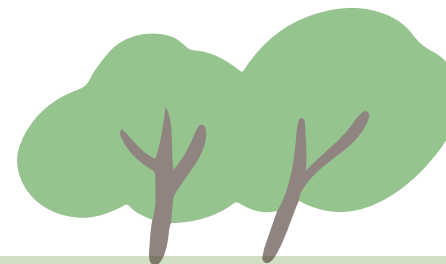
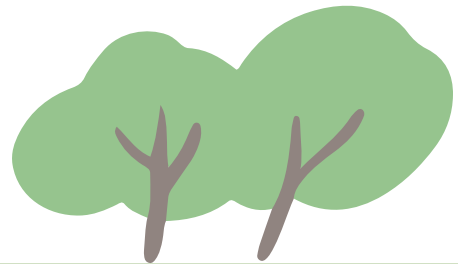
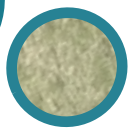
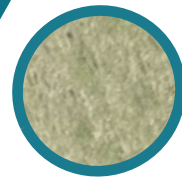
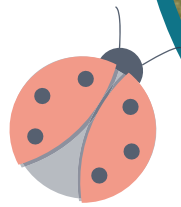




Re-Imagining St Margaret's Park Bowling Green

Concept Design Report
June 2024





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DOCUMENT INFORMATION

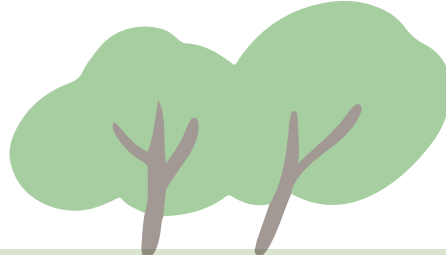
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Introduction

1.1. Project context

The following proposals come under a wider initiative for transforming unused Bowling Greens in parks throughout the city. Previously under Edinburgh Leisure's stewardship, the bowling greens came to the Thriving Green Spaces Team due to under-use. This offers an opportunity to breathe new life into these spaces and to ensure that they are maximising the benefits for both people and nature.

We aim to create spaces that welcome people of all ages and interests. Spaces that provide opportunities to play, learn, socialise and learn. With further opportunities for community events and educational programs.

1.2. Our approach

Community Collaboration: Community input is at the heart of everything we do. We aim to make spaces that reflect the diverse needs of Edinburgh's residents. We have done this through open talks and active participation including in-person consultation events and online workshops.

Landscape Design Excellence: We are using feedback and ideas from the public to inform our ideas from public consultations informing the plans. From lush greenery to modern facilities, every detail will be thoughtfully considered.

Transparent Process: We believe in transparency every step of the way. After the consultations and design phase, plans were advertised on My Engagement Hub for the public to provide feedback on. Next, the plans and their feedback went to Council Committee for thorough review. This ensures that the vision aligns with the community's best interests.



Fig. 1 | Bowling Greens icon | ©City of Edinburgh Council

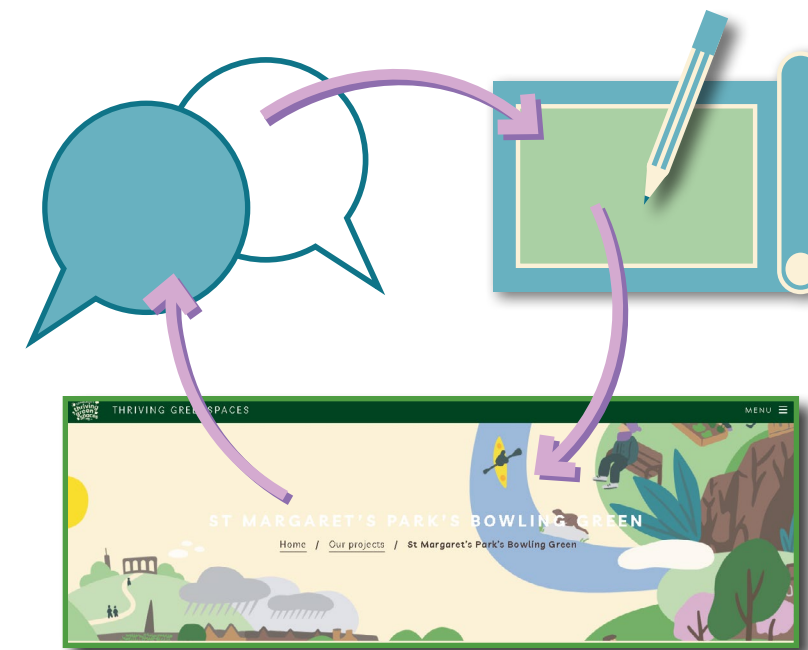


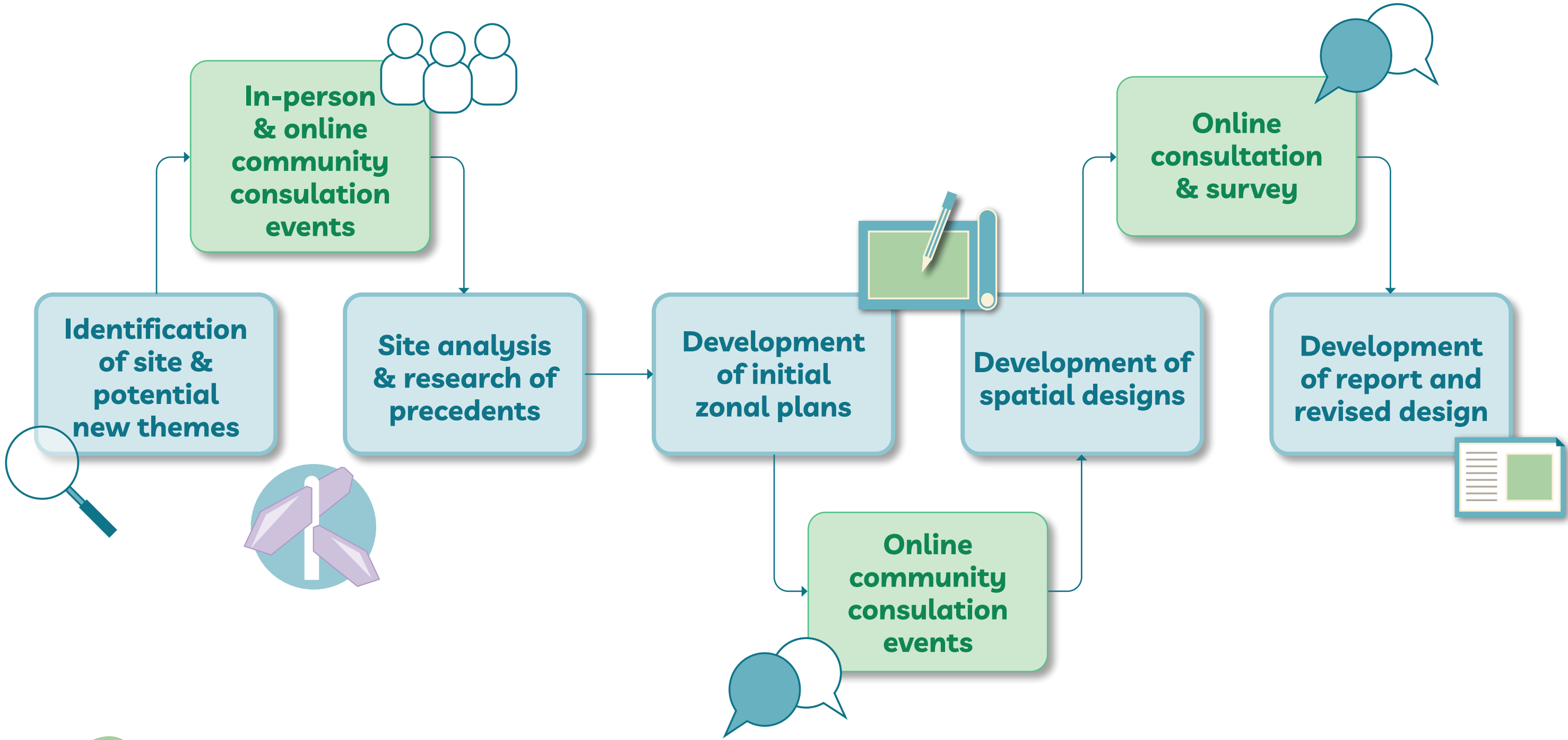
Fig. 2 | Collaborative approach design process



Methodology

1.3. Methodology

The below diagram explains the journey we have been on with regards to developing the design for St Margaret's Park bowling green.



Site Analysis

2.1. Site context

St Margaret's Park is within the historic suburb of Corstorphine, west of Edinburgh's city centre. It is also part of the Corstorphine Conservation Area. Historic features within the park include the Dower House, features outside the park include the Old Parish Church, the Psychic Well and the Dovecot.

Existing amenities in the park include; a playing field, a play area, football pitches, tennis courts and the former bowling green.

A private bowling club is a short walk away from the park - situated on Saughton Road North.

A tree lined avenue provides pedestrian links from Corstorphine High Street to Dovecot Road and there are many other mature trees around the perimeter of the park.

The Corstorphine Fair - Edinburgh's largest community run event is held biennially on the first Saturday of June within the park. And attracts an estimated 20,000 people.



Fig. 3 | Corstorphine Fair

- Key**
- Project boundary
 - St Margaret's Park boundary
 - Conservation Area
 - Park entrance
 - Tree lined avenue
 - Formal play and sports areas



Fig. 4 | Contextual analysis of St Margaret's Park within the Corstorphine Conservation Area



Site Analysis

2.2. History

Corstorphine was originally an agricultural village separated from the city by open countryside. As Edinburgh grew the village was incorporated within the administrative area of the city in 1920.

