



MUIR WOOD PARK

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2010-15



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"No more than an oasis of greenery in the centre of a housing estate, this tiny park is none the less a little wonderland to those who know it Little of it remains (the Muir Wood) but this isolated magical forest, left by George Wimpey to remind us of what used to be".

"Edinburgh's Green Heritage" by Ian Nimmo (1996).

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Working the ground



Taking it Easy

1. INTRODUCTION



The Management Plan sets out the future management, maintenance and development of Muir Wood Park and has been produced by the City of Edinburgh Council in conjunction with the Friends of Muir Wood Park Group(FMWPG) to provide not only a long-term vision, but also details on both developmental and operational duties required to achieving that vision.

The Management Plan covers the period 2010 to 2015 and has a detailed plan of works for that period. Like any management plan its purpose is to provide a framework within which all future management is carried out. The plan enables any person involved to understand how and why decisions are taken, and the reasoning behind the policies and proposals for action. The plans target audience are elected Members, the local community and Council officers and its style and content should ensure continuity of purpose and consistency in service delivery. It is intended to be a flexible, working document that will be reviewed and updated annually. A final copy of this document will be made available by email for those who have requested information by that source and on the FMWP website (www.fmwpg.btik.com).

The plan is set out in distinct sections:

The first section, “Where are we now?” describes the current situation in Muir Wood Park, including the policy and legal context within which it is managed, and also provides some basic information about the park.

The second section, “Where do we want to be?” develops the vision for Muir Wood Park providing assessment and analysis at the time of writing the Management Plan, and states the aims established for the park.

The third section, “How will we get there?” describes the aims and objectives for the park. These are used to form a development plan, which sets out how the aims and objectives will be achieved. This section also describes the maintenance regime for the park and the proposed management structure to deliver the Management Plan.

The fourth and final section, “How will we know when we get there?” explains how progress will be reviewed.

Muir Wood Park Overview

This section provides a general summary of Muir Wood Park.

NS Grid Reference	NT187 684
Location A site map can be found on page 10	The Park has two recognised entrance points from Muir Wood Road. There is also the newly installed gate which offers secure access from the adjacent Nether Currie Primary School.
Ownership	The City of Edinburgh Council
Main Contacts	<p>Stewart Farquhar , Local Environment Manager, South West Neighbourhood stewart.farquhar@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel 0131 527 3850</p> <p>Craig Dunlop, Community Parks Officer, South West Neighbourhood. craig.dunlop@edinburgh.gov.uk Tel: 0131 527 3896</p> <p>Charlie Cumming, Project Manager, Edinburgh Lothian & Greenspace Trust Charlie@elgt.org.uk</p>
Stakeholders A list of main contacts and stakeholders are included in Appendix 5	<p>The objectives within this management plan are to be developed in consultation with both existing and possible future users. Where this is not possible or difficult to achieve then their likely needs should be considered by Currie Community, Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership, Friends of Muir Wood Park and the Council's Neighbourhood Team.</p> <p>The park is available to any resident or visitor of Edinburgh, however the principal stakeholders and users are considered to be the residents of the Currie Community. The park sits within this community and is well used by residents from this area. The park has an active Friends Group made up of local community members and meet on a regular basis. The group is responsible for developing both the physical assets of the park, marketing and generating community interest in the usage of the park both through organised events and community participation.</p> <p>Nether Currie Primary Schools is a participants in the Eco-Schools programme. Eco-Schools is an international initiative designed to encourage whole-school action for the environment. Muir Wood Park has been an excellent venue for promoting this programme with students benefiting from an outdoor classroom for learning and recreation. In particular the recently installed gate between the park and school offers a secure and controlled access route into the park.</p>



Summary of Main Uses

Due to the size of Muir Wood Park (1.8 hectares) it is not seen as a destination in its own right as it does not contain the breadth of facilities of much larger parks. However, the park provides an essential green space for child play, relaxation and passive recreation for the local community. Its design provides seating mainly to the North and West of the wooded area. The small woodland gives a sense of countryside within a built up area and softens the impact of adjacent built environments.



Bulb Planting 2010

Community Event 2010

A brief assessment of the typical users of the park includes a wide sector of the general population:

- Users for passive recreation – local people taking lunch, people taking gentle exercise through the park.
- Users for informal recreation – parents with young children use the park as it is a safe environment away from busy roads and like many areas of open space it is used for exercising dogs.
- Users for exercise – the park has junior football facilities, a play park and offers scope for more imaginative woodland play.
- Users for educational purposes – Nether Currie Primary School.
- User for organised community events – Friends of Muir Wood Park.

Since 2008, the Parks and Greenspace Unit have used a web-based questionnaire to capture the views of residents and visitors to Edinburgh's parks and greenspaces. The questionnaire is available at <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/parksurvey>. The survey asks people to give their views about what they think about the service the Council provides and their experience of Edinburgh's parks. The management plan will include such comments to help to improve the service and the park for local residents and visitors. Information relating to an additional survey conducted by the Friends can be obtained at www.fmwp.btik.com under documents, then click on recent park questionnaire.

The objectives within this management plan are to be developed in consultation with both existing and possible future park users. Where this is not possible or difficult to achieve then their likely needs should be considered by the FMWP in liaison with the Local Neighbourhood Team.

