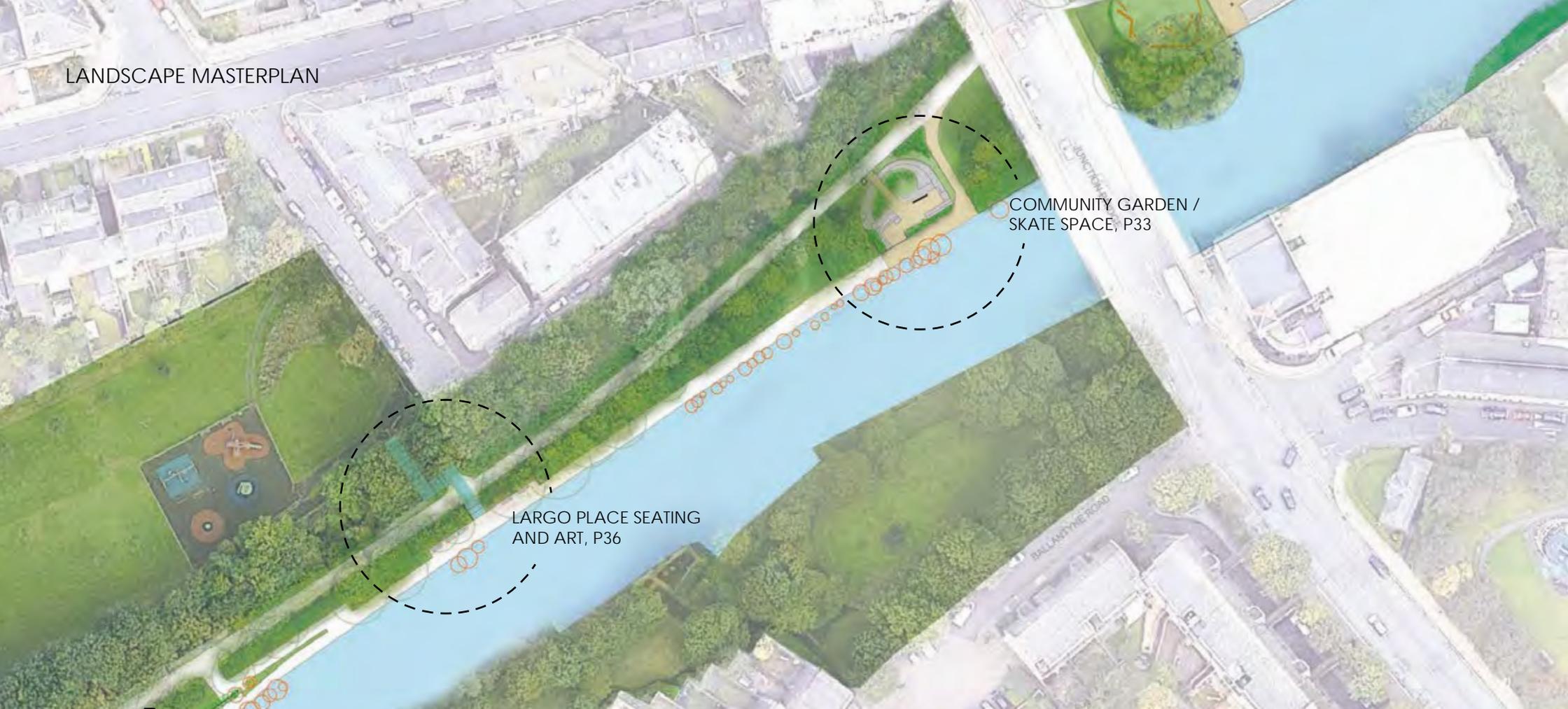
As a linear park, Coalie offers valuable opportunities for greenspace linkages and habitat connectivity. The planting and habitat enhancements proposed (Biomatrix, woodland under-planting) will increase biodiversity value and network. As far as possible, existing trees should be protected in place. Growing opportunities are created for example with the integration of raised bed planting areas at the gathering space, the brick structure, and the entrance space.

IDENTITY AND SENSE OF PLACE

The proposals for Coalie Park identify locations for clusters of furniture, activity and facilities such as benches, bins, lighting, public art, interpretation, and the Citadel outdoor activity storage container. These becomes nodes' and help organise the park and give the user a rhythm moving through the space. They also act as meeting spaces, points of interest, or aid recognition of location, while adding comfort and safety to the park. The spacing of benches at no more than 400m apart is considered good practice place design in line with DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) recommendations.



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COMMUNITY GARDEN /
SKATE SPACE, P33

