

East Dunbartonshire Open Space Strategy 2015 – 2020 Progress Report (February 2015 – March 2017)

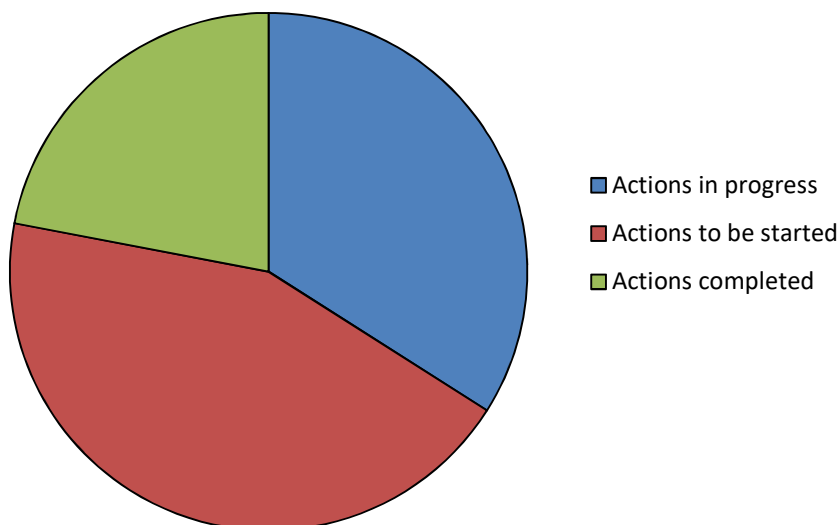
1. Introduction

The Open Space Strategy was approved in January 2015 by the Development and Regeneration Committee. The production of an Open Space Strategy is a requirement of Scottish Planning Policy which requires Local Authorities to provide a framework for current and future open space provision. The Strategy contains opportunities for improving open space across 68 sites and covers all settlement areas.

This report provides detail on the progress made to delivering these opportunities over the first two years of the Strategy. This includes details of any additional opportunities identified or amendments made to the opportunities within the Strategy since its production. An overview of the progress made is provided and then a more in depth look at eight projects is presented covering the themes found in the Strategy's action plan including climate change, biodiversity and food growing. This is followed by the report's conclusion. A full list of all the completed projects and those currently in progress is also provided at the end of the report to show the full extent of the projects being delivered.

2. Overview of opportunities delivered

Over the last two years good progress has been made on the delivery of the Strategy with over half (56%) of all projects either in progress or completed, as shown in the pie chart below. Funding for the delivery of the open space projects has come from a mixture of sources including Council capital and revenue funds, developer contributions and external grant funding.



Since the approval of the Strategy, a number of additional open space improvement projects have been identified and taken forward in response to new external funding opportunities and local demand. Occasional amendments have also been made to the original opportunities if these were no longer relevant or deliverable. These additional projects and amendments are shown in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively.

Table 1: Additional Projects for Open Space Improvements

Site Name	Settlement	Project	Status
Bishopbriggs Public Park	Bishopbriggs	Wildflower, bulb and tree planting including with local school groups. Installation of carvings and new 200m footpath.	In progress – installation of footpath outstanding
Merkland LNR	Kirkintilloch	Apply for Woodland In and Around Towns funding for production of a woodland management plan.	In progress
Boghead Woods	Lenzie	Apply for Woodland In and Around Towns funding for production of a woodland management plan.	Complete – woodland management plan produced.
Tintock Wood	Kirkintilloch	Apply for Woodland In and Around Towns funding for production of a woodland management plan.	In progress
Bearsden Baptist Church	Bearsden	Woodland management works to accommodate Forest School on site.	Complete

Table 2: Amendments to Open Space Opportunities as set out in the Strategy

Site Name	Settlement	Original opportunity	Amended opportunity	Reason for amendment
High Park	Lennoxton	Pond area enhancement	Scrub removal from area of lowland heath	Pond was removed as part of cemetery extension
Westerton Station Open Space	Bearsden	Amenity tree and shrub planting	Creation of wildflower meadow	Tree and shrub planting not appropriate for this site.
Whitefield Pond	Lennoxton	Additional planting of trees and shrubs	Improve amenity features of the site with new stone wall entrances and seating. Naturalise lade including installation of silt trap.	Further tree and shrub planting not appropriate for this site.

3. Detailed project examples by theme

Good quality open space can deliver a number of different benefits to communities. They make an important contribution to the character of settlements and to the quality of life of residents and visitors by providing the setting for a wide range of social interactions and recreational pursuits that support personal and community health and wellbeing. Depending on the type of open space, they can also provide habitat for wildlife and contribute to climate change mitigation through flood prevention and carbon sequestration.

The following pages provide some examples of the projects carried out and the different open space actions these have contributed to including:

- Biodiversity
- Climate Change
- Community Involvement
- Food growing
- Green Networks
- Play

A list of all the open space projects so far completed or which are in progress is provided in Table 3 at the end of this report.

For a full list of all the opportunities outlined in the Open Space Strategy please refer to the document itself online at: <https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/residents/sport-leisure-parks/parks-gardens-and-open-spaces/parks-gardens-and-open-spaces-locations>

Biodiversity

Cluny Park, Bearsden

Opportunity identified in strategy: Access improvements, grassland and wildflower creation and maintenance, tree planting

Opportunity status: Ongoing

2015 Open Space Audit score: 50.41 (good)

Funding and delivery of improvements so far: Sustrans (Community Links), Council (Traffic & Transport, Streetscene Technical Support, Environmental Health and Countryside Ranger Service)

Meadow Creation

Cluny Park is located beside the A81 in Bearsden and lies just to the south of the Bearsden Air Quality Management Area. The use of vegetation to mitigate pollution, especially particulate matter, has been recognised for a number of years. Streetscene Technical Support and Environmental Health have worked together to improve Cluny Park through the creation of a 4000m² wildflower meadow. The meadow creates an attractive and colourful feature within the park as well as removing harmful pollutants from the atmosphere and providing habitat for variety of wildlife such as butterflies, bumblebees, birds and amphibians.