Assessment of cultural and aesthetic value	<p>The proximity of Muir Wood Park to adjacent housing estate is important for recreational green space and informal play.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Autumn 2009</p> <p>The woodland in the park offers an exciting play area for local children.</p>
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Boundaries The park's boundaries are marked on the map found on page 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North boundary –Muir Wood Road • East boundary – Nether Currie Road • South boundary – Nether Currie Primary School • West boundary – Thomson Crescent
Topography, Drainage and Soils	<p>The park is located on gently sloping ground draining from the housing and school boundary on the Southern aspect of the park to the Northern aspect at Muir Wood Road. The land undulates slightly with minor topographical variations producing minor slopes and low knolls throughout the woodland.</p> <p>There is a historic drainage system crossing in an East/West direction through the woodland area consisting of a shallow ~1metre wide and ~30-40cm deep open drainage channel. No longer appearing to function actively, the channel is generally dry and infilling with tree regeneration, scrub and ivy growth, leaf litter and wood debris.</p> <p>The soil composition in the park is generally gley soil composed of heavy clay with a rich humic layer.</p>

Planting and Layout	Approximately 55% of the composition of the park is grassland with the remaining 45% being woodland. There is an avenue of trees on the North aspect between the boundary fence and the footpath. Recent tree planting of native species has taken place at the North West corner. A large amount of Spring flowering bulbs have been planted throughout the park.
Infrastructure	A database is used to record condition of all the park's assets these include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating (7 benches) and bins (4 conventional and 1 novelty) • Whinstone path with timber board edging along Northern aspect and winding through wooded area • Children's play area • Junior football pitch (unmarked) • Scottish Power substation • Information board • Access gate between school grounds and the park



New play equipment installed 2009/10

Heritage and History

Muir Wood Road Park, commonly known as Muir Wood Park is a remnant of the old Muir Wood that once extended from Gillespie Crossroads, located to the East of Juniper Green, to Currie. The 1855 Ordnance Survey map of the area shows an area of trees located on the edge of agricultural fields. Its geometric outline suggests policy woodland.

In 1955 George Wimpey house builders began developing the Easter Currie fields. Much of the woodland was felled and a burn culverted during the building of houses in the late 50's. Elements of the original woodland are still visible however in the form of remnant mature trees, some aged over 70 years. Part of the original water course is also still evident in the form of a dry ditch running through parts of the wood. Electricity pylons were located within the park at one stage.

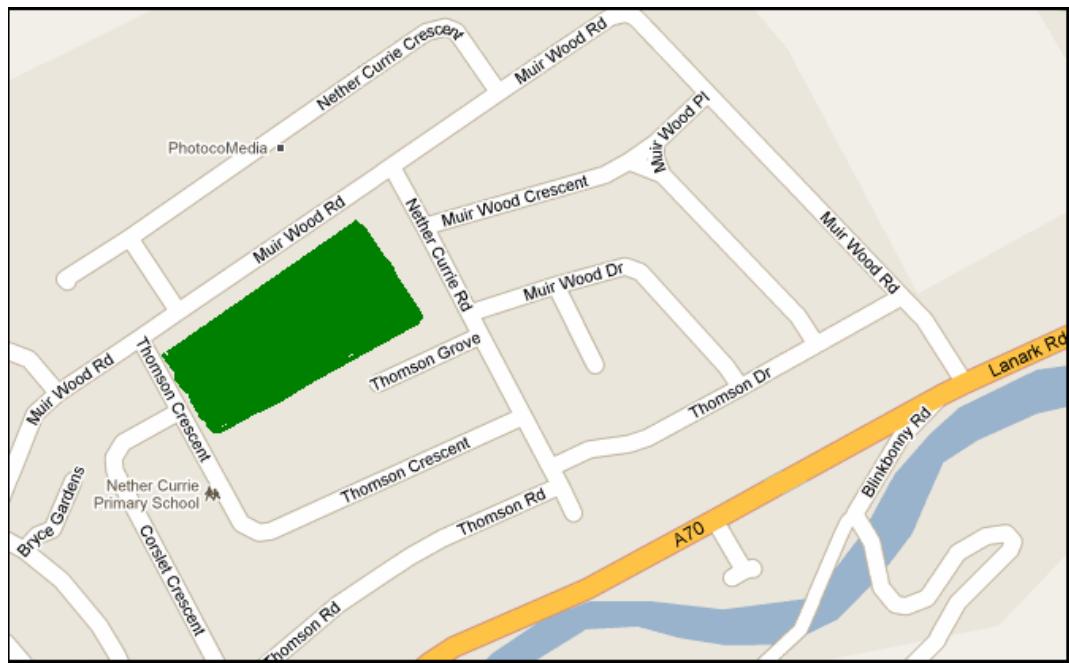
Designated for public recreation under the ownership of the Local Authority, some coppicing and replanting of trees was undertaken around forty years ago. Basic children's play equipment was subsequently installed. Thereafter management of the land consisted of grass cutting and tree safety procedures.

The community formed a Friends Group in 2005 (see Appendix 3) to attempt to regenerate this area for local residents and visitors to the area. Improvements have been made throughout the park in terms of aesthetics, access, biodiversity and recreational opportunities.