LARGO PLACE SEATING
AND ART, P36

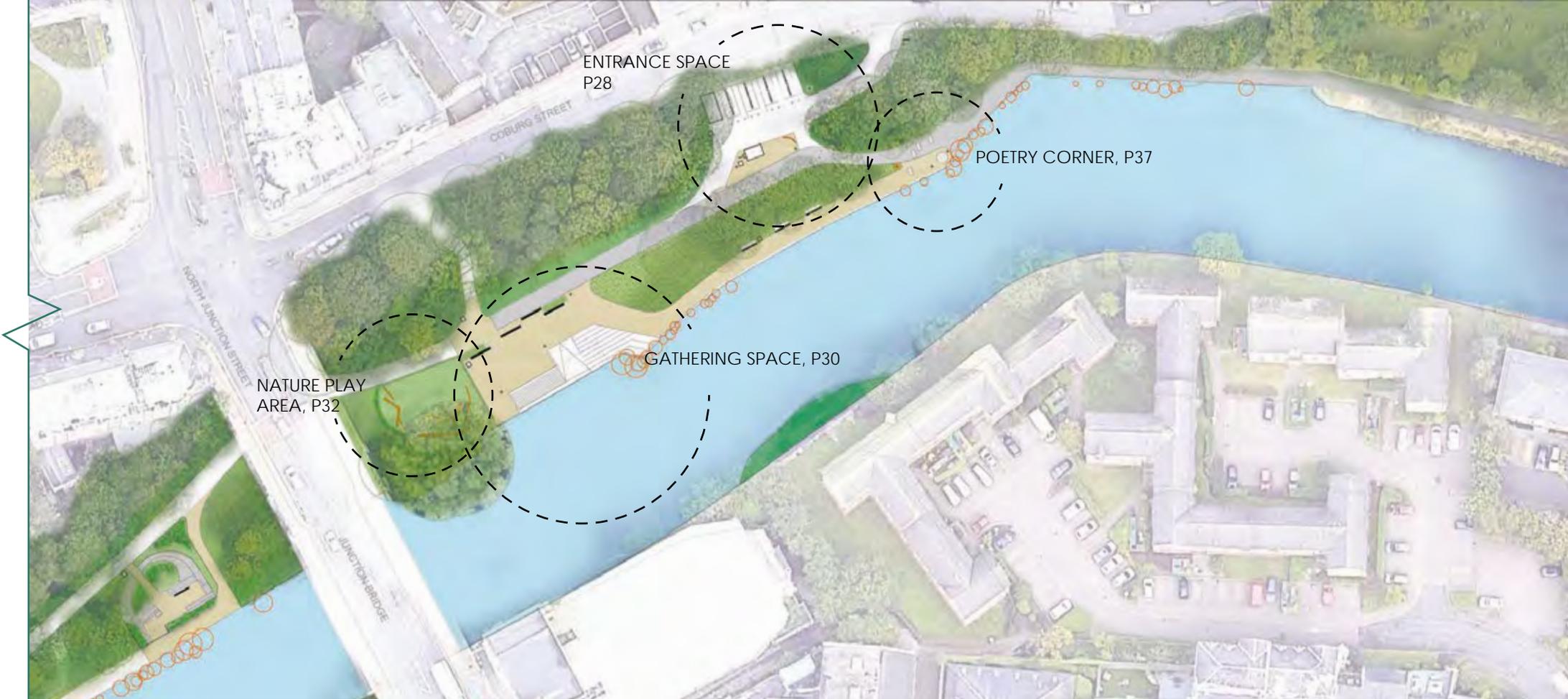
THE STORY OF
WATER
P35

PLANTING

-  Existing trees to be retained
-  Nature restoration planting, with new native woodland shrubs and structure planting
-  Biodiversity planting with woodland groundcover and bulbs
-  New perennial (pollinator friendly species) planting at rain garden
-  Evergreen and thorny species hedgerows, planted as a triple staggered row and trimmed to 1m high
-  Mown grass
-  Wildflower meadow - grassland managed for wildflower establishment
-  Buddleia removed from river wall
-  Biomatrix habitat installation - nature restoration and river bank creation

HARD LANDSCAPE - FURNITURE

-  New concrete steps, formed over existing. Re-profiled to reduce step height, and wrap steps at river bank
-  Relocated, painted Citadel storage container
-  Coffee kiosk / trailer
-  Bike rails - stainless steel, painted black to match site furniture
-  Welcome signage / info about Coalie Park facilities and heritage. 'Trail head', waymarking
-  Low level lighting columns, on key sight lines
-  Concrete form benches and planters, cast over existing (presumed redundant) brick structure to create seating and teen's hang-out. Smooth light coloured concrete. Break in structure height allows removal of sections of existing barrier rail



-  Stainless steel benches, painted black
-  Reclaimed railway seating, painted by Citadel as part of a community public art project
-  Logs laid as informal adventure play area, from any Ash removed for Ash Dieback management
-  Interpretation panels affixed to existing brick walls
-  Climbing plant trellises affixed to existing brick structures
-  Paint all railings black
-  Install new handrails to improve accessibility at existing steps between upper and lower walkways

HARD LANDSCAPE - SURFACING

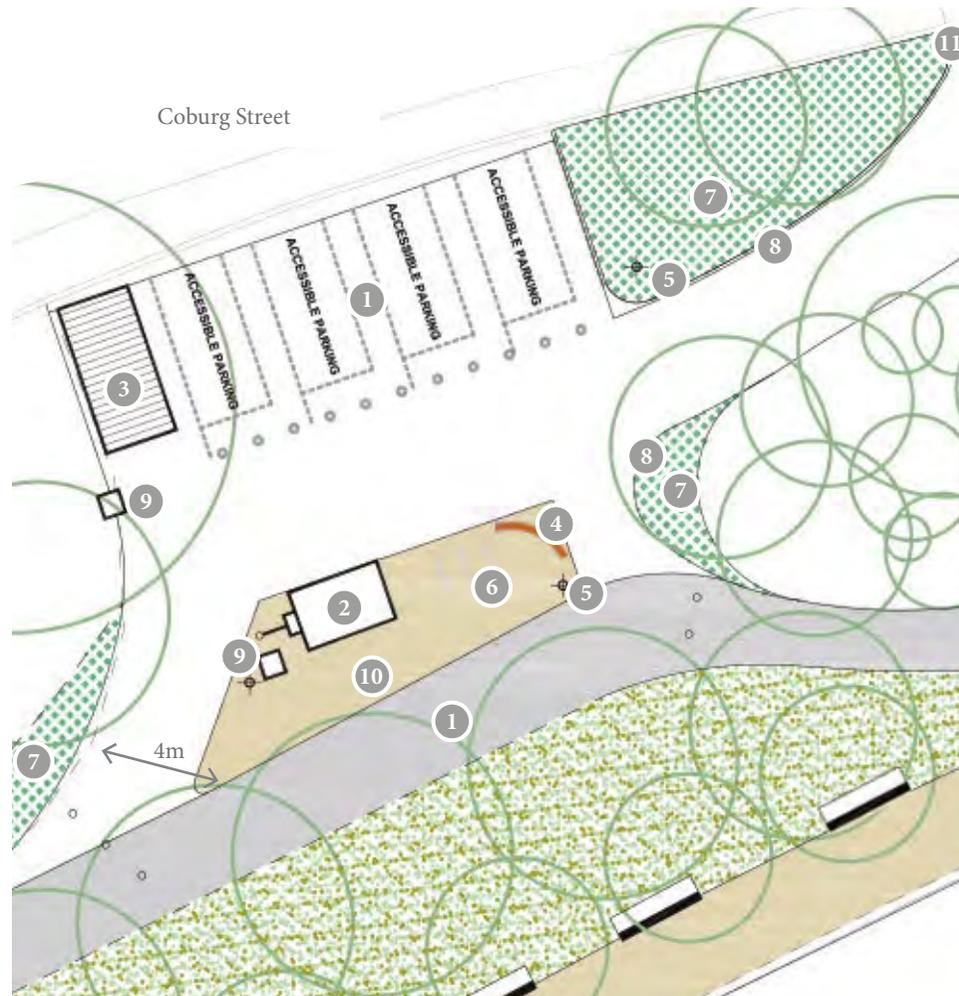
-  Resin bound gravel - warm natural stone aggregate
-  Resin bound gravel - coloured, to design and specification of artistic installation / briefing
-  Bituminous macadam surfacing to cycle track route
-  Concrete form through soft creating skate loop, detailed design by others
-  Relocated poetry stones, into resin bound gravel / bituminous macadam made good areas
-  Marking - Thermoplastic paint marking 'fast' route
-  Marking - Install in-ground markers within existing cobble area to define accessible parking spaces x4



1. CAR PARK + ENTRANCE SPACE

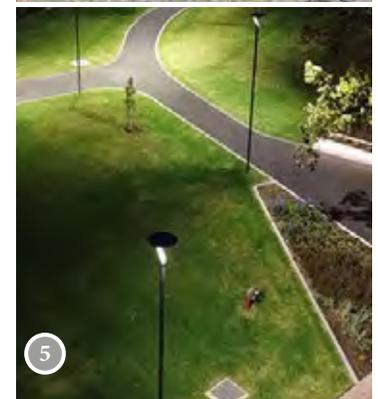
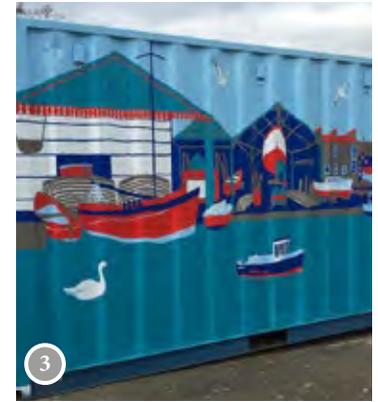
Reduction in parking is based on the findings of public survey and stakeholder feedback, which found that very few people using the car park are in fact users of Coalie Park. There was a considerable response to what a waste of park space the car park was, and users would prefer facilities and features which relate to the park / natural greenspace.