The Manor of Corstorphine was acquired in 1347 by Sir Adam Forrester, who's family constructed a castle on this land, as well as the Old Parish Church. The Forrester family were also responsible for the construction of the mid-17th century Dower House, which is set within the north east corner of St Margaret's Park. The entrance gateway to the house is reputed to have been constructed from stone from Corstorphine Castle, which was demolished in the 18th century. The only structure that remains from the castle grounds is the 16th Century Dovecot, which is situated to the south of the park on Dovecot Road.

In 1915, the land for St Margaret's Park was gifted to the Parish Council by Christopher Brown of Arizona, whose wife Margaret came from a long established Corstorphine family. The park and the Dower House were taken over by the Council of Edinburgh in 1923.

In 1991 the Corstorphine trust were given use of the Dower House and in 2000 the Corstorphine Heritage Centre was established in the building.

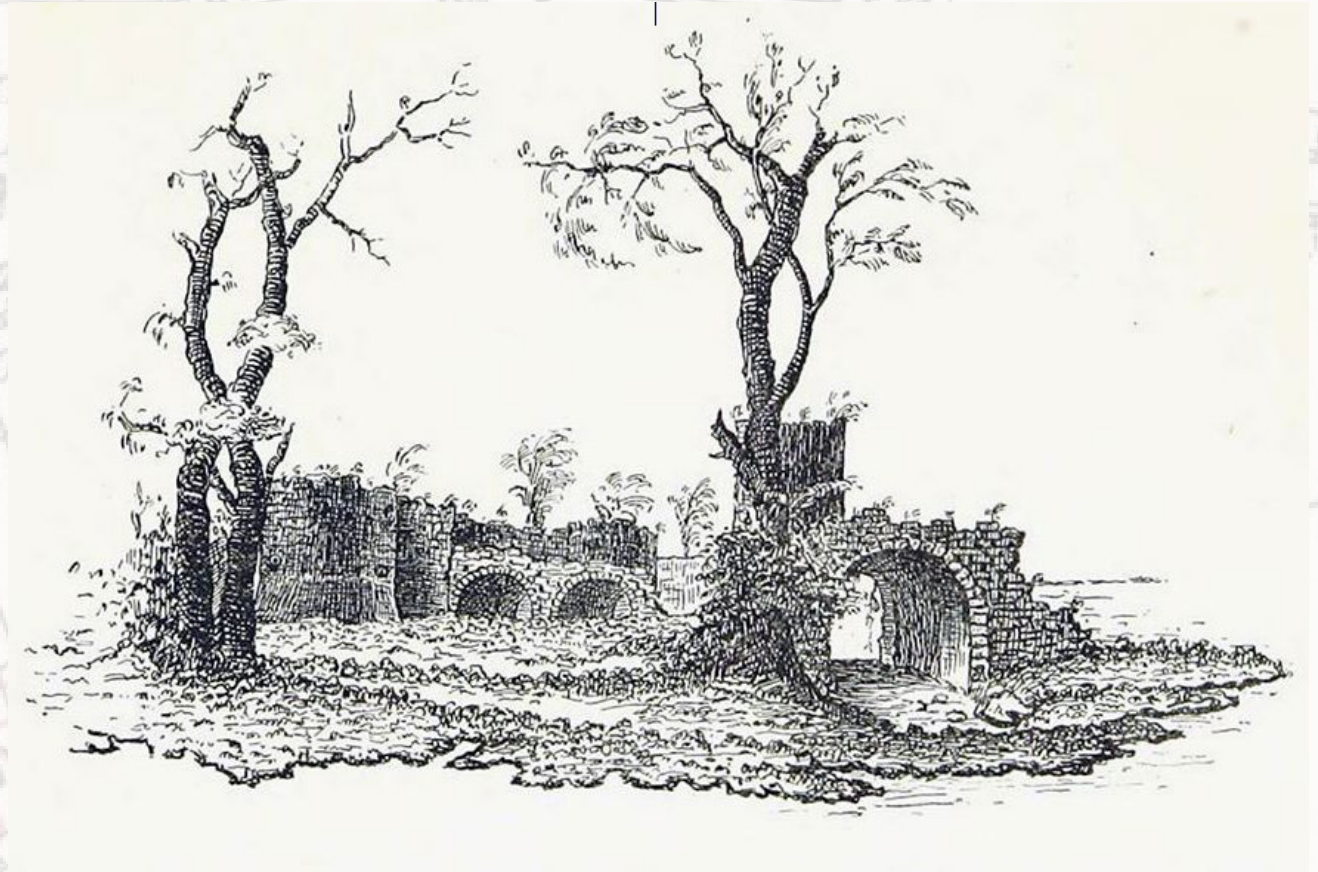


Fig. 6 | The ruins of Corstorphine Castle, from a Pen and Ink Drawing dated 1777



Fig. 5 | Dower House

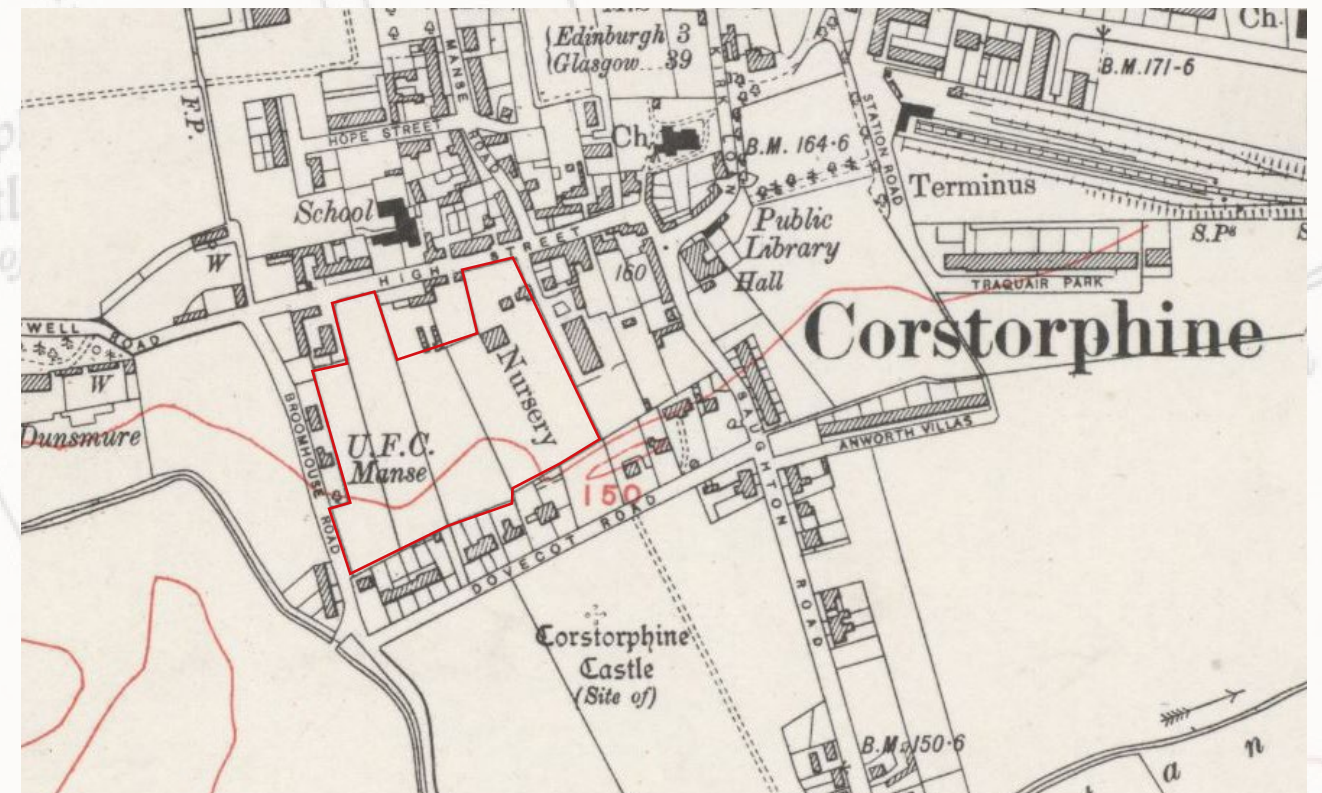


Fig. 7 | The land which later became St Margaret's Park. Map 1914



Site Analysis

2.3. Photographic study

The bowling green site is open in character with a row of mature trees on the border with Orchardfield Avenue (Image 1). To the south of the site is the connection to the tennis courts and to the north is the connection to the Dower House (Image 2). Desire lines have been formed to the west of the bowling green from people accessing the tennis courts (Image 3). Other desire lines have been formed around the periphery of the park (Image 4). The main paths (Images 5 & 6) are well proportioned and are well defined due to the avenues of trees.