Site map



Local Map



Wider Policy Context

The creation of this document has taken into consideration a range of different policies to reflect the complex nature of greenspace management. The five national and local policies which influence this document include the Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy, Parks Quality Assessment, Edinburgh Local Plan, Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership Local Community Plan and Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan amongst others. Muir Wood Park is managed by the City of Edinburgh Council's South-West Neighbourhood Environment Team and partners Edinburgh Lothian and Greenspace Trust. Previous management of this park has been guided by ELGT, local CPO and Task Force. The South-West Neighbourhood Environment Team manages 34 parks and is committed to developing the quality of its local parks and green spaces.



Bulb Planting



Bird box installation

1. Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy (2006)

The City of Edinburgh Council's commitment to providing quality and vibrant parks and greenspaces and improving on the standards achieved are clearly demonstrated in its vision for parks.

The Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy classifies Muir Wood Park as a community park. This can be defined as a park which serves the people of a defined local area they are generally smaller in area and the facilities provided are likely to be relatively simple access to these parks will be mainly on foot or by cycle.

This site does however provide for a wide range of recreational activities within the park and has one of the neighbourhood's most active community groups who help with local events. The small size of the site has been utilised to maximise the benefit to biodiversity.

2. Parks Quality Assessment

The City of Edinburgh Council's Parks and Greenspace Service has developed a quality framework for monitoring and reviewing for all the city's parks and gardens. The framework is based on by using the Green Flag award scheme and is known as Edinburgh's Parks Quality Assessment.

Introduced in 2008, the Council assessed the quality of its parks and gardens using 19 of the 27 criteria and in 2009 this was increased to 26. An example of the scoring card used by Parks and Greenspace to carry out the annual assessment is provided in Appendix 9.

In 2010 a total 134 sites were assessed across the city involving over 70 assessors which included representatives from:

- Community groups members
- External partners i.e. Edinburgh & Lothians Wildlife Trust
- Council Officers linked to Parks and who have an interest
- Task Force Managers (Grounds Maintenance)
- Gardening staff
- Park Rangers

Training was provided for all assessors in the Green Flag Quality Standard and all related criteria used within the Edinburgh Parks Assessment.

Each site was assessed using teams of assessors consisting of an experienced officer and two or three assistants. Additionally each site was also assessed twice by different teams and where variance outside 10% was noted in criteria that could not be explained i.e. signage, then a third assessment was undertaken.

The methods, variance and ultimately scores were validated by the Council's Parks and Greenspace Team.

The system used in 2009 saw the introduction of bandwidths. This was to accommodate the natural variance of assessors both in terms of reliability and repeatability. The accepted variance of 10% meant that the forum opted for bandwidths instead of a percentage score and year one scores were retrospectively placed into the appropriate bandwidths for year on year analysis. Parks and Greenspace went one step further and instead of simply creating a bandwidth for scores out of a 100, they looked at each type of park and allocated bandwidths based on the quality and appropriateness of each type of site.

3. Edinburgh Local Plan (2007)

Policy OS 1 – Open Space Protection

This policy seeks to protect all open spaces, which contribute to the amenity of their surroundings and the city, which provide or are capable of providing for the recreational needs of residents and visitors or which are an integral part of the City's landscape and townscape character and its biodiversity.

Proposals involving the loss of open space will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated that:

- a) There will be no significant impact on the quality or character of the local environment
- b) The open space is a small part of a larger area or of limited amenity or leisure value and there is a significant over-provision of open space serving the immediate area
- c) The loss would not be detrimental to the wider network including its continuity or biodiversity value and either
- d) There will be a local benefit in allowing the development in terms of either alternative equivalent provision being made in the area or improvement to an existing public park or other open space or
- e) The development is for a community purpose and the benefits to the local community outweigh the loss.

On the basis of this policy it is unlikely that the park will ever be sought for development but the policy provides opportunity for investment if other areas are developed or if new open space cannot be developed within any new housing developments in the vicinity.

4. Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership- Local Community Plan (2009-11).

Community Planning is about organisations and communities working together to improve public services and quality of life. At the core of Community Planning is listening to and communicating with communities while involving them in developing programmes and initiatives that can best serve local circumstances.

This document sets out a vision for 2024 in which the Pentlands community will inhabit a sustainable built environment, be safe and healthy, have good quality community facilities, enjoy economic prosperity and have good transport systems. The number one priority for the partnership is local green spaces and the environment. The measure of success for the local plan is locally well maintained and accessible parks.



5. Open Space Strategy (2010).

The strategy sets standards for different types of open space in Edinburgh. It defines what kind of open space provision there should be, estimates the needs for certain types of open space and proposes sites that could help address those needs.

In the Open space Audit each Edinburgh Park was given a Park Quality Assessment Grade with Muir Wood Park being assessed as Very Good.



6. Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan (2010 – 2015)

The third Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan (2010-2015) includes the protection and enhancement of urban habitats, including parks, and the species living in them. The Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership will be working to implement the actions contained within the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action

Plan, co-ordinated by the Edinburgh Biodiversity Officer based in the Council. Successful implementation will provide opportunities for both wildlife and people to thrive in Edinburgh's quality environment.