1. Removal of approximately 5 unmarked parking spaces, to site park furnishings and improved circulation design reducing conflict between cyclists and pedestrians. Mark out 4x accessible sized parking spaces against the wall, using in-ground markers.
2. Coffee kiosk / trailer, a small mobile coffee shop could serve as a hub within this entrance space off Coburg Street, so people can have even more reasons to explore and enjoy the park.
3. Citadel's outdoor equipment storage container located to create a setting in partnership with the Coffee trailer. Painted on East facing elevation with a Coalie Park 'welcome' graphic and interpretive mural indicating the route the railway tunnel took and celebrating the site's railway connections.
4. Wayfinding and interpretation panel installation, with content sharing history and heritage of Coalie park, and sign-posting to the other public art / heritage interpretation features in the park.
5. 3x LED post-mounted lights, e.g. MACARON luminaires.
6. 3x new bike racks.
7. Bulb and wildflower planting under existing trees.
8. New edge alignment to maximise space for planting, improve definition of vehicular movement and use of space. Build drystone retaining wall, delivered as a community project with the Scottish Association for Drystone Wallers. Planted up with woodland biodiversity species mix (see p39)
9. 2x new litter bins.
10. Space re-surfaced with resin bound natural stone aggregate to create a smooth inclusive access space. Remove existing bollards to prevent trip hazard, and use colour, flush kerbs and materiality to define spaces.
11. Entrance heritage signs upgraded as per others along Water of Leith Walkway,



^ N 1:250 (A4 printed pages)

[Active travel route (fast route), see project 15 on p44 for details and full description.]





6



7

8



9



Existing



Proposed

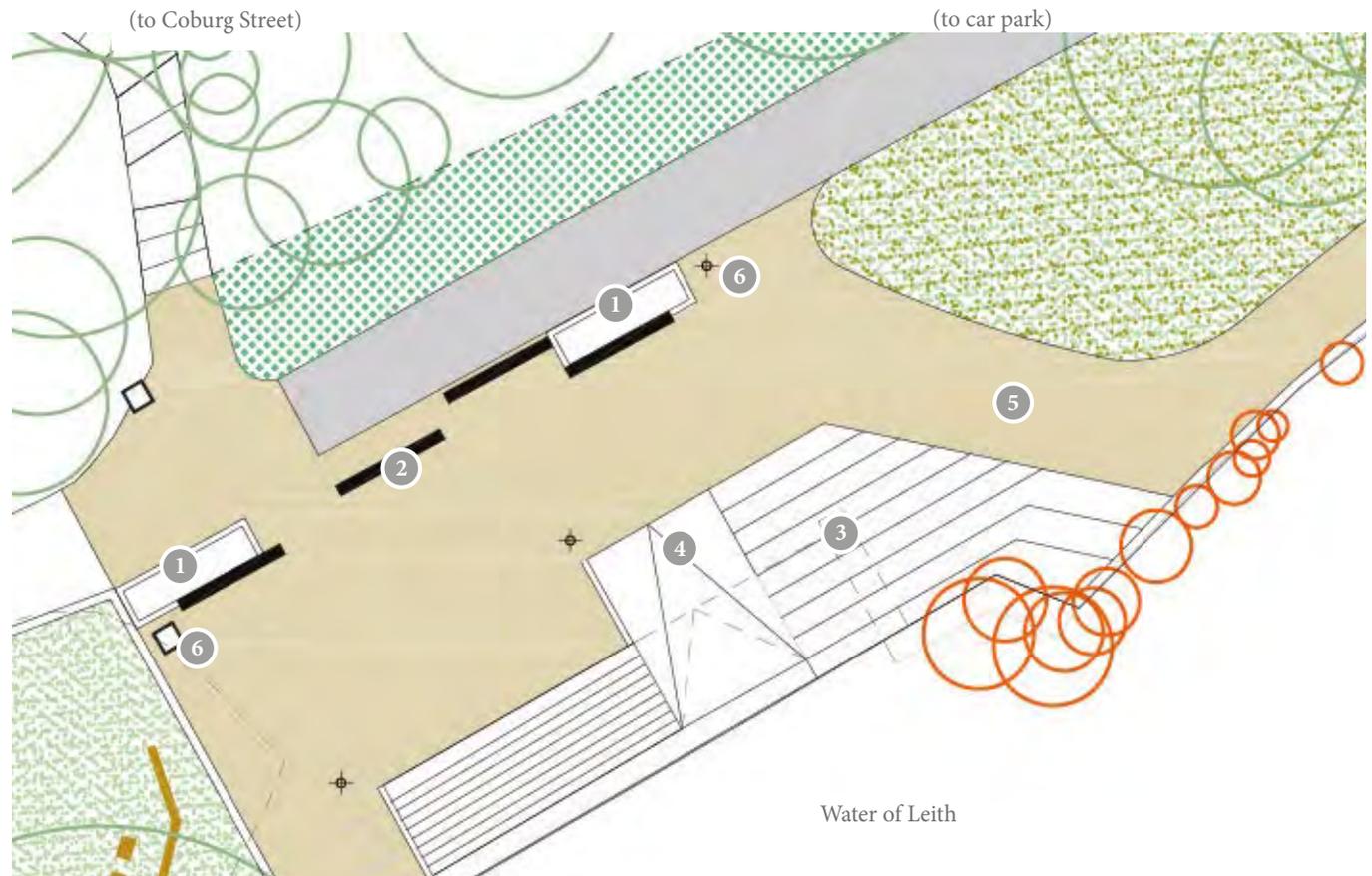
2. GATHERING SPACE

Designed to offer a flexible events and meeting space, supporting the existing use by Citadel for access to the river for watersports and creating a place where people can meet, relax, and watch the comings and goings at Coalie Park.

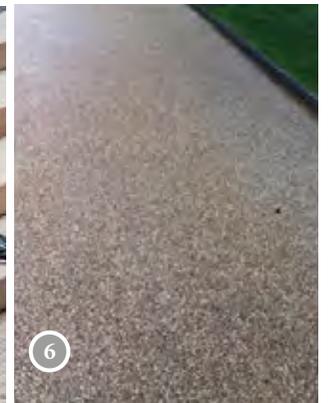
This space should feel open, inclusive, safe, and clean.

Bicycle users are encouraged through the application of markers painted on the ground to use the 'fast' route to the north of this space, bypassing this slower passive area.

1. Planters to delineate space, giving it edges but still allowing easy movement between and through spaces. Planting would be managed by WoLCT as part of monthly clean up events and programme of hands-on volunteering.
2. Long benches which double as an informal skating opportunity. A spot to bring school / nursery children and use Coalie Park as an outdoor learning resource.
3. Reconfigure concrete steps to wrap around the point where the river bank opens up and is accessible. South facing, these widened steps create informal seating opportunities.
4. Ramp length doubled; gradient halved to facilitate use for e.g. access for watersports.
5. Realign path to smooth gradient, widen, and resurface with resin bound natural stone aggregate to create a warm and friendly, and inclusive access space wrapping around this area.
6. Lighting and litter bins, addressing principal comments from the public asking this project to ensure the small things are done right.