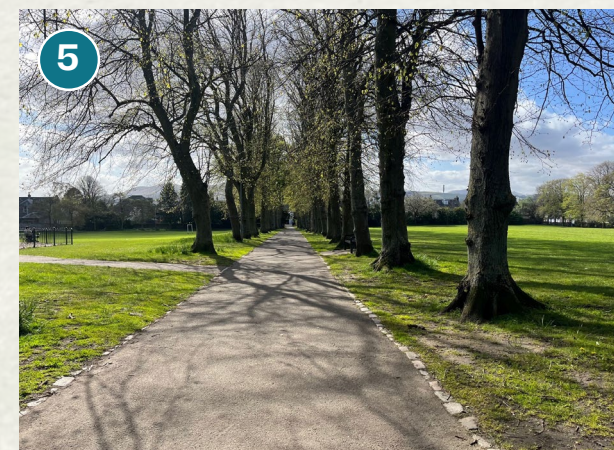
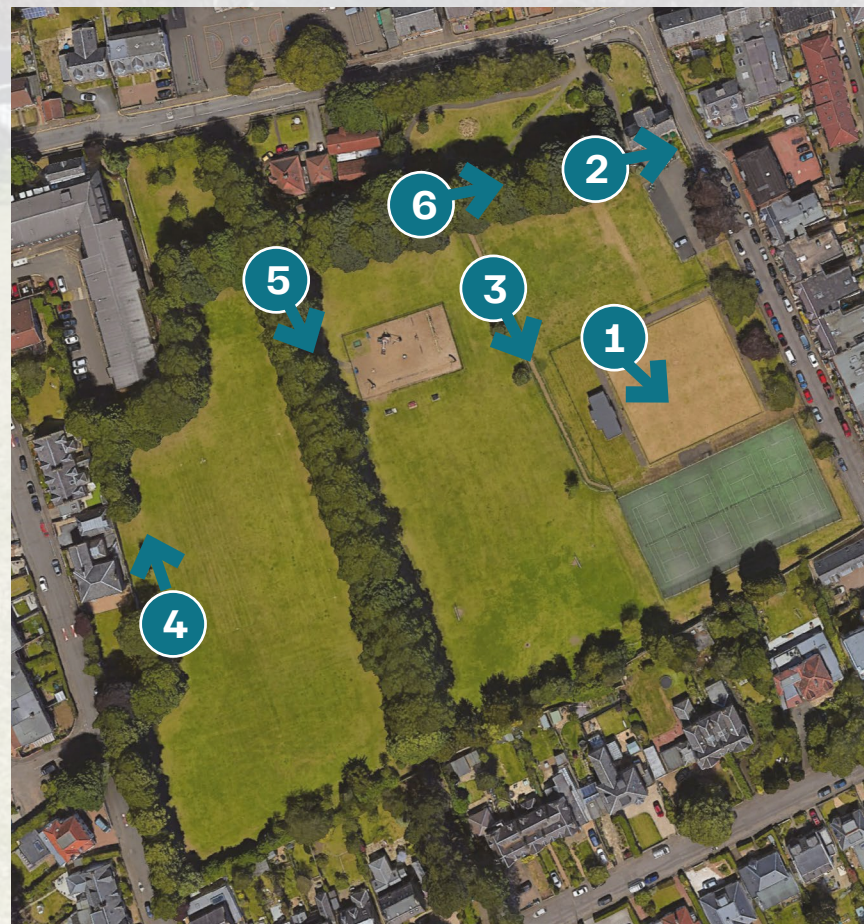
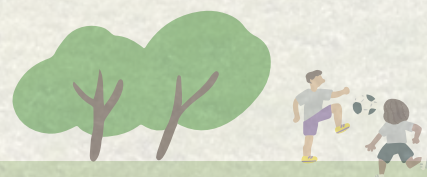


Fig. 8 | Photographic analysis with location plan of photograph locations and view direction.



Site Analysis

2.4. Opportunities and Constraints - Park Wide

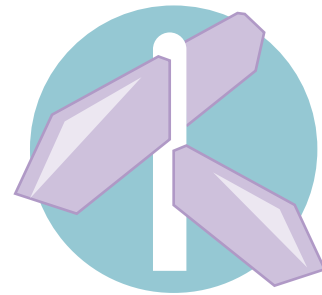


Land use:

The City of Edinburgh Council is keen to establish more community grow spaces within the city. During public consultation this notion was popular with a number of local people. There is also the opportunity to involve local schools, The Corstorphine Trust and other community groups, such as the Friends of St Margaret's Park. Two potential sites for this dedicated space have been identified, however future discussions will be required to establish how these spaces are organised.

Access and circulation:

The existing path network is limited to the north-south avenue and some additional links to the Dower House. All other routes through the park are informal and can be seen on the ground as desire lines. To improve access and circulation it would be beneficial to provide accessible paths to enhance east-west connections and access to the tennis courts and the bowling green site.



Flood and water management:

There are several locations across the park which are prone to flooding. Sustainable Drainage Systems - such as swales and basins should be installed to help alleviate this issue, whilst providing new opportunities for habitat creation and natural play.

Vegetation:

Existing tree planting within the park is a great asset and should be protected and enhanced. Further areas of tree planting, as well as ornamental beds and wildflowers can be introduced to improve biodiversity.



Key

- Project boundary
- St Margaret's Park boundary
- Conservation Area

- Park entrance
- Existing path network
- Proposed access and circulation

- Formal play and sports areas
- Potential to introduce sustainable drainage system with natural play
- Potential for further tree planting



Fig. 9 | Wider park opportunities and constraints plan



Site Analysis

2.5. Opportunities and Constraints - Bowling green

The former bowling green site provides an opportunity to introduce a range of spatial typologies and features that will be unique within St Margaret's Park. The changes made here could also promote additional benefits beyond its boundary, across the park and wider area.

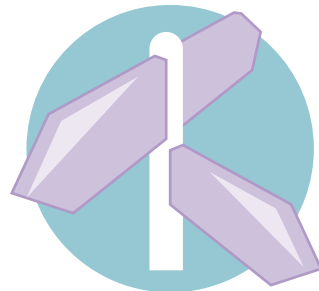


Land use:

We see this space becoming a space which is multi-functional and is focused on community cohesion, providing spaces for people to play, relax, socialise and learn. The clubhouse should also be retained and renovated to provide various amenities for the community.

Access and circulation:

New connections through the space should provide greater levels of access from Orchardfield Avenue, the Dower House, the tennis courts and the wider park.



Flood and water management:

The area to the north of the space that is prone to flooding should be addressed through the inclusion of a swale feature. This would provide a sustainable way of managing flood water, but also an opportunity for natural play and additional biodiversity.

Vegetation:

The existing trees within the site should be retained and enhanced through the addition of further tree, shrub and herbaceous planting. Plants should be selected on their biodiversity credentials and ability to cope with a range of climatic conditions. Sensory planting should also be included to promote inclusivity.

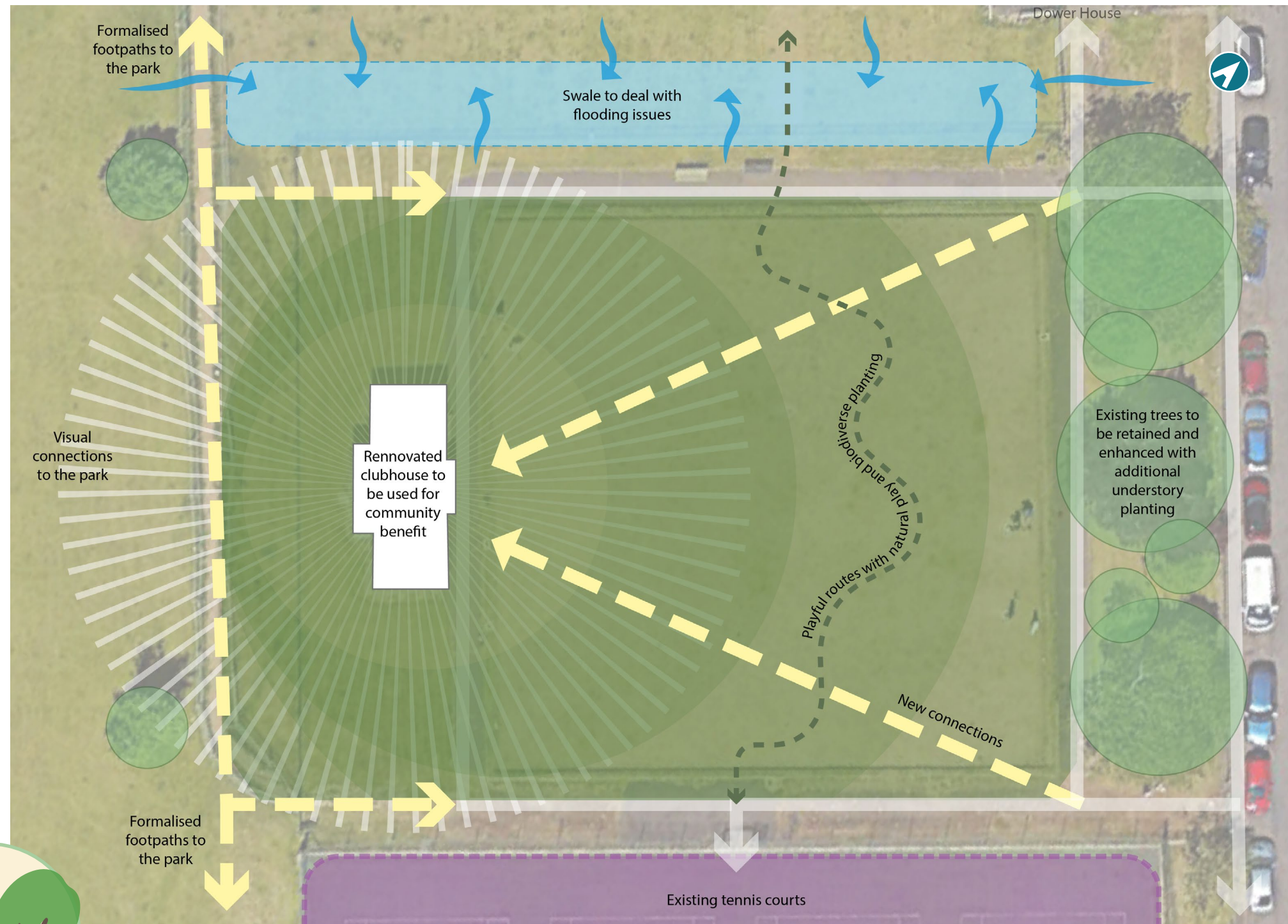


Fig. 10 | Bowling green opportunities and constraints plan



Design Development

3.1. Our approach and Design Principles

Our overarching design principles are split into 3 key themes - Sustainability, Inclusivity and 'Room to Grow'. These themes are summarised as follows:

Sustainability:

- **Environmental Considerations:** Incorporate sustainable landscaping practices such as native plantings, rainwater harvesting systems, using reclaimed materials, and providing composting areas to minimise environmental impact and promote biodiversity.
- **Durability:** Select durable materials for infrastructure such as raised beds, pathways, and seating areas to ensure longevity and resilience to wear and tear.
- **Low Maintenance:** Design the garden layout with low-maintenance features such as drip irrigation systems, self-sustaining plant communities, and easy-to-maintain structures to minimise ongoing upkeep requirements, and to avoid creating additional workloads for council maintenance staff.
- **Funding Strategies:** Integrate aspects which lend themselves to socioeconomic models for community gardening. This may be integrating funding strategies into the design, incorporating space for community fundraisers, storage areas, etc.

