

Play parks in the council's sights

Over £1.5 million pounds is set to be invested in children's outdoor play areas in Edinburgh over the next five years.

A finalised [Play Area Action Plan](#) will be considered by the Policy and Strategy Committee on Tuesday 12 June following extensive consultation with the public over the draft version.

If approved this will direct funds over the next five years to ensure all children across Edinburgh have access to outdoor play areas of good standard.

The plan aims to increase the number of households that meet the Play Access Standard as outlined in the Council's [Open Space Strategy 2010](#). This recommends that every house and flat in the city should have access to a play space of good value within 800m walking distance, of very good value within 1,200m walking distance and of excellent play value within 2,000m walking distance.

If the five year programme is implemented, the proportion of homes falling within the standard is predicted to increase from 67% in 2011 to 80% in 2016.

Councillor Lesley Hinds, Convener of the Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee, said: "It is crucially important that every child in the city has access to good outdoor play areas which help development and keep them fit and healthy. We believe that play is a fundamental right for every child and is a way for young people to acquire new skills, make new friends and gain an understanding of the world around them.

“This action plan will provide clear direction for investment in play parks over the next five years.”

This vision was supported by the majority of respondents to the consultation and most people strongly supported other recommendations such as the introduction of more natural play and introducing controlled risk into play.

After further feedback from local residents on the draft strategy, the following amendments to the finalised version were agreed:

- The toddler play area in Pilrig Park that was originally due to be phased out will now be kept and improvements made in the area.
- Developing the Newcraighall Park play area will now also be brought into the programme in 2015 following comments from the Portobello & Craigmillar Environmental Forum.
- A major development of play facilities at Leith Links, in association with the general renewal of the park, is now also included in the plan.

Maintenance issues were highlighted as a key area of concern in children’s play areas and work is ongoing with Neighbourhood Task Forces to improve the standard of cleanliness in play areas across the city.

In total 110 responses were received from members of the public from October 2011 to January 2012. All responses are detailed in the appendix to the report.

The Policy and Strategy Committee is asked to approve the revised Play Area Action Plan at its next meeting on Tuesday 12 June 2012.