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Existing



Proposed

3. NATURE PLAY AREA

A space to the side of the main gathering area, currently overgrown grass, willow scrub and brambles. This could be cut back, retaining the trees and some of the understorey, but carving a greenspace out next to the more formal riverside gathering space, to create an area for children to explore and play in nature. This outdoor learning opportunity should be designed in detail with input and engagement from local primary school children.

1. Mown grass area with informal log seating presenting Forest School / play opportunity.
2. Up-stand edgeto elevate the area by one step (200mm), setting this space apart to discourage short cuts and to dogs by defining this as a woodland play area.
3. Evergreen structure planting added as a backdrop, adding to the year-round biodiversity value by varying the plant species present. Maintained as low hedges (1m high) to create a greenspace backdrop to the play area.
4. Logs felled as part of Ash Dieback management retained on site, and arranged in space to create play opportunities.



Water of Leith



Install some fun play sculptures, celebrating local natural heritage or historic context.

Details to be developed through community workshops with artists or led by local organisations, to develop briefs which reflect public interest and local history.



Logs arranged within landscape areas, offer an inviting play opportunity.

Use any timbers felled on site as part of Ash Dieback management; no logs or branches to be removed from Coalie Park rather they should be either incorporated for play or left on the ground to rot and add to the habitats on site.



Collaborate with local nurseries, schools and Forest School leaders to create an active programme of use of the site, establishing this as a child / family friendly environment.

4. COMMUNITY GARDEN / SKATE HANG OUT

Throughout the development of this landscape masterplan, the team has been in contact with Scottish Water regarding the status of the brick structure near the Great Junction Street Bridge.

Its ownership is not confirmed, however it is believed to be redundant. The removal of this structure would be costly, and instead there is an opportunity not to remove the brick structure but rather the incorporate it into a new purpose - to create growing areas, to terrace with planters, and to wrap a new concrete form skate / teen hang out seating onto and around the structure.

1. Concrete form onto and around the existing brick structure. Skating structures, designed in detail in partnership with Edinburgh Wheels, who have input to the development of this park improvement plan. The skate structures / paths would be constructed as a design and build partnership with Edinburgh Wheels, who provide opportunities for unemployed youths to build paths and plazas.
2. Hang out space, platform / informal seating in an amphitheatre form, designed as a teens social space. 3-sided, and create a raised 'stage' area with seating facing inwards: talking, music and dance.
3. Planting by community, local project partners, and WoLCT volunteers. Species choices could focus on plants appropriate for use in rain gardens, with interpretive signage, giving people ideas for planting for climate resilience and adding biodiversity to urban landscapes. Planting with the community will help to make the space feel safe and cared for.
4. Remove sections of handrail, which increase the perceived height of the structure, where planters are attached and therefore reduce the free-fall height to two levels of 600mm.
5. Truncate dead-end space towards the bridge and plant for wildlife and biodiversity.
6. Resurface top of structure with same bound aggregate material, to mark this out as a community space and create a smooth, even, accessible surface.
7. Ongoing programme of removal of Buddleia from the river walls.



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5. COMMUNITY ORCHARD

Forging greenspace links and reinforcing connections with adjacent parks and greenspaces, a community orchard is proposed for Keddie Park. This is an underused park and yet presents a valuable greenspace, extending' the scale of Coalie Park.

Many users of Coalie Park are not aware of Keddie Park, or don't make the connection. A community planting initiative could bring this space into more active use, and the clearer link between the two spaces strengthens each as a park with its own functions and character.

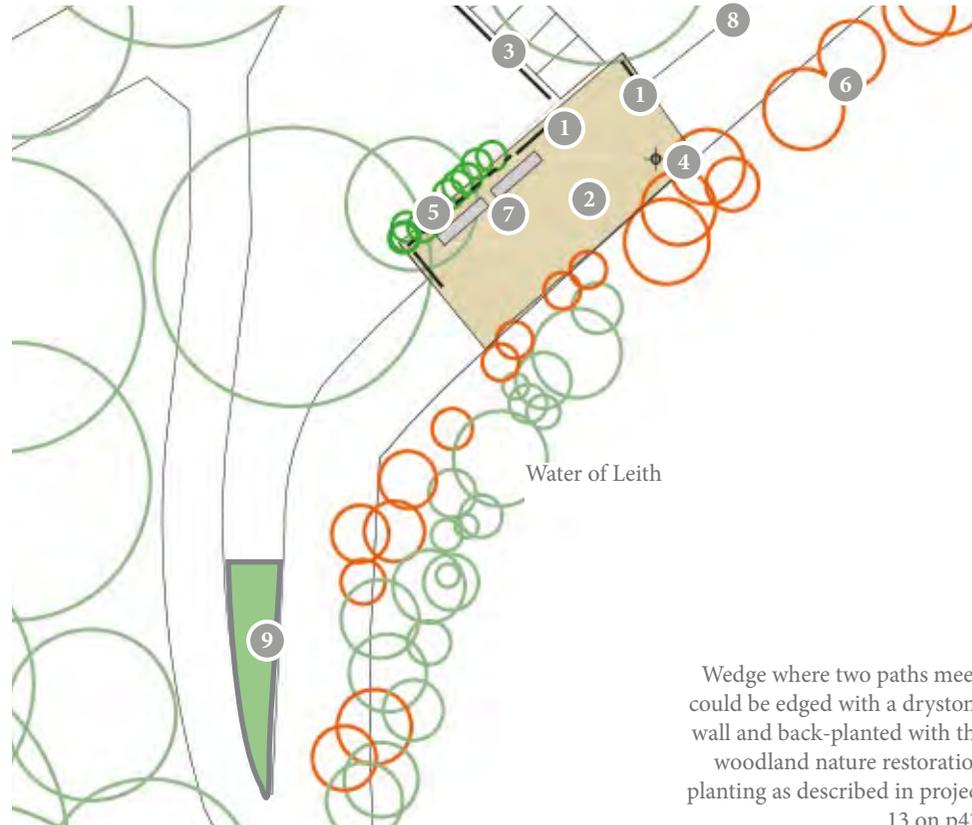
A project could be delivered in partnership between ELGT and CEC parks, through the 'TreeTime' initiative, planting trees for climate resilience and biodiversity.



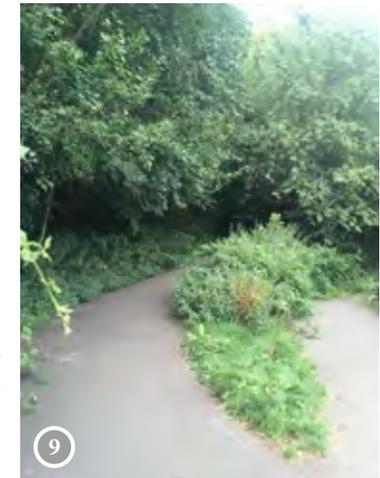
6. THE STORY OF WATER

A small space formed on the lower walkway route, creating a destination at the west end of Coalie Park. This area is designed around a CSO (Combined Sewer Overflow) which is due for upgrading works by Scottish Water in 2027 so a radical redesign is not proposed at this time.