Inclusivity:

- **Accessible Design:** Ensure that the garden layout accommodates individuals of all abilities by incorporating features such as wide pathways for wheelchair access, raised beds at varying heights, and seating areas with backs and pads for comfort and support.
- **Universal Design:** Implement universal design principles throughout the garden to create a welcoming and inclusive space for diverse community members, including those with mobility challenges, sensory sensitivities, or other special needs.
- **Community Engagement:** Foster inclusivity through community engagement initiatives, such as areas for hosting workshops, events, and educational programs that cater to a wide range of interests and backgrounds.

'Room to Grow':

- **Educational Opportunities:** Designate areas within the garden for educational activities such as workshops, classes, and demonstrations to promote learning, upskilling, and knowledge sharing among community members.
- **Flexible Spaces:** Create flexible spaces that can adapt to changing needs and preferences over time, allowing for experimentation, innovation, and continuous improvement within the garden environment.
- **Encourage Innovation:** Provide opportunities for community members to contribute their ideas, expertise, and resources to the garden project, fostering a culture of collaboration, creativity, and empowerment.



Fig. 11 | Design Principles



Design Development

3.2. Stakeholder engagement

It has been of upmost importance during this project to engage with the local community to determine what people would like to see happen in this space. As such, there have been numerous in-person and online consultation events. There has also been a survey posted online to collate people's thoughts on the draft proposals that we have designed. The list of key events are listed below:

- **9th February 2024:** Initial online consultation with 9 attendees and 3 council officers
- **4th March 2024:** In-person consultation event at Corstorphine Community Centre with around 40 attendees
- **12th March 2024:** In-person assembly and workshops with children at Corstorphine Primary School, reaching over 100 pupils
- **12th March 2024:** Online consultation call with stakeholders
- **15th April 2024:** Online consultation call with stakeholders
- **24th April 2024:** Online consultation survey opened
- **8th June 2024:** Online consultation period survey closed
- Outreach to surrounding businesses and organisations

During the initial consultation events that were held in March we asked the community to rate a series of features that we believed would be suitable for the space. The results of this consultation was then summarised into the adjacent diagram - reflecting which percentage of people responded positively to each feature. These results helped us to develop our design proposals.



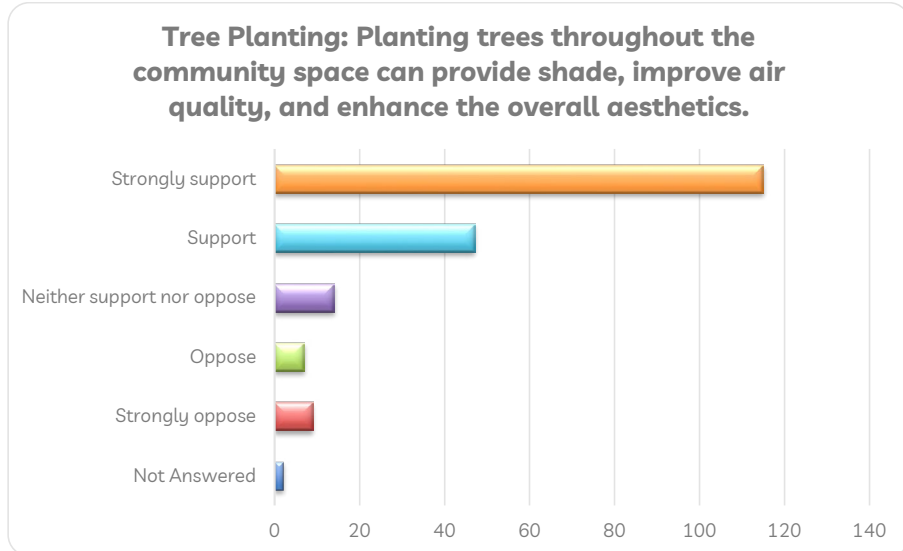
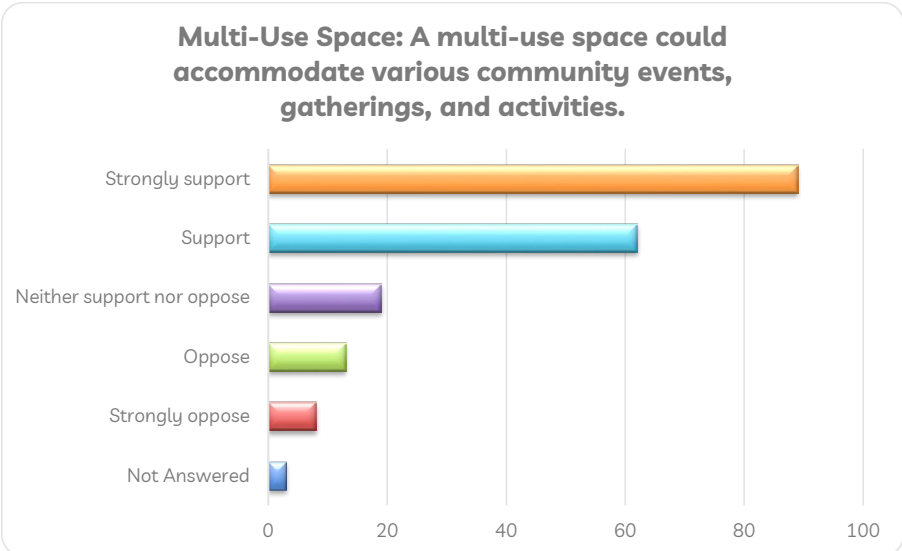
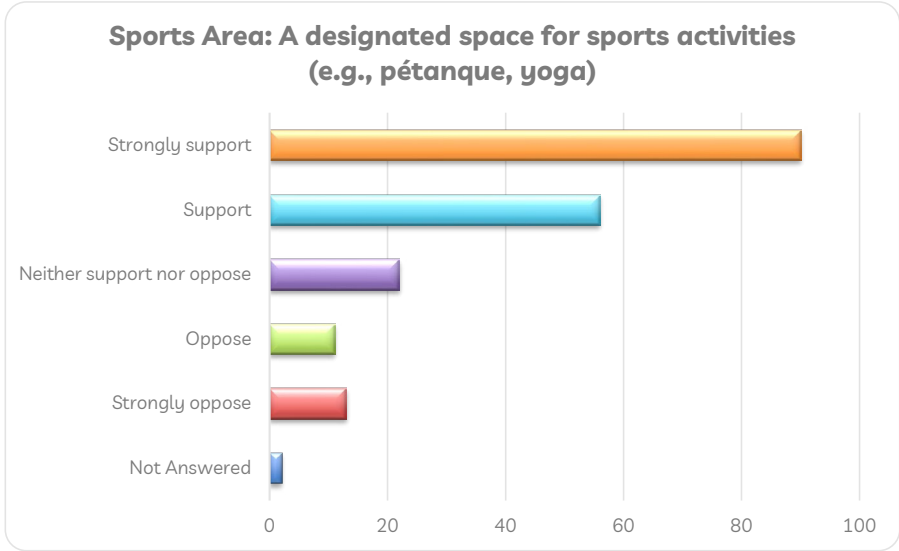
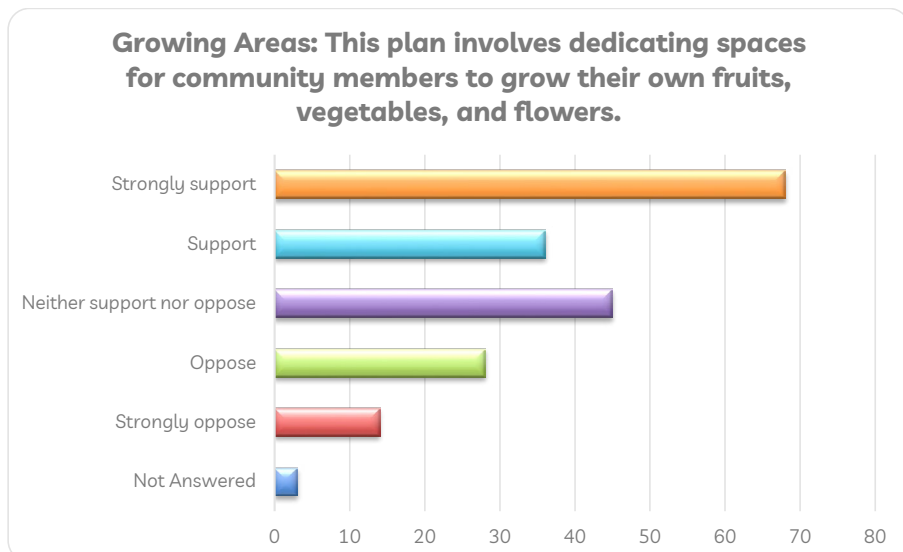
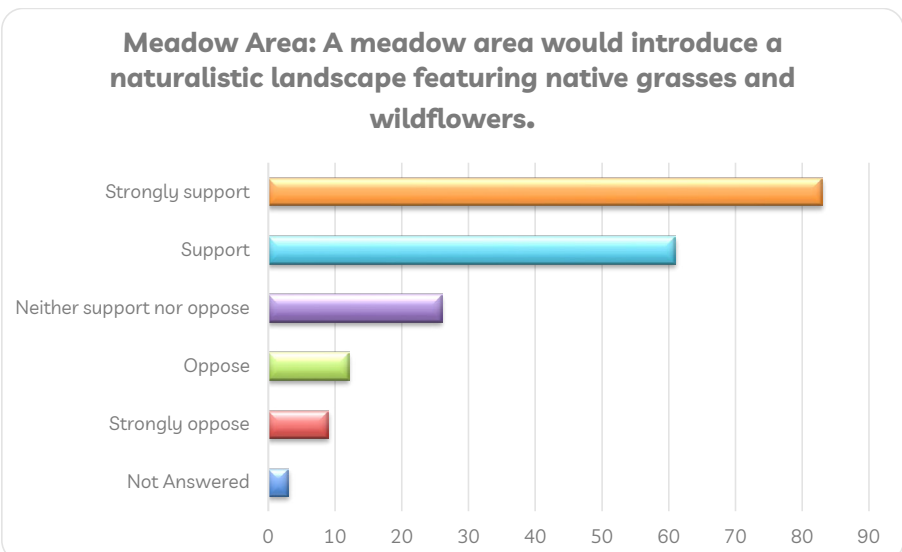
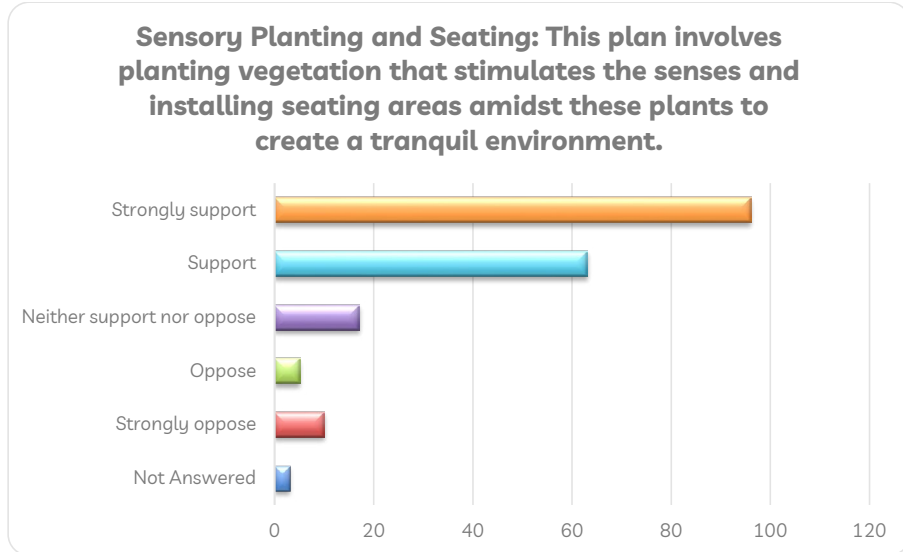
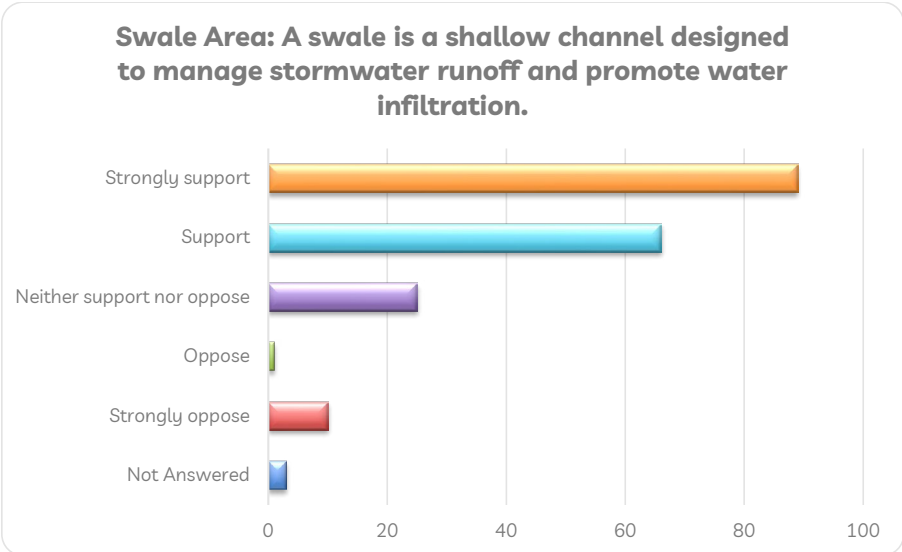
Fig. 12 | Positive responses from the community