Woodland Habitat Action Plan

When looking at any woodland area, including small woodland areas within parks, it is possible to identify indicators which can demonstrate how good the area is for biodiversity. These are:

- A good diversity of tree species, both broadleaved and conifer, particularly native species
- A diversity of age and size of trees, from young regeneration to standing damaged or dead trees
- Presence of undergrowth and diversity of undergrowth structure and composition
- Presence of fallen dead wood and deep leaf litter
- Gap sites, glades and rides which allow light to filter to ground level
- Areas of bare or disturbed soil
- A range of dry and damp or wet areas
- Presence of transitional woodland edge habitats or riparian corridors

The variety of trees and small woodland areas in Muir Wood Park offer a range of habitat types for wildlife. In particular the central undisturbed woodland area of the park.



Surveys and Assessments

Legal Framework

Site Owner: The City of Edinburgh Council, Services for Communities Department, South West Neighbourhood Team.

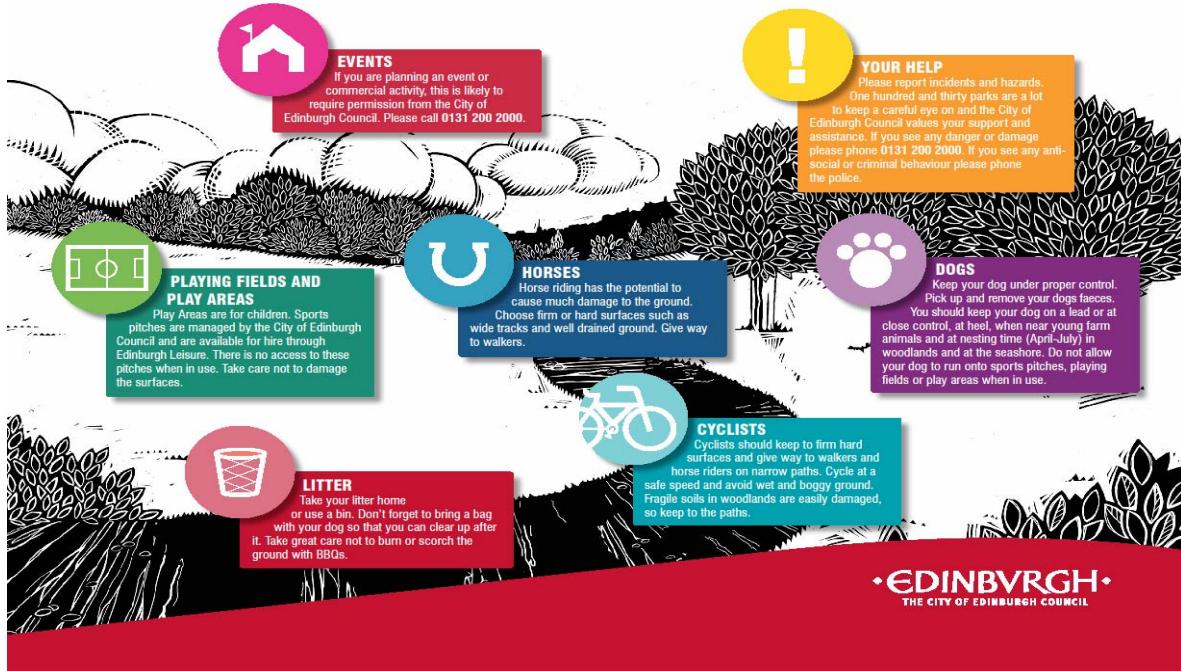
The City of Edinburgh Council's Legal Services hold the deeds for Hailes Quarry Park. The Council's Legal Services department will provide advice and assistance as necessary for any legal enquiry relating to the park. The local Environment Team ensures that the management of Muir Wood Park adheres to all relevant legislation.

Woodland Management Plan (2006).

The Edinburgh Greenbelt Trust commissioned a Woodland Management Plan in response to discussions with local residents. Recommendations from this report will inform the immediate, future and long-term development of the landscape features of the park, and will constitute part of the Action Plan. Tree safety work undertaken in response to this report was funded by CEC Community Park and Gardens, Scottish National Heritage and WREN (Landfill Tax).

Caring for Edinburgh's Parks

With a little care and respect everyone can enjoy Edinburgh's parks



Park Management Rules

Until recently the Council operated a set of management rules using powers available under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. A review of these rules was undertaken in 2007 to remove those rules which conflicted with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Our new approach is to move away from administering a list of rules to a more proactive regime of encouraging responsible use of public parks. (See image below). This approach should be more manageable and provide the opportunity to better link park management issues to existing legislation available under the Environmental Protection Act and Anti-Social Behaviour legislation. Consideration is currently being given to reinstating bye-laws for issues not covered by existing legislation. This will be reviewed by 2013. New promotional material has been prepared to:

- Create an awareness of the value and importance of Edinburgh's parks, gardens and greenspaces
- Outline what "responsible use" constitutes with clear and meaningful explanation"
- Outline what is irresponsible with reference to the law and the consequences

In addition, Park Rangers will have a more proactive approach in advising and persuading park users in responsible behaviour. Working alongside Environmental Wardens, Community Safety Officers and the Police and using existing legislation, they are becoming more effective at deterring (and potentially prosecuting) users who persist in irresponsible behaviour(s).