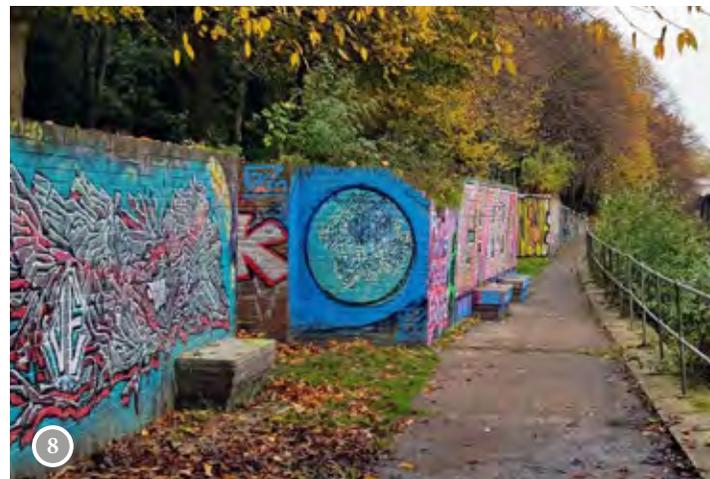
1. Pipes and Sewers interpretation story, use the brick walls as a canvas for interpretive installation - sharing the history, infrastructure and issues facing urban water management, design and planning. Messaging around responsibility and action. Content and design to be developed by WoLCT in partnership with a local interest group/s, to touch on:
 - Water Quality: the River's journey and human waste (relate to sewer network and our impact on it)
 - Geography: tidal extent, silt, water ebb and flow,
 - History: coal depot, railway lines and stations, mills, ship building and repair.
2. Resurface this area to brighten and set this area apart as a destination space, with views up and down the Water of Leith and a space to stop on the walking loop route. Along pathway, re-set any lifted cobbles.
3. Install new handrail at steps linking upper and lower paths, stainless steel painted black to match all Coalie Park railings.
4. One low level lighting pole located on axis of steps, a subtle beacon on the walking route improving sense of safety and security, while limiting light pollution and impact on nocturnal wildlife.
5. Sections of trellis on brick retaining walls to grow climbing plants, adding to the biodiversity of this area of Coalie Park, and emphasising the greenspace character.
6. Continue maintenance by volunteers to remove weeds and Buddleia from the walls, and commission an engineer's report on the stability of the river wall.
7. Install new benches to replace existing; collaboration with Citadel Youth Group to renovate former railway benches, painting with thematic colours / logos to tie in with LeithLate graphics / installations.
8. Street art opportunity on existing brick walls
9. Build a planting area within a triangular drystone wall, planted with native woodland groundcover species.



^ N 1:250 (A4 printed pages)



Wedge where two paths meet: could be edged with a drystone wall and back-planted with the woodland nature restoration planting as described in project 13 on p42.



Street art on the brick walls; with replacement benches, painted railings and invasive species removal this walkway could be an interesting, beautiful urban setting.



Explore different methods of interpretation, from attached panels to the brick structures to direct graffiti painting. The detail, design and story-telling brief should be fully developed as an engagement process involving the local community.

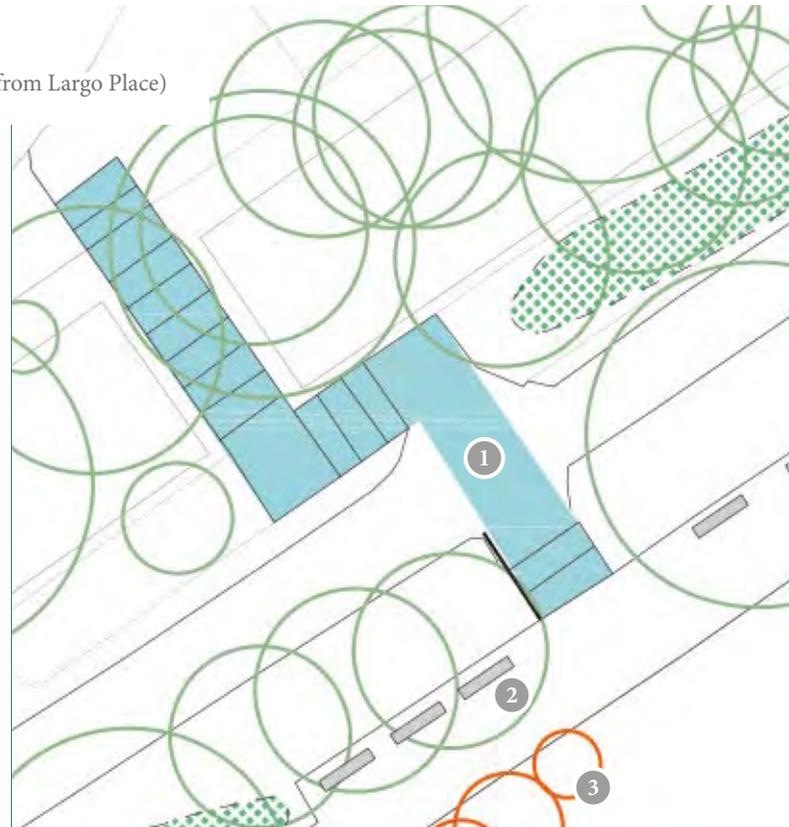
7. LARGO PLACE SEATING + ART

A key project partner throughout the landscape masterplan development has been LeithLate, with representative involved throughout the engagement and consultation period, inputting context and background, and keen to partner on delivery of ideas going forward.

LeithLate has put together a Water of Leith public art project proposal, identifying a series of sites where the organisation is keen to explore funding and delivery opportunities for a public art. One of these is for a seating and art intervention at the point where the steps from Largo Place transect the Coalie Park walk / cycleway. Their preliminary / scoping report identifies a location at brick structure where the existing dilapidated brick benches are located for a design and art project building on the existing infrastructure with multi-level seating, public art and informal space for pop-up outdoor performances.

1. Detailed plans for this space could tie in local social history projects including the Spirit of Leithers, SOSLeith and the Old Leith Rediscovered Project. At the scale and scope of a site masterplan, the project team consider this site a strong site for installation, and a detailed brief should be developed and curated by LeithLate. The WoLCT and LeithLate would partner on this development and delivery process.
2. Install new benches to replace existing; collaboration with Citadel Youth Group to renovate former railway benches, painting with thematic colours / logos to tie in with LeithLate graphics / installations.
3. Continue maintenance by volunteers to remove weeds and Buddleia from the walls which reduce usability of path route and seating areas.

(from Largo Place)



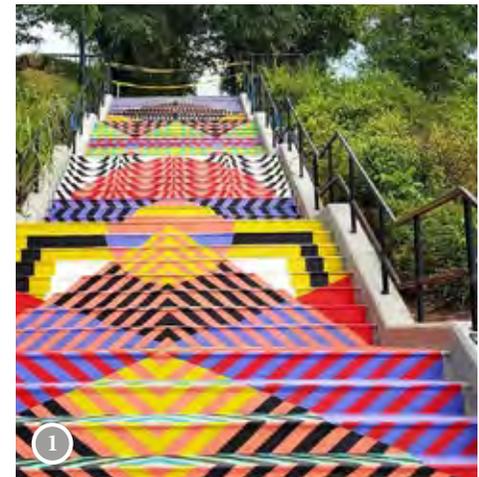
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Steps from Largo Place



Steps to riverside path



8. LEITHLATE UNDER-THE-BRIDGE PROJECT

LeithLate also identified the area under the Great Junction Street Bridge as a space which could be transformed with a public art project. This is directly on the Sustrans NCR 75 path, and there's an opportunity to deliver a project in this space with support from the Sustrans ArtRoots Fund.

