

Beach volleyball court for Leith Links



Tomorrow's Transport and Environment Committee meeting is set to be pretty diverse especially with the latest plans for Leith Links which are to be discussed, and other spaces which might be used for gardening.

Beach volleyball courts, allotments or play areas could soon neighbour some of Edinburgh's bowling greens as part of a plan to overhaul underused sites.

Proposals would allow seven of the 15 public bowling greens maintained by the Council to be put to different uses in response to declining levels of demand.

These would include a proposal by the Scottish Volleyball Association to convert a Leith Links green into a beach volleyball court, tennis courts replacing a green at Balgreen or Broughton Primary School's suggestion to use space at Powderhall for sporting and food growing activities.

[A report](#) to be considered at the next Transport and Environment Committee will review the plans in more detail.

Changes to the greens would take place across four sites owned by the Council: Balgreen, Leith Links, Powderhall and Victoria Park.

Figures reported by Edinburgh Leisure, who manage bookings and pavilions for the sites, show a significant drop in the number of people using bowling greens since 2007, resulting in many of them being underused.

A public consultation carried out with members of the bowling community established that there was scope to reduce the

number of playable greens on the sites, with extended opening hours and improved booking systems accommodating current users.

Participants also agreed that alternative uses for redundant greens could “add value” to sites.

Proposals for new uses, which will now be investigated in consultation with community councils and other local stakeholder groups, would add to the popular Leith Links Tennis and Petanque Project, opened late last year on the Leith Links site.

Edinburgh Leisure recently took the decision to close Portobello Indoor Bowling Centre in June 2013 after visitor numbers were found to have dropped significantly over the previous five years. The centre’s conversion into a soft play area and gymnastics hub is expected to double the usage.



Opening of the Leith Links Tennis Courts Autumn 2013

Councillor Lesley Hinds, Convener of Transport and Environment, said: “These plans will make the best use of local sites to provide new and exciting opportunities for the community, potentially improving facilities for both young, disabled and elderly people.

“There is no doubt public bowling greens serve as an invaluable source of interaction and leisure for local groups and we hope the addition of new activities and provisions will only go to enhance this.”

In addition to bowling clubs using public bowling greens there are also approximately 58 private bowling clubs in the Edinburgh area. These are self-governed organisations who are affiliated to the national governing body for outdoor lawn bowls in Scotland, Bowls Scotland. A number of these clubs lease the land from the Council at a peppercorn rate.