Summary of Management Issues

This section provides an overview of the parks management and maintenance issues and related policies.

Muir Wood Park is managed by the Council's Services for Communities Department's South West Neighbourhood Team.

Services for Communities bring together a range of 'quality of life' services that are aligned to meet the needs of the local community. The city is divided into six neighbourhoods and core strategic support units across the services. The aim of Services for Communities (SfC) is to create and maintain clean, safe, green, healthy, well managed and well maintained communities. SfC is very much about the day to day services that have a massive impact on all our day to day lives, from keeping our neighbourhoods clean to tackling antisocial behaviour. Each of the services that have joined SfC contribute to these key aims.

The management and maintenance of the park is carried out by the South West Neighbourhood Environment Team (See Appendix 6) and is strategically overseen and supported by the Parks and Greenspace Service based at the Council's Headquarters.

Muir Wood Park is the responsibility of the Local Environment Manager. The Local Environment Manager manages the Community Parks Officer and Park Rangers and can direct the neighbourhood's grounds maintenance service and call on the support of other sections managed centrally by the Parks and Greenspace Service also provides support with strategic and policy issues specifically relating to parks and greenspaces, such as the Arboricultural Team, Inverleith Maintenance Workshops and the Inch Nursery as required.

Although there is no site based staff dedicated to maintain Muir Wood Park, a range of staff from the South-West Neighbourhood Team is involved in caring for the Park, e.g. Community Parks Officer, Park Rangers, Environmental Wardens, Community Safety Officers, Police, etc. Together, this provides a more joined up management approach for the park.

Healthy, Safe & Secure

The Community Parks Officer and Parks Rangers are responsible for ensuring that the park is healthy, safe and secure.

The South West Local Neighbourhood has two Park Rangers working within the Environment team who oversee 34 sites within the Neighbourhood. All of these sites are patrolled on a regular basis to ensure that the sites are being maintained to a safe, clean and secure standard.

The Park Rangers monitor each site and work with a number of different departments to report issues and concerns ranging from cleansing issues (Taskforce), dog fouling problems (Environmental Wardens), infrastructure issues (workshops), tree safety (Forestry), horticultural management (Grounds Maintenance) and that play areas are in good working order with any issues being raised with the specialist play team. General day to day maintenance and safety

within the parks are tackled where possible immediately by the Park Ranger on site. Any other works that cannot be dealt with directly are recorded and formally requisitioned through the appropriate maintenance section

The Park Rangers also provide a local presence for the local community to contact either directly when on site patrolling, or through friends groups and schools who have an ongoing working relationship with the Rangers and discuss any issues that they experience or developments they would like to see in their local park.

All City of Edinburgh Council Play Areas are designed in house to meet BS EN 1176 Parts 1 – 11. Prior to 1998 all play areas were designed to meet BS 5696. All play areas are held on a data base called Playsafe produced by Public Sector Software Ltd. This system holds information on all City of Edinburgh Council play areas, including; type of equipment, installation date, type of surface, fences and bins.

Informal inspections are carried out by council employees who enter the play areas as part of their daily duties (Park Rangers, Playgrounds Maintenance Officer and Task Force staff). They report obvious hazards to the Councils workshop engineers. In-house ROSPA trained staff inspect the equipment on a monthly basis. Any defects identified are either repaired immediately or isolated and made safe, for repair at a later date. Written records of inspections and works undertaken are held with the Workshops at Inverleith Park. Annual inspections and risk assessments, conforming with RPII, are carried of all the playgrounds by an independent Playground Inspector.

Sustainability

Peat use

The only use of peat by the Parks and Greenspace Service is in the production of bedding plants at the Council's Inch Nursery. Since 2004 the nursery has reduced its consumption of peat by 25% and aims to meet national targets of 90%. A number of alternatives to peat have been incorporated into the growing mixes for plant production at the nursery, including; compost derived from the Council green waste collections, the nursery own compost, worm cast, fine bark, vermiculite and sand. Trials have been run since 2007 to assess the best mix to support seedling and plant growth.

Herbicides

A policy needs to be developed that considers the minimisation of herbicide use. Meanwhile herbicide application is only used when cultural practises will not provide adequate control. Only affected areas are treated and only then using strategies that are sensitive to the needs of the public and the environment. All operatives are trained to the approved certification level for the application of chemicals. The application of herbicides is scheduled during off-peak times of park use and signs are posted to indicate the re-entry time period if appropriate.

Waste minimisation

In order to reduce land filled waste, the City of Edinburgh Council is working to develop and extend initiatives to prevent, minimise, reuse and recycle not only the city's but also its own waste. The Council is actively collaborating with other local councils in progressing the Lothian & Borders Area Waste Plan.

Green waste (e.g. grass clippings, weeds, seasonal bedding) is taken to Braehead Recycling Centre where it is composted by Forth Resource Management. Tree limbs are chipped and used as mulch on site. Larger limbs and trunks are sold. Compost generated from this process is used by the Parks and Greenspace Service as a soil conditioner in seasonal bedding.

The South West Task Force's Grounds Maintenance Team operate a chipper to shred all green waste material for reuse on site at Muir Wood Park

Litter collected from the park and litter bins are disposed of appropriately to a licensed tip.