Design Development

3.3. Stakeholder survey

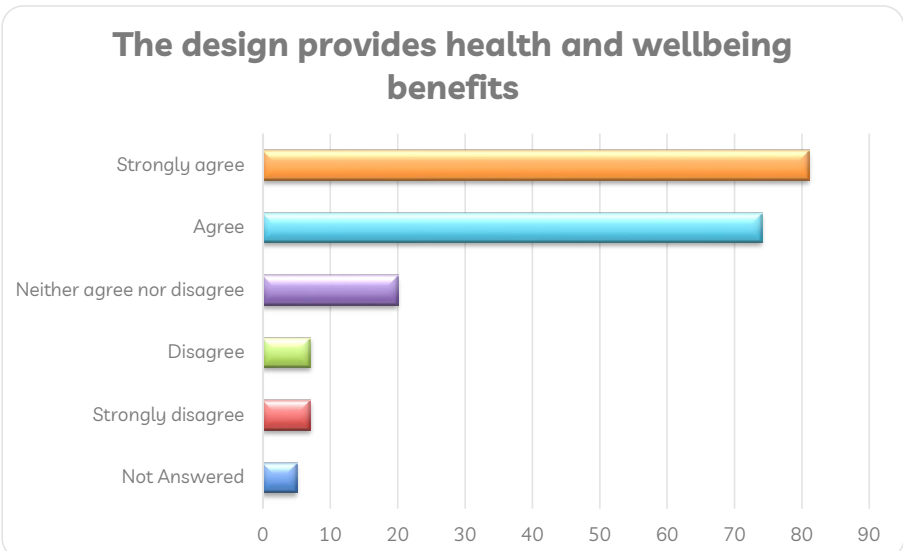
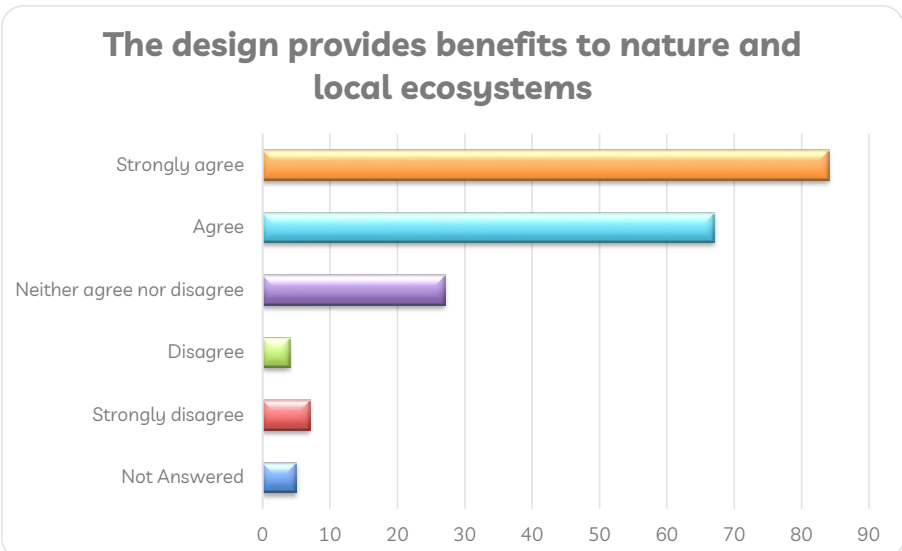
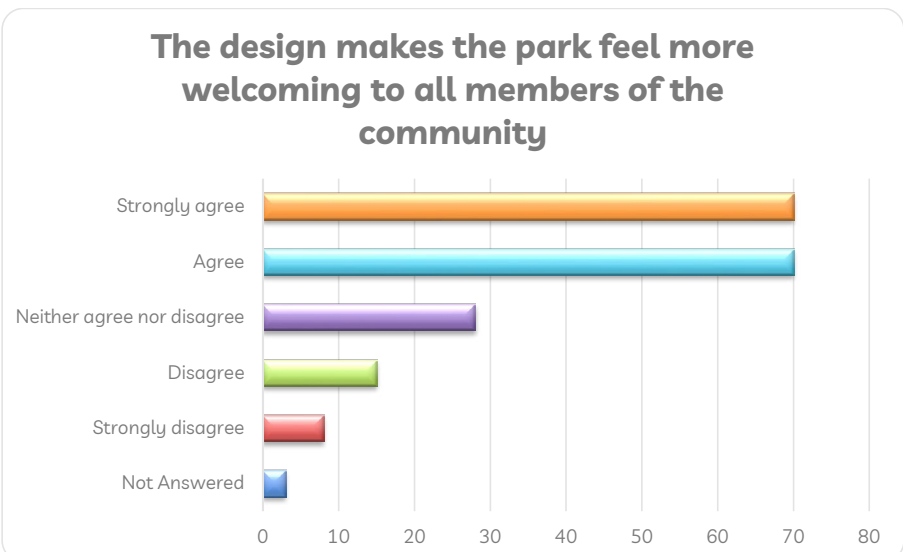
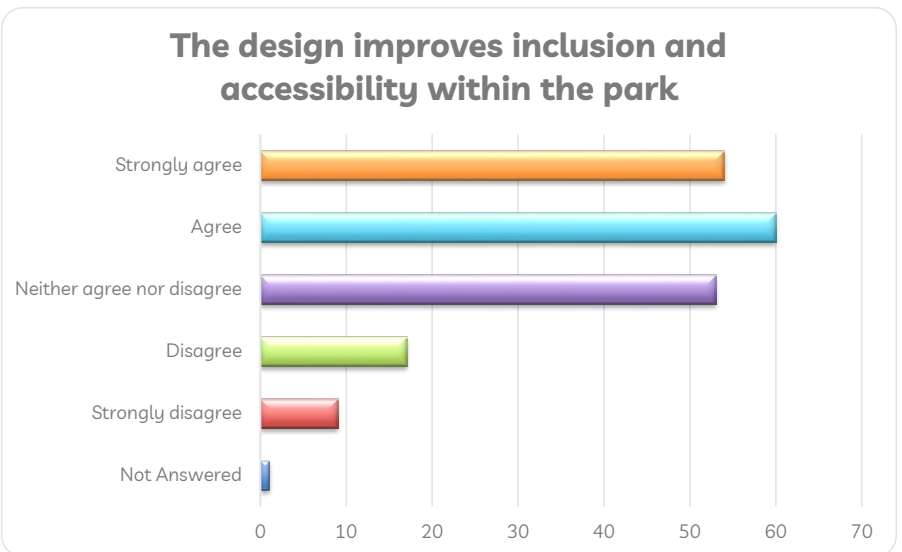
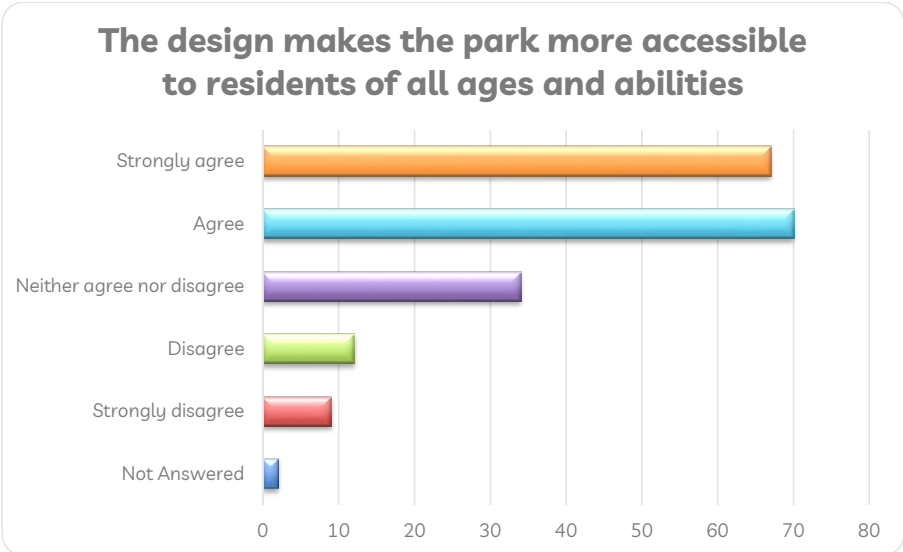
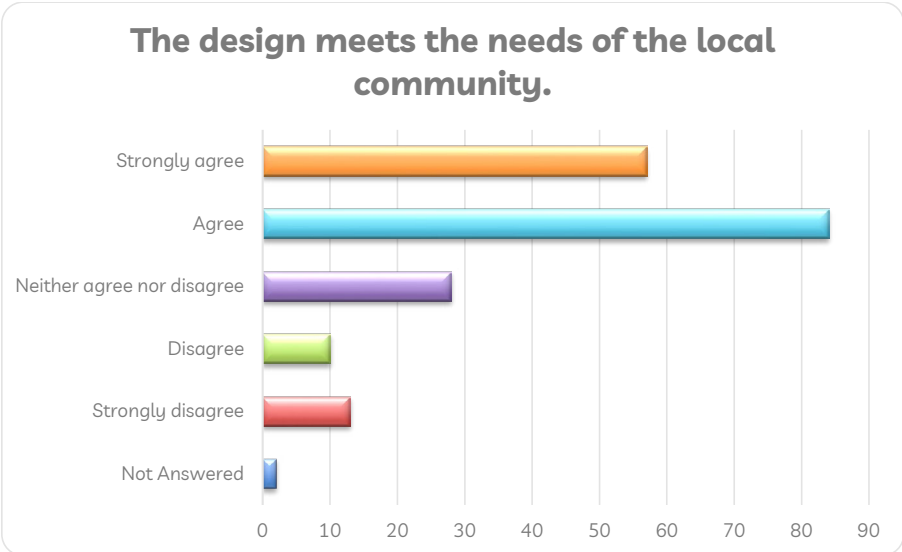
As part of the consultation period the City of Edinburgh Council hosted a survey on the Consultation Hub between the 24th of April until the 8th of June 2024. In total there were 194 responses to the survey. The first part of the survey asked how strongly people supported proposed design features. The answers to which are shown on this page.