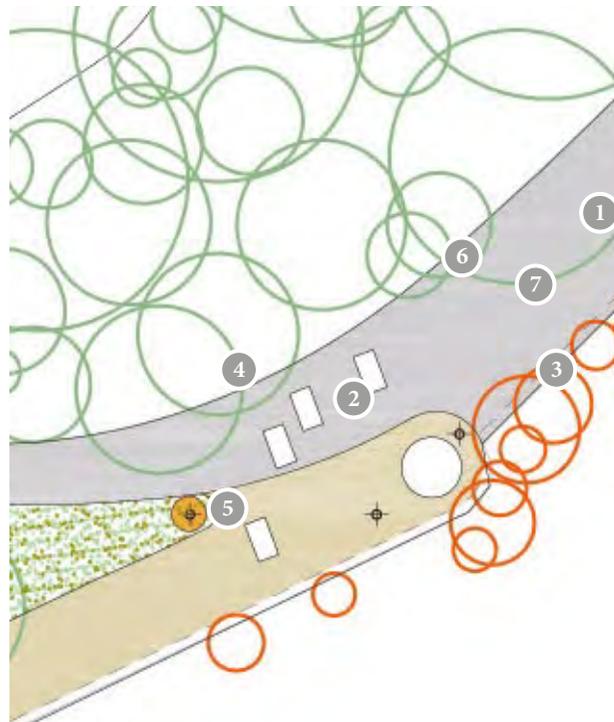
The area under Great Junction Street Bridge is an exciting yet sensitive site, and this project should be co-produced in detail with LeithLate as local knowledge, expertise and connections are reinforced. A detailed proposal and implementation plan may be developed in partnership with Water of Leith Conservation Trust, bringing together a collaboration of artistic installation and heritage interpretation. Furthermore, this project could link with the nearby Leith History Mural, informing the briefing for this public art element.

Delivery would be through a commissioned freelance producer, acting as project manager, who would work with the commissioned artist. This briefing, development and delivery process would be overseen by the LeithLate board of Trustees.



9. POETRY CORNER PROJECT

1. Upgraded path surface between the new 'slow space' and active travel route with resin bound material.
2. Set the Poetry Stones into this new paving surface, flush, and position to form a 'gateway' into the slow route walkway by the riverside.
3. Paint railings black
4. Cut back the tree canopy at the Poetry Corner
5. Install 3x low level lighting columns to create a sightline to this space from the car park.
6. Remove benches from this convergence point between walkers and cyclists.
7. Continued removal of Buddleia growing out of wall structure.



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Existing



Proposed

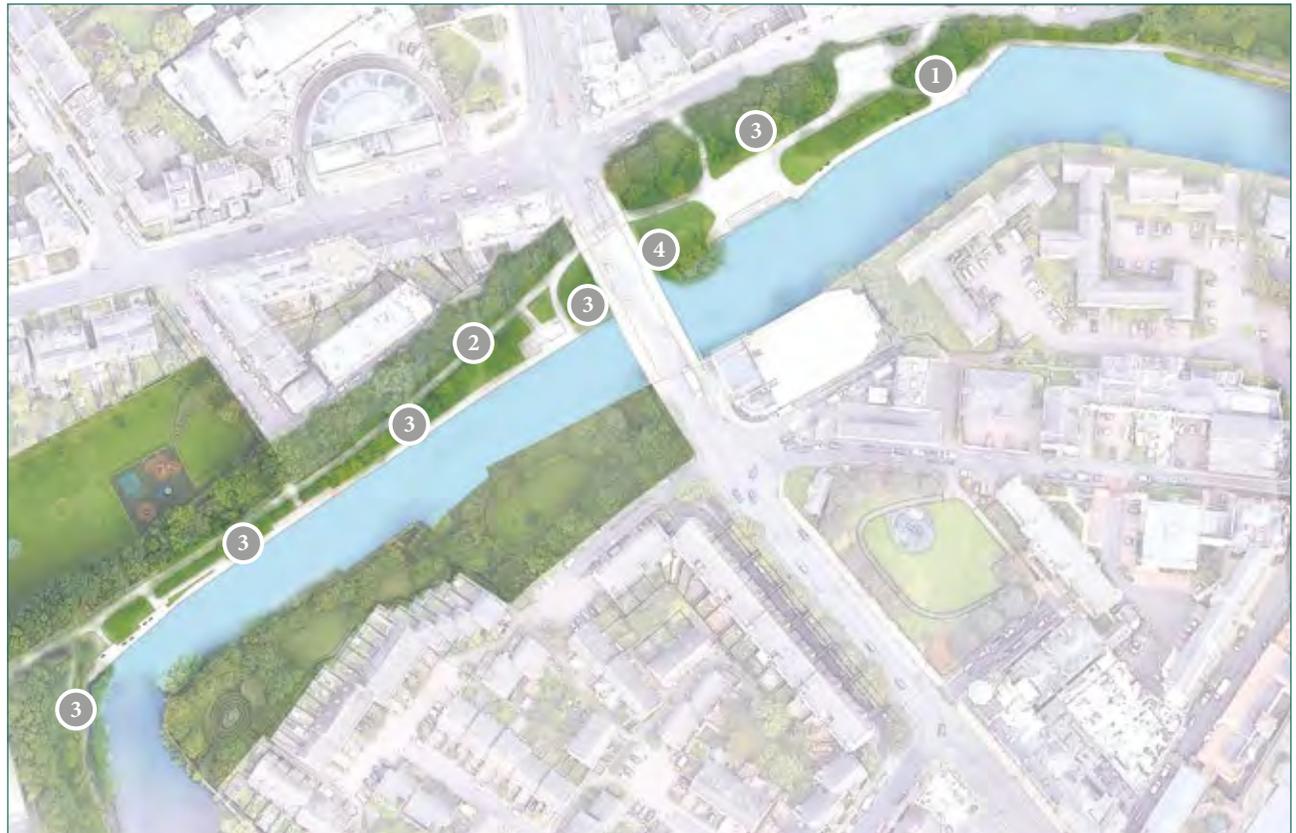
10. WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

The woodland setting which defines Coalie Park is a much loved and valued part of what makes this place special, and in this densely populated urban area it is a critical resource supporting peoples' health and wellbeing.