Arboriculture and woodland management

The park has been subject to a five year woodland management plan, this can be made available to judges on the day.

Elms are surveyed annually for signs of Dutch Elm disease and felled if appropriate. Damaged or dangerous trees are dealt with by the Council's own foresters.

The Council's Tree & Woodland Division also survey the tree stock every three years to monitor health of trees, this enables a program of priority works to deal with hazardous trees.

Plants are sourced by the Council's Inch Nursery staff from reputable suppliers and if possible from local suppliers. The choice of tree depends on location and its purpose.

Analysis and Assessment

The following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis summarises the comments from our internal parks quality assessment, which has been shared with, ELGT, and The Muir Wood Park Friends group. The findings have also been used for the preparation of this management plan and forms the basis of the vision and aims. The purpose of this analysis if to identify key aims for the development and maintenance of Muir Wood Park.

A Welcoming Place: Muir Wood Park is an accessible green space for the local community. In the assessment the following aspects have been taken into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcing the park • Physical access • Social access • Design 	
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information board on site • Physical access to the park is very good with level entrances • Main entrance points have threshold signs • The design of the park allows opportunities for physical and imaginative play and also quiet contemplation 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub station • No path link to play equipment • Damaged drain can lead to occasional flooding
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop signage within the park to interpret wildlife. • Plant screen around sub station 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalism • Loss of mature trees through over maturity and disease

<p>Healthy, Safe and Secure:</p> <p>The following factors were taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and well-being – is the park being used to promote healthy life-styles? • Equipment and facilities • Security 	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used on a regular basis for informal play • Overlooked by houses • Traffic calming measures on adjacent road • Patrols by Park Rangers every second day • New woodland pathway encouraging walkers • Schools use park for environmental projects. • Good quality facilities • Controlled access via school 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some dog fouling in grass and woodland areas • Some repainting required on play equipment
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit tree growing • Increase warden patrol to prevent dog fouling 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalism to facilities. • Anti social activities

<p>Well Maintained and Clean:</p> <p>The garden is maintained and cleaned according to a tight maintenance schedule. The following aspects were analysed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter and waste management • Ground maintenance • Infrastructure 	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate number of bins for site • Infrastructure generally well maintained • ‘Caring for Edinburgh’s Parks’ signs are displayed 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasional litter problem in woodland • Ground maintenance could be improved
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new grounds maintenance 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter accumulating in woodland

<p>schedule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating interest with the use of planting • Install new section of piped drainage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe weather can lead to flooding with deep water
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Sustainability:

In design and maintenance of the park , sustainability issues have played and continue to play an important part:

- Environment management
- Pesticides, herbicides and materials
- Horticulture and arboriculture

Strengths

- Large proportion of broadleaved trees
- Replacement planting of trees
- Peat use is minimal
- Trees have been surveyed and information is held electronically on the EzyTreev database
- Woodland management plan almost completed
- Areas of naturalised bulb planting

Weaknesses

- Location of park in relation to other GM commitments

Opportunities

- Can use of herbicides be excluded?
- Introduce some seasonal colour into park
- Create habitats for natural predators
- Park improvement plan to identify new grounds maintenance schedule

Threats

- current GM resources likely to be reduced

Conservation and Heritage: Consider the following:

- Habitats
- Cultural landscapes

Strengths

- Woodland Management Plan in place to monitor health and development of woodland
- Some of the original woodland trees and drainage system from the old Muir Wood are still evident within the park
- Bird and bat boxes have been

Weaknesses

- Woodland tree distribution is 60% non-native

installed	
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathway completion may encourage less use of informal paths and allow sub-canopy tree growth and regeneration To create more grass habitat areas with different sward lengths Develop an appropriate meadow feature 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">

Community Involvement: Considered were the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patterns of use Community involvement Play and educational value School groups 	
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active community involvement through Friends of Muir Wood Park in regeneration and design of the park Proximity of park to local school ensures that it is well used by children for play and utilised by the school for educational purposes Local community questionnaire has been distributed, collected, interpreted and published by the Friends Group On line Parks Survey 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Friends Group management team – need for new, younger blood
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link biodiversity interpretation aspects to school environmental curriculum 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The physical size of the park and dynamic intervention of the Friends group means that all the large projects are almost completed. This may mean that direct community involvement will diminish as the park will soon only require maintenance projects (e.g. grass cutting, play equipment painting)

Marketing:

The following aspects were considered:

- Information provision
- Events
- Promotion
- Local press

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information board in Park is regularly updated • CEC Parks website • Main gates display park name • Webpage on BT community website, www.fmwp.btik.com • Parks Officers contact details are displayed within the park • Regular article in Currie and Balerno news advertising meetings and events • Posters advertising park events produced by schoolchildren and located in school, local library, shops and park notice board 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing extent of the park limited to the nature and size of site
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation boards • Promote park through successful green flag award 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalism • Restricted future funding

Management: The park is managed by the City of Edinburgh Council, FMWPG, ELGT Community Agencies and local volunteers.

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid partnership bond between community and CEC • Amalgamated local service delivery team • 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard of grounds maintenance tasks
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with local groups • Working with the steering group to develop improvements projects 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing efficiency reviews • Efficiency review of GM operations

Our Vision

In developing this management plan for Muir Wood Park, our vision is:

To provide a park that is safe, secure and attractive, enhances biodiversity and provides a social and educational resource for the local and wider community of Edinburgh.

