

Lighting up parks and green spaces

Plans for spending more than £500,000 on park and open space lighting improvements across Edinburgh have been approved by the council.

A prioritisation framework has been developed to identify where lighting improvements which would benefit the city's parks and open spaces are assessed. The ranking includes 58 sites with Hailes Quarry Park considered first for developing a detailed lighting design.

In recent years, requests for park lighting have increased. This is in part due to increased numbers of people having enjoyed opportunities for exploring local parks and open spaces during the pandemic, as well as improving safety within and through parks, particularly for women and young girls who often feel most at risk at night when walking alone in or near open spaces.

The proposed framework follows an audit of the formal paths used for walking, wheeling, and cycling across city greenspaces. The approved priority listing will determine the order in which lighting projects in parks and open spaces are carried out.

It is hoped the new lighting in these popular areas can help reassure park users and encourage people to visit or travel through parks and open spaces.

But the council heard that there are additional considerations to be taken in parks in comparison to streets and roads as lighting outdoor space has to combine technical solutions with the unique features of green space environments.

This can include supporting valuable habitats for wildlife, trees, historic buildings and monuments, as well as spaces for events, sport, active travel routes and traffic-free places.

Each of the proposed lighting designs must also consider improving lines of sight, the proximity of entrances and exits, vegetation overgrowth, use of the space, and the importance of routes to local communities.

In order to meet the full plans, match funding will be sought to supplement the Council's allocation.

The first 10 sites identified for improvements are:

Hailes Quarry Park (Sighthill/Gorgie)

Gyle Park (Drum Brae/Gyle)

Hunter's Hall Park (Portobello/Craigmillar)

Ferniehill Community Park (Liberton/Gilmerton)

Roseburn Park (Corstorphine/Murrayfield)

Calton Hill (City Centre)

Princes Street Gardens (City Centre)

Harrison Park (Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart)

Leith Links (Leith)

Pilrig Park (Leith Walk).

Culture and Communities Convener Cllr Val Walker, said: "In Edinburgh we're extremely fortunate to have nearly 200 parks and open spaces to visit across the city and we want to make sure that they all remain accessible, safe, sustainable and of course open to the public for generations to come.

"Post-pandemic our parks and open spaces throughout the city have increased even further in popularity and continue to be essential to modern life in the capital. They also provide

havens for wildlife as well as important routes for people to move around the city by cycle and on foot.

“However, for many, these can be unwelcoming places, especially after dark, when fear of crime and concerns for personal safety are heightened. We of course recognise the community’s concerns and the need for these spaces to be safe and accessible for all users so I’m delighted that we are able to progress with illuminating existing paths in many of our parks and open spaces. We know where the first changes will be made but I hope through match funding we can roll these improvements out further across the city.

“We must also of course consider getting the right balance for needs of people and wildlife and steps will be taken to ensure the new lighting is not at the expense of biodiversity.”

Following today’s approval, work will commence on the design of the first scheme for Hailes Quarry Park. Each lighting project in turn will include public engagement in the design process.



Roseburn Park