Design Development

3.4. Stakeholder survey (continued)

The second part of the survey asked people to judge the design as to how well it met certain criteria. People were therefore asked how much they agreed with a selection of statements. The answers to which are shown on this page.



Design Development

3.5. Integrated Impact Assessment

As part of this project, the City of Edinburgh have produced an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA). Within the IIA, this project has been assessed on its ability to meet criteria defined by governmental legislation, such as the Fairer Scotland Duty, as well as local action plans and best practice guidance.

The IIA also assessed the projects impact on the local population and the environment - the outcomes of which are detailed on this page.

For full details, please refer to the IIA document.

Economic

Positive Impacts:

- **Low-Income Families:** Community growing initiatives can help reduce food poverty by providing access to fresh produce, potentially lowering grocery costs.
- **Local Businesses:** Enhanced park spaces attract more visitors, increasing foot traffic and potential customers for local businesses, boosting local economic activity.
- **Job Seekers and Youth:** Improved local employment opportunities, including jobs related to park maintenance and activities, help young people into positive destinations and support people in accessing both paid and unpaid work. Improved facilities and programs can also enhance literacy and numeracy skills.
- **Residents Receiving Benefits:** Maximizing income and reducing income inequality through community support initiatives and accessible services.

Negative Impacts:

- None applicable to this site.

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights

Positive Impacts:

- **Children and Youth:** Enhanced recreational spaces with sensory gardens and outdoor education areas can significantly benefit children and youth, promoting social integration, well-being, and educational opportunities.
- **Elderly and Dependents (65+):** Inclusive recreational spaces with social seating, fitness areas, and accessible paths could improve the quality of life for older residents, offering socialization, physical activity, and community engagement.
- **Low-Income and Deprived Communities:** Enhanced recreational spaces in deprived areas can provide free or low-cost activities, educational programs, and community events, contributing to social inclusion.
- **Vulnerable Groups (e.g., Unemployed, Homeless, Carers):** Community gardening and welcoming spaces could support vulnerable groups by providing food security, social support, stability, and community connection.
- **Eliminate Discrimination and Advance Equality:** Improved safety with increased lighting and entrances, along with enhanced access and quality of services.
- **Foster Good Relations and Reduce Status Differences:** Community spaces for events and sensory gardens enhance cohesion, while inclusive community gardens promote skill development and food security.
- **Empowerment and Participation:** Engagement in design processes, ownership of space, and activities foster participation, inclusion, dignity, control, and community resilience.
- **Safety and Healthier Lifestyles:** Improved lighting, CCTV, open access reduce crime; greenspaces offer physical activity, nutrition (via community gardens), well-being, and life skills development.

Negative Impacts:

- None applicable to this site.

Environment and Sustainability

Positive Impacts:

- **General Population:** Addressing the climate crisis through fuel efficiency, local renewable energy, and low-carbon materials reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Enhanced biodiversity and green infrastructure improve air quality, mitigate heat, and absorb carbon dioxide. Local food production reduces carbon footprints from transportation.
- **Urban Residents:** Adapting to climate change impacts with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), resilient planting, and greening reduces flood risks, manages surface water, and mitigates urban heat island effects.
- **Local Wildlife:** Protecting and enhancing biodiversity through reduced mowing, tree planting, resilient species selection, and solar lighting considerations promotes habitat preservation.
- **Community and Public Health:** Improved green spaces and public safety measures (better lighting, escape routes, and fencing) enhance the physical environment and reduce pollution (air, water, soil, noise).
- **Local Economy and Resource Efficiency:** Promoting material reuse, procuring recycled goods, selecting local products, and using durable, low-maintenance materials support the circular economy, minimize transport emissions, and reduce waste.
- **Active Travel:** Improved cycle routes in parks encourage sustainable transport and reduce the need for car travel, promoting active and healthy lifestyles.

Negative Impacts:

- **Local Wildlife:** Additional lighting, even if solar-powered, could potentially disrupt wildlife habitats and behaviours. Careful planning and implementation are needed to balance lighting needs with wildlife protection.



Design Development

3.6. Zonal plans

Informed by our analysis and the feedback from the community, we produced the adjacent zonal diagram to define the basic geometry and uses for the space.

The former club house will become the central focus for the space and newly defined zones will radiate out from it. The club house itself would provide various amenities for the community and adjacent spaces would reflect these use cases - such as a Café spill out zone - providing extra capacity for Dower House Café during the summer months. The multi-use spaces would also provide places for people to gather and for community events.

The sports area is intended for leisurely games such as Pétanque - which was specifically mentioned as a desirable sport during public consultation and is well used as other parks in Edinburgh, such as Inverleith. It is also less of a maintenance issue than lawn bowls and is suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities.

A semi-circular area in the middle will combine a growing area - with raised beds for community groups and schools and a sensory planting area with trails and seating.

A meadow area with links to Orchardfield Avenue will provide spaces for increased biodiversity and opportunities for natural play. This will also connect through to the swale area to the north, which will help to alleviate localised flooding issues and provide further opportunities for natural play.

Formalised footpaths between this space and the rest of the park are also suggested to help improve connectivity. Additional tree planting and hedgerows are also suggested to increase canopy cover and natural structure.