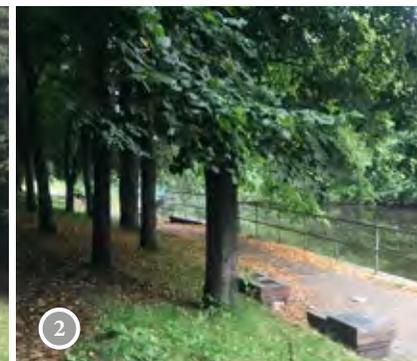
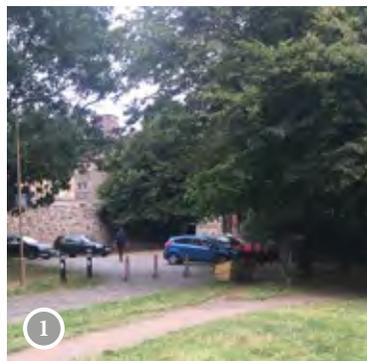
The quality and coverage of the woodland should be retained and protected as other developments, improvements and construction projects may take place. A light touch approach of positive tree and woodland management is promoted, e.g. selective trimming where tree branches impede pedestrians / cyclists, or to optimise biodiversity and understorey layers of diverse plant species.

A woodland condition survey is recommended in support of this management planning. WoLCT has liaised closely with Council Officers (Natural Heritage, and Parks & Greenspace) to understand what works are planned, and how Ash Dieback is being managed in this greenspace.

1. Selective trimming of overhanging boughs of Sycamore where these are impeding the active travel route.
2. Selectively lift crowns of the Lime trees in double avenue to lift canopy, allow in more light, and reduce low hanging branches. Enhance sense of safety within park environment, and encourage greater species diversity in understorey.
3. Bulbs and evergreen woodland shrub species to diversify woodland areas and enhance habitat mosaics (see p42).
4. Reduce area of brambles around Willow cluster to create a greenspace which can be planted up with a mixed native hedgerow containing nut and berry species (e.g. Dog rose, Hazel, Sloe, Blackthorn) which would form a backdrop to this greenspace.



^ N [NTS]



11. INNS MANAGEMENT

The location of Buddleia, an invasive non-native species (INNS) has been mapped and recorded as a detailed digital survey, and analysed to prepare a 'heat map' identifying areas of priority for treatment and removal.

A contractor has been engaged with to determine scope, costs and the potential for volunteer engagement as part of the management works. Organised and overseen by the WoLCT, volunteers could be involved in the active management of INNS, for buddleia as a first stage project with the mapping and scope already known, and then for subsequent species of concern for nature restoration such as Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed.

The buddleia removal is also a first priority due to the damage to the structural integrity of the river bank and stone walling.

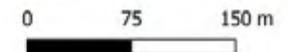
The potential to enhance habitats and to engage the public in nature restoration should be fully explored, as a means to connect individuals and interest groups with the hands-on management of the riverside landscape.



Volunteers help undertake INNS management work



Buddleia - INNS heat map - detailed digital survey undertaken by WoLCT



12. BIOMATRIX

BIOMATRIX

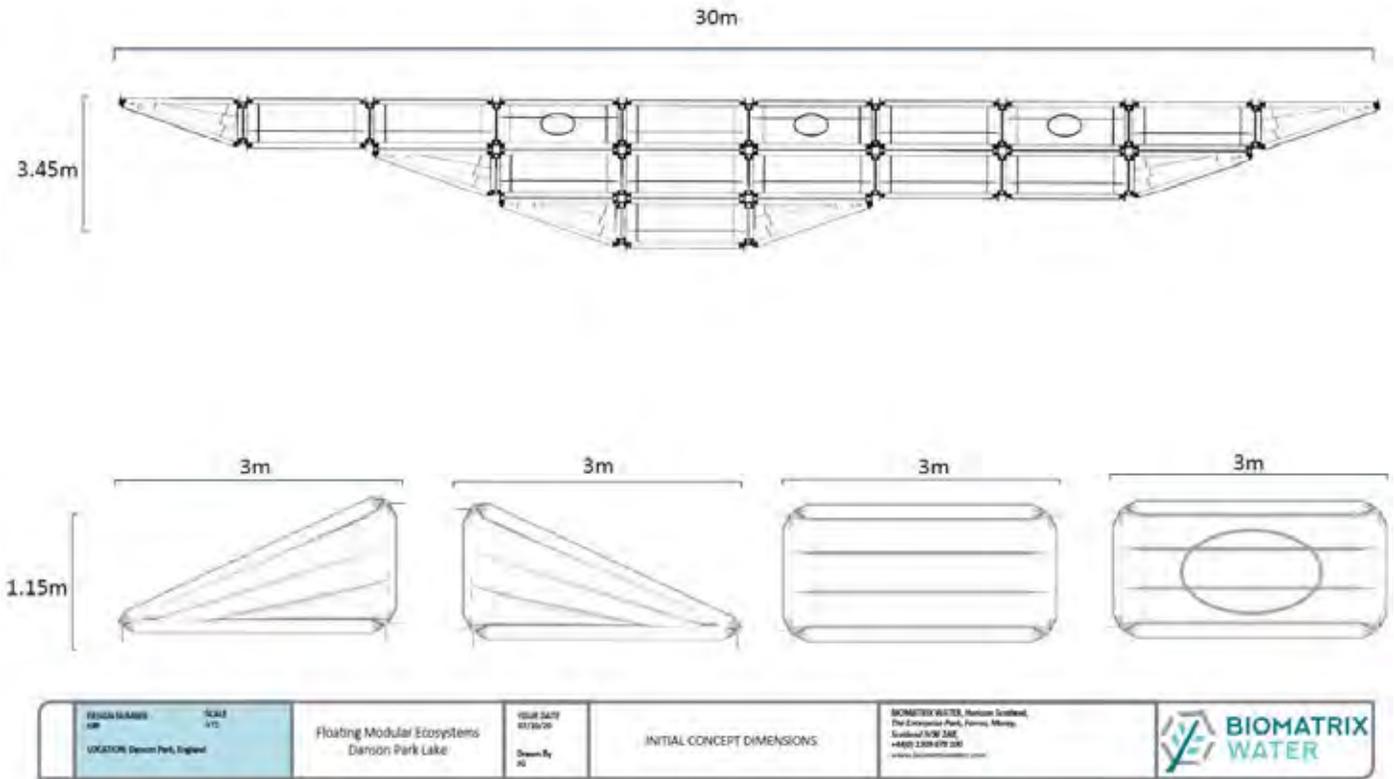
Floating ecosystems are anchored to the banks of water courses, and there is an opportunity at the Water of Leith to install a Biomatrix as a habitat restoration project.

- Installed on the south banks of the river basin, a location shown on the photograph below. As a habitat enhancement project, a quiet, undisturbed site was identified, where fish and waterfowl can flourish.
- The installation is a floating modular ecosystem, by Biomatrix Water, using sustainable non-toxic materials to enhance water habitats through increased water's edge surface area, providing a safe haven for birds, and sub-surface shelter for fish.
- This habitat enhancement project also aims to improve water quality and human connection with the water.
- Anti-social behaviour is unlikely due to the natural vegetation which forms this riparian edge, discouraging access due to the wet and muddy substrate and dense planting.
- Biomatrix Water would propose to engage with local groups and residents, to find ways to get the local community involved in the maintenance of the floating ecosystems. Participation can be promoted at installation days, where local groups can join the contractor in the installation and launching of the ecosystem.





Biomatrix Water location visualisation



Biomatrix Water diagrams and component details

13. BIODIVERSITY PLANTING

The south facing slopes could be planted with bulbs and managed for diverse wildflower grassland.

