


Council bidding to improve Saughton Park

 *The Council have launched a funding bid to revitalise Saughton Park*

A £5.8m project to transform Saughton Park and Gardens into one of Edinburgh's premier parks has taken a step forward with the submission of a £4m funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Parks for People programme.

The City of Edinburgh Council is bidding for funds to restore the historic park to its former glory, which in its hey-day rivalled the Royal Botanic Gardens and played host to one of the best collection of roses in Scotland.

The money would be used to extensively renovate the walled garden, footpaths and historic features, and replace the Winter Garden building with a Victorian-style glasshouse. It would also include the creation of a café and community building.

[A report](#) to the Council's Transport and Environment Committee details the plans, which include working in partnership with the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society, who would be based at Saughton Gardens. From there they would plan to run a programme of horticultural volunteering, as well as hosting shows, lectures and other events.

Councillor Lesley Hinds, Transport and Environment Convener, said: "Obviously we're at the very early stages of the funding bid but if we're successful this could completely transform this area of the city and put Saughton Park on a level with other premier Edinburgh parks."

“Looking back over the history books, Saughton Park and Gardens used to be a leading tourist attraction and played host to the famous 1908 Scottish National Exhibition, which attracted 3.5 million visitors to this part of the city.

“This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get the funding to put this park back at the centre of outdoor living in Edinburgh and also at the centre of horticultural activities in Scotland.”

The Heritage Lottery Fund sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage through innovative investment in projects with a lasting impact on people and places. Its Parks for People programme provides grants of between £100,000 and £5m for projects related to historic parks and gardens.

The estimated cost of the project cost is £5.83m, of which £4.09m is sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £233k from third party sources. The Council would also contribute £1.25m, phased over a six year period. This also includes £250k to install a micro-hydro turbine to generate power for the proposed garden café and community facility.

Pam Whittle, President of the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society, said: “The Society is delighted to be working in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. This is a really exciting project and one that re-establishes the Society’s links with the park in a new era.”

If successful, the Council would have two years to fully develop detailed plans which would be submitted in 2015 for final approval.