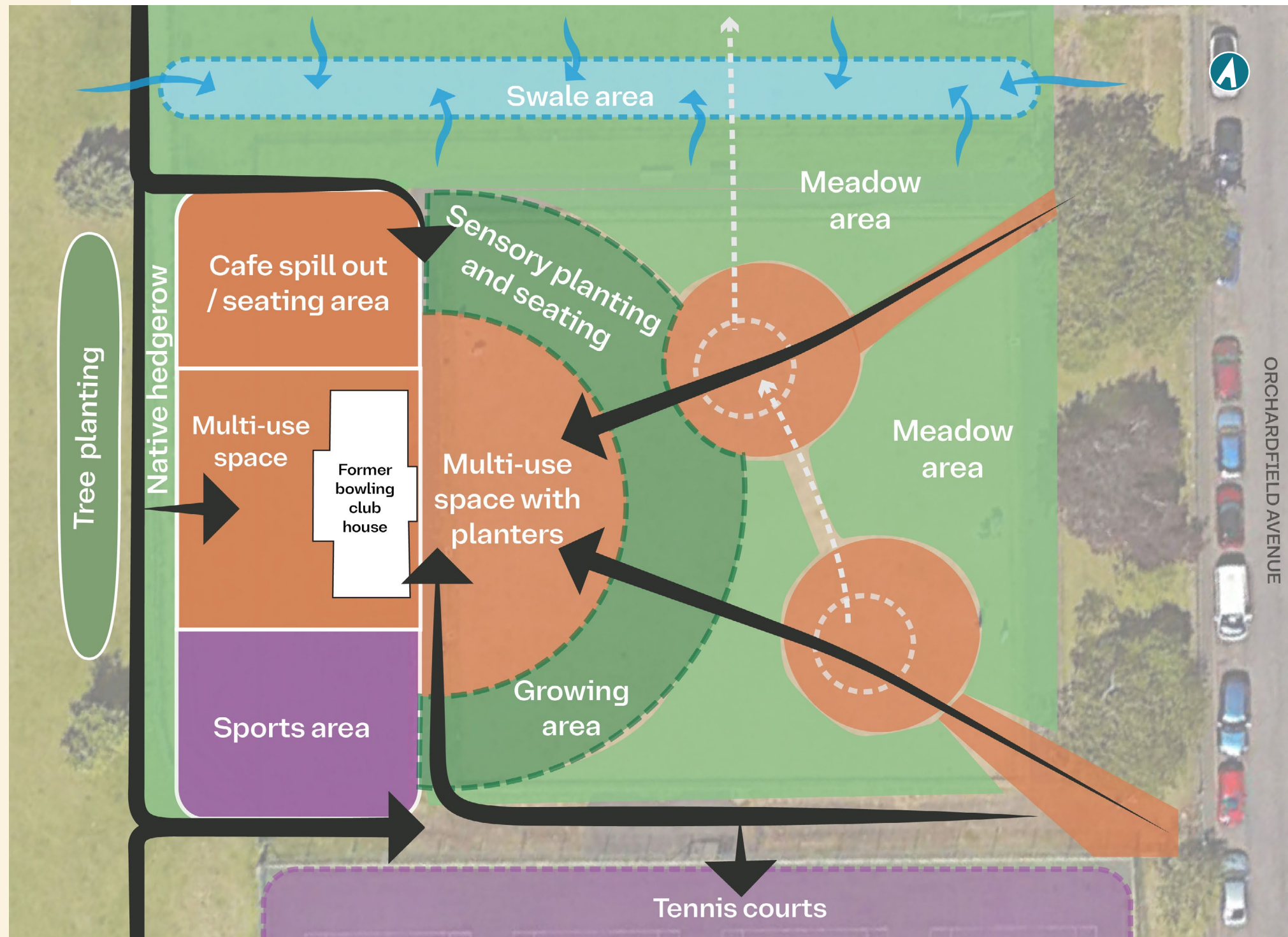
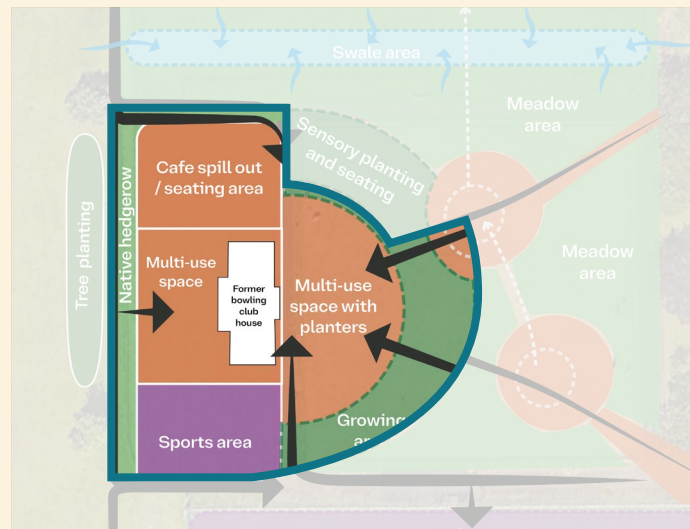