Bulb planting was already started at Fun Day event as a way to engage the public and show direct action. A mixture of WoLCT volunteers and students from The University of Edinburgh cleared leaves, cut back vegetation and added 300 plants to the verges at this event. Already planted are:

- Snowdrops and bluebells
- Winter aconite
- Wild daffodil
- Teasel
- Selfheal
- St John's Wort
- Tansy
- Yarrow
- Ox-Eye Daisy
- Red campion
- Knapweed.

Any gaps in the tree canopy or less heavily shaded locations could be planted under with more bulbs or wildflower plug plants. Plants should be native, and pollinator species prioritied e.g.

- *Geum urbanum* (Wood Avens)
- *Blechnum Spicant* (Deer Fern)
- *Asplenium Scolopendrium* (Hart's Tongue Fern)
- Lungwort (*Pulmonaria officinalis*)
- Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*)
- Hellebore 'Single Clear White'



Mix 1 - shaded woodland floor



Mix 2 - Edinburgh shoreline mix / urban pollinator mix



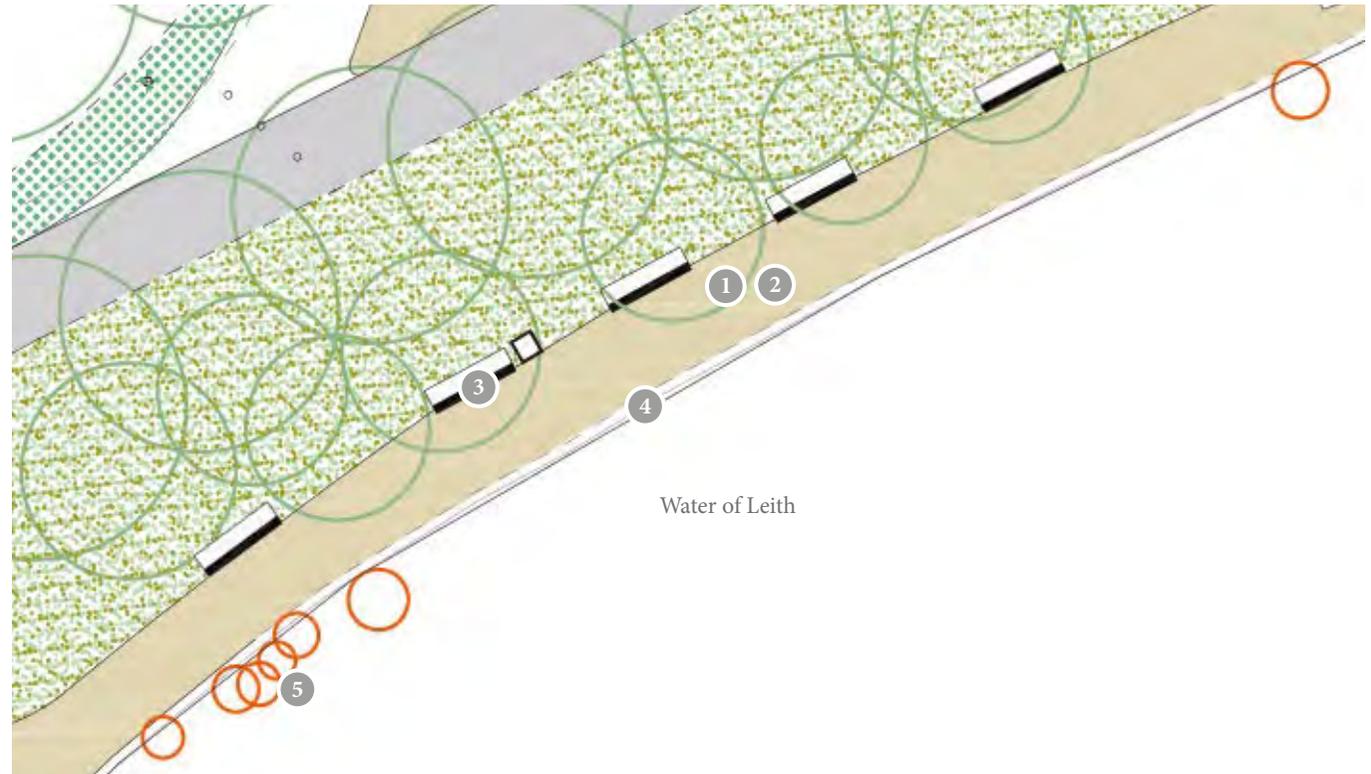
WoLCT and University of Edinburgh volunteers at the Coalie Conversations 'fun day' event in October, 2021

14. SLOW SPACE AND SEATING

A light-touch alteration to this space, where the main issue is the conflict of different speeds of user. Commuting or leisure cyclists want to move through the space at speed while walkers and families have an opportunity to experience the riverside up close.

The design proposal focuses on clarity of two routes for different park users: an upper route for cyclists and a riverside route for walkers.

1. Upgrade the entire path surface between the new 'gathering space' (project 2) and Sandport Place to remove trip hazards.
2. This accessible walking route will be re-surfaced with resin bound material.
3. Replace existing brick seats with 5x Edinburgh street furniture standard stainless steel benches, painted black. Push the benches back into the grassy area to keep the walking route clear. These benches with backrests and arm rests are suitable to increase the usability of the public space for older people. The Disability Discrimination Act recommends a minimum 400m spacing of seating opportunities in public spaces.
4. Paint railings black.
5. Continued removal of Buddleia growing out of wall structure.



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4

15. MOVING THROUGH COALIE PARK

MANAGING FLOW

Coalie Park is both a stopping place and a route people use to pass through to get to places, a healthy clean greenspace offering an alternative commuting route. It is identified in the work of the Leith Connections Project, which looks at cycle routes and placemaking in Leith, and identifies Coalie Park as an important link in the wider connection network.

Leith Connections explores how to encourage cyclists to use the road rather than the riverside route, and looks at how the streetscape can be redesigned to make cycling on streets a safer and more attractive option.

The Leith Connections project is being developed in parallel with the Coalie Park improvements plan, and the Coalie design process was mindful of the engagement and feedback gathered on the on-line storymap: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/319c706abb-224968b1eb20c3496c4377>

Within the park, the objectives of the fast route / slow route approach described by Leith Connections is supported through clarity of the NCR 75, limiting conflict points such as at the gathering space and the car park / entrances, and making users more aware of each other.

1. The 'fast' route (>4mph - cycles, scooters, runners) is marked on the northern 2.5m width of pathway (against the railway wall). Marked with thermoplastic paint markers on the ground, and lines where needed.
2. The 'slow' route (<4mph) runs next to the riverside, predominantly using the 'lower' path route.
3. Further use of thermoplastic paint, in graphic typography could be used to indicate distances or features of local significance, for example for their heritage or history.



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— 'Fast' route - predominantly cyclists

— 'Slow' route - and furniture, interpretive features, trim trail equipment

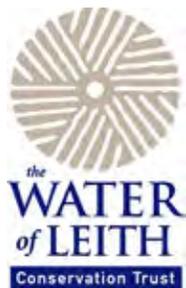


DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

WHAT'S NEXT ?

[TO FOLLOW AFTER THE COLLECTIVE FEEDBACK SESSION]

A PROJECT DEVELOPED BY



REPORT PREPARED BY



PROJECT SUPPORTED BY