Muir Wood Park is held in high regard locally. The ambition of the management plan is for the Muir Wood Park to continue to be a respected, valued and well maintained park that is clean, green, safe and enjoyed by all those who visit it.

Our vision is supported by the Council's Parks and Gardens strategy which aims to provide:

A quality parks system worthy of international comparison, accessible, diverse and environmentally rich; which fulfils the cultural, social and recreational needs of the people

(Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy, 2006, p49)

Aims

The aims and objectives for Muir Wood Park have been developed in line with the City of Edinburgh Council's policies, and supported by Services for Communities Department in its role of managing and being responsible for the site and through analysis of the key management issues. Based on the outcome of the analysis and assessment summarised in the previous section, the following aims have been formulated for the maintenance and further development of Muir Wood Park:

Aim 1: To keep the park as an attractive green space: welcoming, clean, safe, and in a good state of maintenance

- Ensure infrastructure is inspected regularly and well maintained.
- Encourage responsible use of park.
- Providing public information of responsible officers contact details
- Monitor condition of tree stock.
- To compile site specific hazards

Aim 2: To further develop the park into a well-established greenspace and a haven for wildlife

- To conduct survey of wildlife
- Develop appropriate wildlife enhancements.
- Identify choice plant material for site
- To increase range of butterfly & insect species in park

Aim 3:

To promote the park further into a well-established public park, which the local communities can use for both leisure and educational activities

- Apply for green flag 2011
- Continue with online parks survey
- Continue with community events and biannual gala day
- Install interpretation signage with wildlife information

The aims underpinning this management plan have been linked to the Edinburgh Quality Standard which is based on the Green Flag Quality criteria and are set out in the table below.

Each of these aims is further developed in the management plan into targets, measures and timescales.

Criteria	Aim
A welcoming place	<i>To ensure that Hailes Quarry Park is welcoming and accessible to all possible users</i>
Healthy, safe and secure	<i>To ensure the safety all of staff and users of the Park</i>
Well maintained and clean	<i>To maintain the highest standards of horticulture, cleanliness, grounds and infrastructure maintenance</i>
Sustainability	<i>To adopt environmental management principles and therefore reduce the impact of management operations on the environment</i>
Conservation and heritage	<i>To promote biodiversity through appropriate management and to maintain and promote the historic significance of the Park</i>
Community involvement	<i>To encourage community involvement, through consultation, events and activities with friends group and other local community groups</i>
Marketing	<i>To actively promote the park to all potential users</i>
Management	<i>To provide a responsive, flexible and high quality management service</i>

Development Actions:

This section sets out the intended development actions and targets for Muir Wood Park under each of the Green Flag Award aims allocating a time frame, responsibility and measures.

It is expected that this section is updated regularly and reviewed as outlined in the Management Plan. It may contain items that are outwith the timescale of the Management Plan, this is to ensure that known future activities are recorded.

Definitions of initials:

CPO	Community Parks Officer
PR	Park Ranger
ELGT	Edinburgh Lothian & Greenspace Trust
FMWP	The friends of Muir Wood Park

Targeting the development of Muir Wood Park aligns the opportunities of the SWOT analysis with the aims set out earlier into targets, measures and timescales as follows:

Park Improvement Plan

Aim 1 : To keep the park clean green and safe				
Objective	Where and/or How	Year	Who	Target Date
High standard of infrastructure	Regular Inspections with quick response times	2011 onwards	Park Ranger	2011 onwards
Encourage responsible use of park	Display Caring for Parks guidelines	2011	PR	2011
Provide contact details of responsible officers	Through signage and park website	2011 onwards	CPO and FMWP	2011
To maintain and preserve tree stock	Monitor existing and newly planted tree stock	2011 onwards	CPO, Tree & Woodlands Officer	2016
Identify hazards	Compile risk assessment	2011	CPO	2011
To improve security within park	Provide a regular park ranger presence.	2011	Park Ranger	2012

Aim 2 : To keep the park as an attractive green space and a haven for wildlife				
Objective	Where and/or How	Year	Who	Target Date
To increase range of butterfly species in park	Changes to grass cutting frequency & sward lengths	2011 onwards	CPO, Task Force Managers, Grounds Maintenance Team	2012
Provide shelter for birds	Install bird boxes where appropriate	2011 onwards	FMWP	2012
Increase number of habitats	Create log piles within woodland area	2011 - onwards	CPO & woodland officer	2016
Identify potential biodiversity enhancements	Request survey assessment and recommendations	2011	Biodiversity Officer	2016

Aim 3 : To promote the park further into a well-established public park, which the local communities can use for both leisure and educational activities				
Objective	Where and/or How	Year	Who	Target Date
To promote the park as a quality local asset.	Apply for green flag award	2011	CPO	2011
To publicise park specific news and events	Manage and update FMWP website	2011 onwards	FMWP	2016
To continue engagement with local schools	Run series of activities in park	2011 onwards	CPO, PR FMWP & ELGT	2016
To support Friends of Muir Wood Park	Attend Friends of Muir Wood Park meetings	2011 onwards	PR & CPO	On-going
To engage with park users and local community	Carry out park user surveys	2011	PR	2012

Finance

Two main sources of finance are available to the Local Environment Team for the management of the park:

1. Revenue funding

The provision of revenue funding for the Park consists of work undertaken at present by the local Grounds Maintenance Task Force. The current maintenance is based on the former Grounds Maintenance Contract that now serves as a guide to what works should be undertaken.