Fig. 13 | Zonal Plan



Design Development

3.7. Precedents



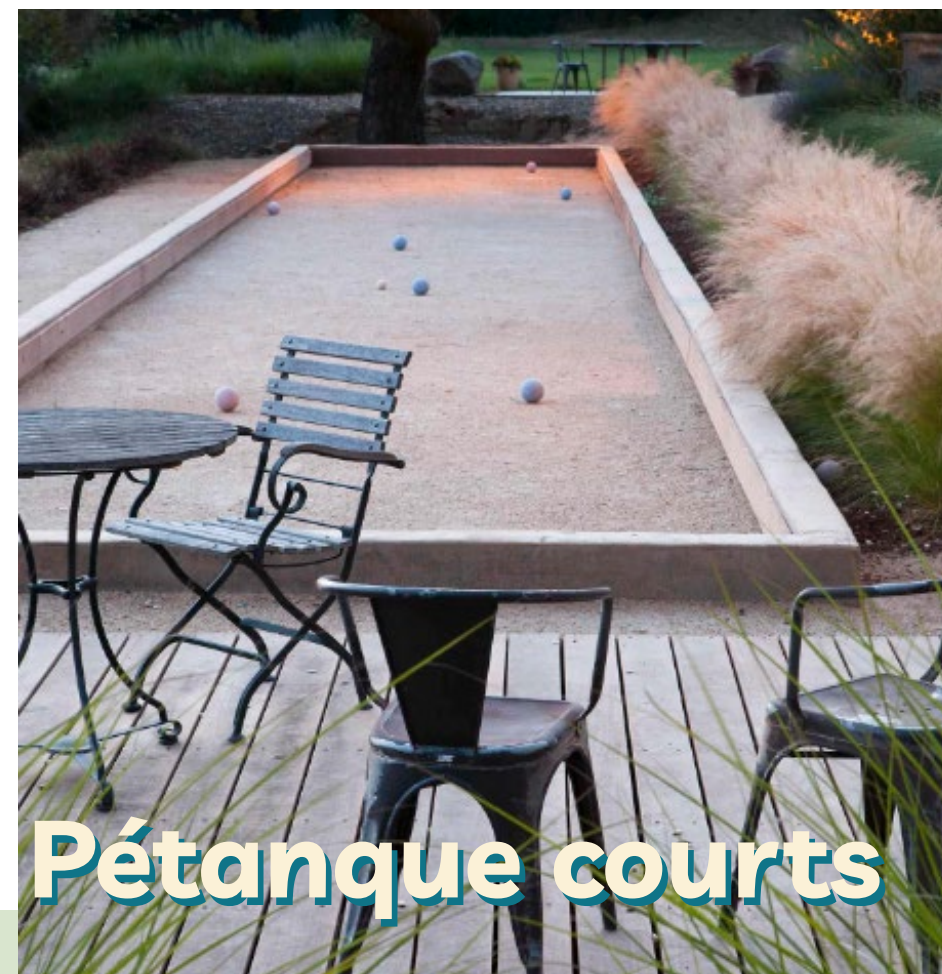
Café spill out seating area



Community space



Community space



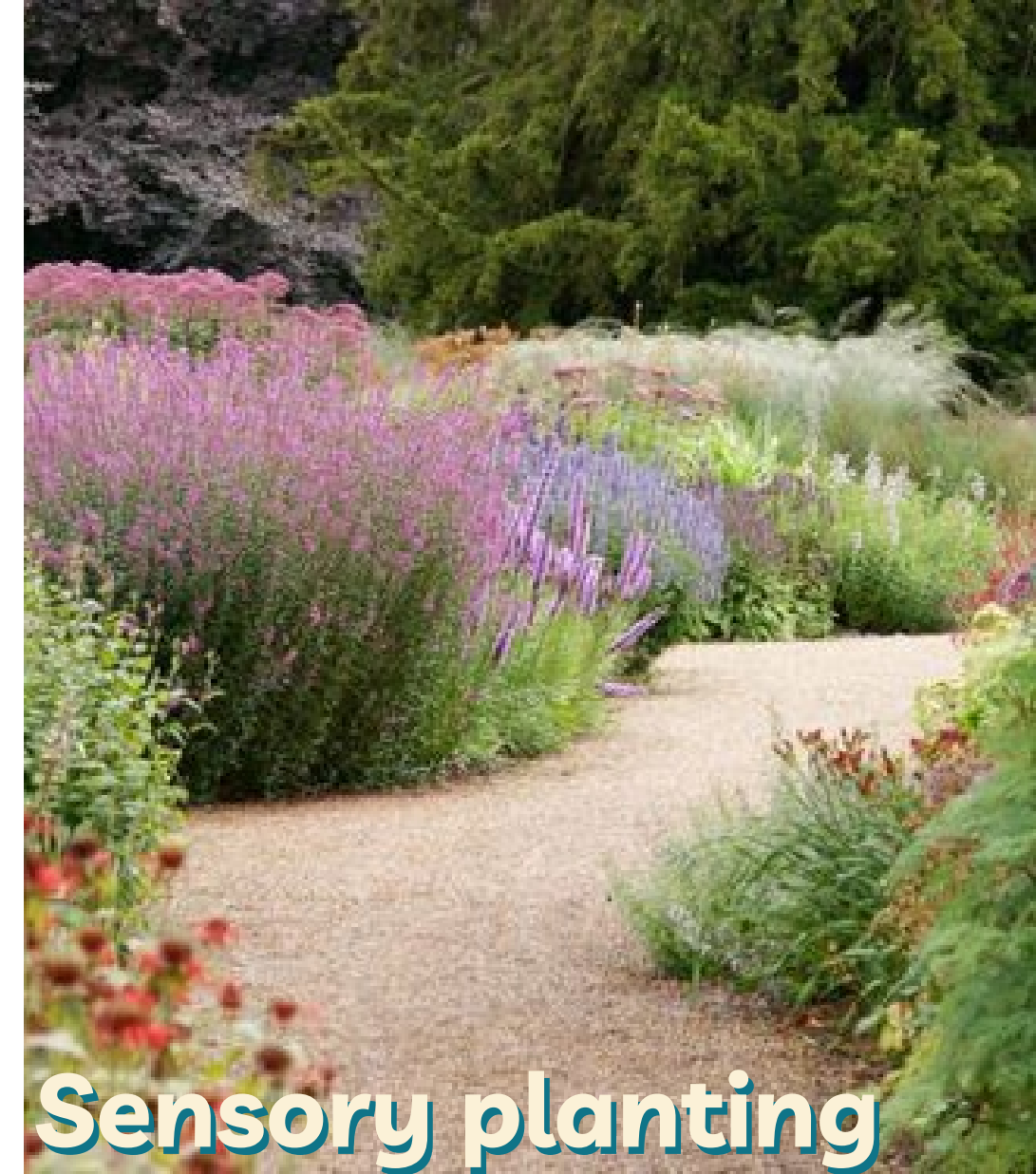
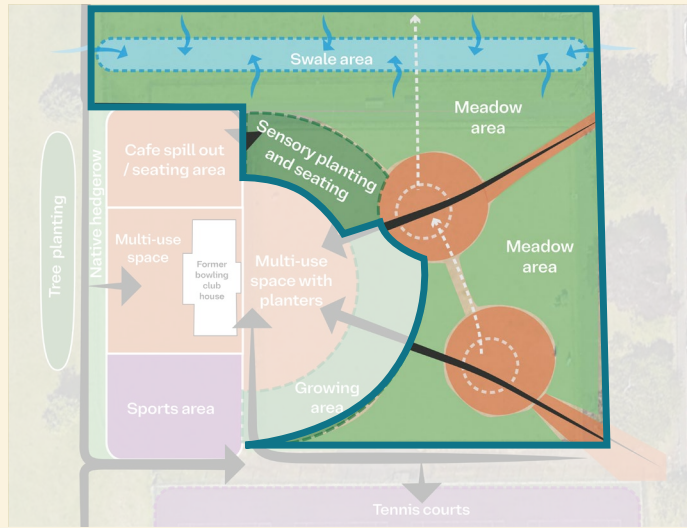
Pétanque courts



Raised planters

Design Development

3.8. Precedents (continued)



Design Development

3.9. Draft designs Options

As part of the design process, a variety of options were developed, with some subtle differences between them. However, a modified version of Option 1 was chosen as the chosen version to proceed with. Modifications to this design were based on comments gathered during the public consultation survey.



Fig. 16 | Draft Option 1



Fig. 17 | Draft Option 2



Fig. 18 | Draft Option 3



Design Development

3.10. Concept Design

The design focuses on the renovation of the existing clubhouse building as a new centre for community events, socialising, pétanque, and social seating. A sensory trail wraps around a generous gathering space, a swale to the north will mitigate flooding and provide natural play.

The design provides an exciting vision for this corner of St Margaret's Park and creates a new destination for people to meet, relax, play and learn.

Key

1. Existing tree planting retained
2. Existing clubhouse to be renovated
3. Proposed tree planting
4. Outdoor picnic area
5. Social seating
6. Pétanque court
7. Flexible community space
8. Raised planters / education area
9. Swale with natural play elements
10. Sensory trail
11. Meadow with landform mounds
12. Improved access with potential for emergency access.
13. New footpath connections to the rest of St Margaret's Park

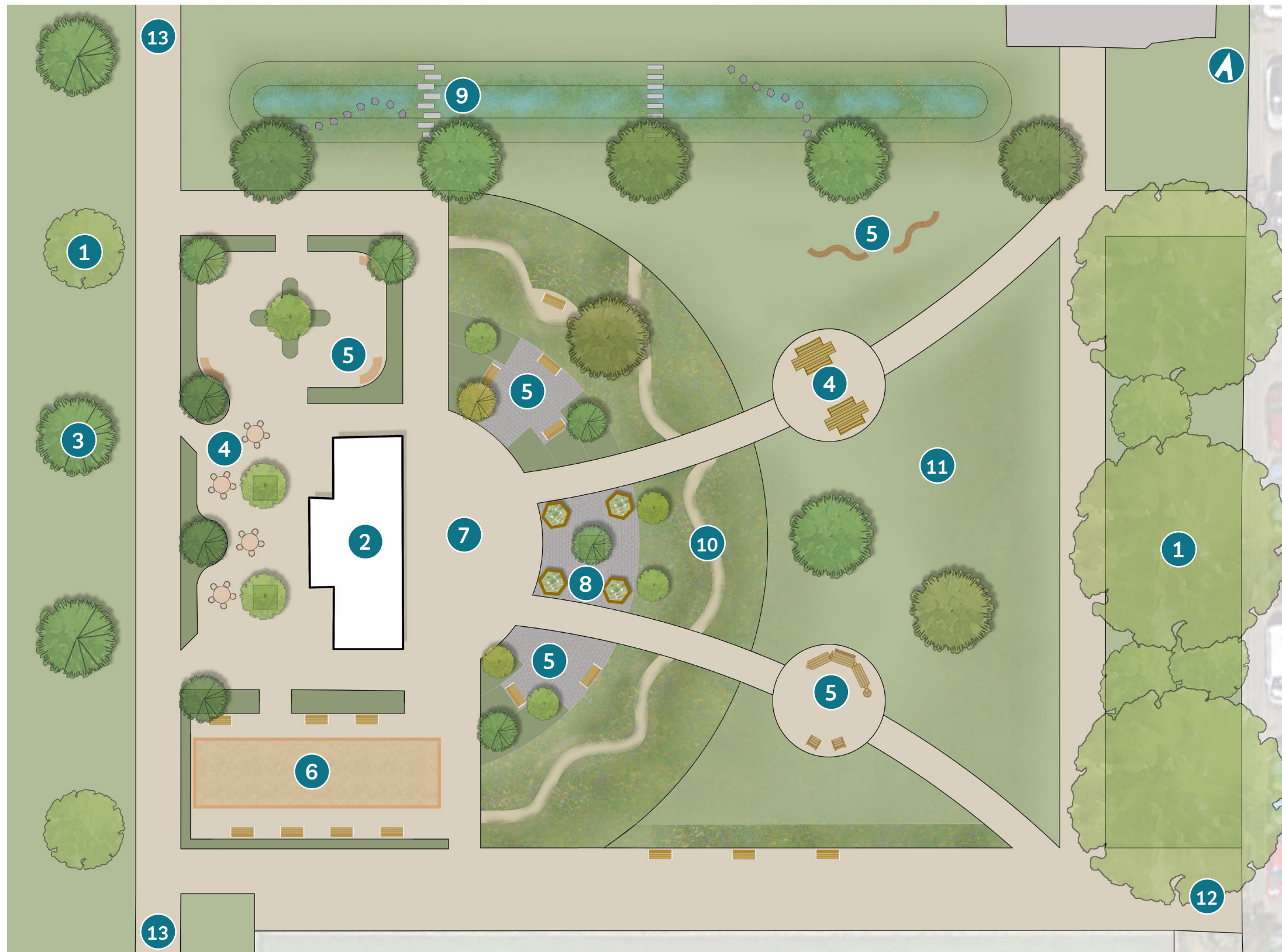


Fig. 19 | Concept design



Design Development

3.11. Visualisation



Going Forward

4.1. Considerations

Several options were considered before developing early concept designs for re-purposing the bowling greens. The final option, “Developing as a Comprehensive Community Resource,” detailed on page 20, reflects the community’s aspirations, addressing all requests comprehensively. This plan balances cost, community benefit, and environmental impact to create a sustainable, inclusive space, maximising health, wellbeing, and environmental outcomes.

Option 1: Doing Nothing / Minimal Intervention

Considerations: No immediate cost. No need for planning or construction. No additional benefits to the community. Sites may deteriorate over time.

Cost: Very low

Option 2: Keeping the Sites as Bowling Greens

Considerations: Preserves traditional use. Minimal changes needed. Limited appeal to broader community. Ongoing maintenance costs.

Cost: Low to moderate

Option 3: Developing the Sites into Allotments/Community Food Growing Gardens

Considerations: Promotes local food production. Engages community in gardening activities. Initial setup costs. Requires community involvement and maintenance.

Cost: Moderate

Option 4: Developing Pavilions as Cafes/Toilets with Seating Areas

Considerations: Generates income through cafes. Provides amenities for visitors. Limited green space. Commercial focus might not appeal to all.

Cost: Moderate to high

Option 5: Developing as a Comprehensive Community Resource

Considerations: Broad community appeal. High social, environmental, and economic benefits. Addresses multiple community needs. High initial costs. Longer time to secure funding and complete.

Cost: High

4.2. Next steps

The next steps for this project are as follows:

- We will seek approval from the Culture and Communities Committee to continue development of proposals for the site. This will include exploration of options such as simplified designs and phased implementation to ensure that we optimise the use of available funds while striving to achieve the community’s vision for these spaces.
- Identification of funding sources will be crucial to realising these plans. We will explore various avenues such as grants, community fundraising initiatives, partnerships with local businesses, and governmental support and make applications as necessary to secure the required funding.
- Planning consent will be required to change the use of the bowling greens. Once funding is identified, a final detailed design will be developed to support a planning application.
- Once funding has been secured, a development scheme will be implemented.
- We will continue collaboration with local stakeholders throughout the entire process.