In addition the Local Environment Manager and Community Parks Officer have a budget for small scale repairs and maintenance improvements.

The South West Neighbourhood team continue to support the local community and work with them to attract funding from internal and external sources towards maintaining and developing the park.

2. Capital funding

The capital budget is administrated by the Parks and Greenspace Service. The budget is generally allocated in advance and the role of developing management plans contributes toward the better planning of financial resources required so that they can be included in future bids.

Wherever possible capital bids should be match funded and the input from the local community can assist with this.

Grants

Edinburgh, Lothian and Greenspace Trust have successfully been awarded grant funding from various funders including WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Limited) and SNH



Monitoring & Reviewing

As part of our ongoing review, each year we have recently introduced an online satisfaction survey. The findings of this second survey 2009/ 2010 are follows.

Muir Wood Park Survey

Number of responses	Satisfied with Park	Upkeep / appearance is good	Average length of visit (minutes)
10	90%	750%	34

What do you enjoy most about this park?	Wildlife Proximity to home Play Park Trees Open space	42% 14% 14% 7% 7%
What changes or improvements would you like to see made to this park?	Resolve Flooding Enhancement for wildlife Dog fouling controlled Wildlife Information Increase wildflowers Fence off play park	40% 22% 12% 12% 10% 4%
What is your main reason for visiting the park?	Walk Dog Play with children Just walk through it Watch wildlife Relaxation	40% 20% 20% 10% 10%

The online survey can be found at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/parksurvey

The survey will be widely promoted in 2010 and beyond to increase participation.

Parks Quality Assessment

The City of Edinburgh Council's Parks and Greenspace Service has developed a quality framework for monitoring and reviewing for all the city's parks and gardens. The framework is based on by using the Green Flag award scheme and is known as Edinburgh's Parks Quality Assessment. This will be a key indicator to measure improvement in the park's quality.

Friends of Muir Wood Park

Regular meetings are held with the Friends of Muir Wood Park, Community Parks Officer and Local Task Force Manager. This has facilitated issues to be addressed and actioned within a reasonable timescale and has also improved the coordination of various projects within the park.

Members of the public are encouraged to comment on the standard of maintenance and these comments and service requests are forwarded to all those involved with the management of the park for action. One useful method is the ongoing Parks and Greenspace Survey, which can provide both quantitative and qualitative information on the levels of satisfaction of the management of Muir Wood Park. This will also reflect how successful we are in implementing the Management Plan.

Neighbourhood Survey

Each year, the South West Neighbourhood undertakes a survey of local residents' views on Council Services. This includes asking local people how satisfied they are with the way in which their parks and greenspaces is dealt with. The table below shows that in 2009, 63% of people in the local Neighbourhood Partnership area were fairly / very satisfied with their local parks and greenspaces.



Green Flag Awards



Participation in the Green Flag Award scheme will in itself provide constructive feedback received from independent judges. The value of this information will help shape further improvements, both to the Management Plan and to our management processes. In addition, each year we will undertake an internal quality assessment. This will provide evidence of the development and management of Muir Wood Park.

Evaluation of the Park Improvement Plan

The detailed Park Improvement Plan outlined in page in the previous section *How Will We Get There* will be reviewed annually by the local Environment Team and the Park's steering group to determine and update progress made to date.

Review Processes

The entire Management Plan will be reviewed prior to its expiry.

CLOSING STATEMENT

This Management Plan provide a working document for all those involved in the management and maintenance of the park to ensure that we achieve our vision of maintaining Muir Wood Park as a distinctive, attractive and well cared for space and to continually improve the quality of the park for the enjoyment of citizens and visitors alike.



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Aerial View



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Maintenance

Maintenance Standards

Current Standards: City Wide

Task	Jan b	Fe r	Ma n	Apr m	Ma n	Ju l	Jul y	Au g	Se p	Oct o	No v	De c	Total
Amenity Grass			2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2			15
Low Amenity Mobile Strim					1					1			2
Grass edging beds		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			7
Perimeter edging spray				1		1							2
Grass obstacles spray				1		1							2
Channels clean & weed		1											1
Channels spray					1		1						2
Shrub cultivate / weed											1		1
Shrub regulate / de-litter	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			8
Hedge prune						1				1			2
Hard Standing spray						1							1
Playground spray					1								1

BIODIVERSITY SPECIES LIST
Ecological, Flora and Fauna monitoring

Species	Immature, New Planting, Established	Location
Prunus	New planting & established	Boundary
Tilia	Established	Woodland
Sorbus	New planting & Established	Boundary
Ash	Established	Woodland
Aesculus	Established	Woodland
Elder	Established	Woodland
Crataegus	Established	Woodland
Acer	Established	Woodland
Prunus pisardii	Established	Woodland
Naturalised bulbs	Established (crocus / daffodils)	Front boundary

South West Environment Team Structure Chart

South West Environment