The meadow was initially created by sowing a wildflower mix but was subsequently enhanced with the help of volunteer groups led by the Countryside Ranger Service who together planted 3, 400 pot-grown wildflowers including Ragged Robin, Meadow Cranesbill, Cowslip and Devil's-bit Scabious. Volunteers included pupils from Killermont Primary School and Boclair Academy, staff from Morgan Stanley and enthusiastic members of the local community.



Preparations for meadow creation



New meadow showing ox-eye daisy, ragged robin and meadow cranesbill

Access Improvements

In addition to the meadow creation, a new shared use tarmac path has been created through the park following previous desire lines. This covered 270m and linked access through the park to the adjacent Maryhill Road. As part of this improvement work a new wooden bench and entrance feature were also installed.



The Cluny Park bear

Future Work

Future work will include the ongoing maintenance of the wildflower meadow through an annual cut and lift and the addition of Yellow Rattle plants to the meadow where grasses are dominant.

Climate Change

Colquhoun Park, Bearsden

Opportunity identified in strategy: Redesign park: flood mitigation work, wetland creation, access improvements, biodiversity enhancements and relocation of play park

Opportunity status: Complete

2015 Open Space Audit score: 74.37 (very good)

Funding and delivery of improvements so far: Council (Technical and Engineering, Streetscene Technical Support)

Climate change is a serious and global threat to biodiversity, including people. One of the expected impacts of climate change is more frequent flooding. Winters are predicted to become wetter with more regular heavy rainfall and floods considered extreme today could become more common in the future.

Some residents of the Colquhoun Park area within Bearsden were experiencing the impacts of flooding first hand and this was only expected to get worse with the impacts of climate change. Numerous historic flooding events have occurred in Colquhoun Park since the 1980s, with significant flooding experienced in 2006, 2012 and 2013.

In order to tackle the problem a holistic and sustainable approach was taken to find a solution. The Colquhoun Park Flood Alleviation Scheme is based on the water attenuation properties of biodiversity and seeks to provide flood protection via habitat creation and enhancement. The design included:

- creation of a large wetland area
- re-instatement and enhancement of a former skating pond
- de-culverting a section of the Ledcameroch Burn through the wetland
- wildflower meadows
- removal of invasive non-native species
- access improvements
- relocation and upgrade of play facilities.



Work in progress: Construction of pond and wetland area, 2014

The wetland and pond provide additional storage during high rainfall events, easing the capacity pressure on the existing underground drainage system. These features also provide an excellent habitat for local wildlife and an amenity asset for local residents. The islands created within the pond provide nesting sites for waterbirds.



New wetland



Biodiversity enhancements at the former skating pond

Community Involvement

Cairnhill Woods, Bearsden

Opportunity identified in strategy: Path upgrade, woodland thinning, outdoor classroom, rustic play, interpretation and wetland creation

Opportunity status: Ongoing

2015 Open Space Audit score: 64 (good)

Funding and delivery of improvements so far: Council (Streetscene Technical Support, Countryside Rangers), local community

The Cairnhill Woods Group formed in 2008 and includes an active group of local volunteers. The Group have worked closely with the Council on a number of projects and have been successful at gaining grant funding for open space improvements including the installation of various carvings throughout the woods. These were introduced to try and encourage more people to visit and enjoy the woods. The Girl Guides have helped fund the installation of further carvings to create a 'fairy dell' at the site to commemorate the 50 year anniversary of the Girl Guides.

The Cairnhill Woods Group have also been involved in a combination of practical tasks, creation of a nature trail leaflet and smartphone app, wildlife recording and the organisation of community events and activities.



Installation of wooden bear carvings



Cairnhill 'fairy dell'

Woodland Management

The Group have been actively involved in removing Rhododendron from the woodland to create space for native understory and ground flora. Planting of native trees and wildflowers such as Red Campion and Primrose has also been undertaken by the Group's volunteers.

Two small ponds have also been created in the woods to further enhance them for biodiversity.

A woodland management plan has been produced for the site, the development of which was funded by a Woodland In and Around Towns (WIAT) grant.



Volunteers from the Cairnhill Woods Group

Future Work

Further Rhododendron eradication works are necessary as well as the removal of self-seeded Sycamore from the woodland. The main path through the site will also be upgraded.

Food Growing

King George V Park, Bearsden

Opportunity identified in strategy: Wildflower and meadow creation, signature tree planting, upgrading of play facilities

Opportunity status: Ongoing

2015 Open Space Audit score: 76.13 (excellent)

Funding and delivery of improvements so far: Council (Streetscene Technical Support, Countryside Rangers), local community

Tree Planting

As part of meadow creation and tree planting at King George V Park, 16 fruit trees have been planted including plum, apple, damson and pear. The trees have established well and are already bearing fruit. 56 additional trees have also been planted. Local members of the King George V Park Group have also been involved in the tree planting.



Tree planting with the Countryside Rangers

Meadow Creation

To compliment the tree planting a new 600m² wildflower meadow has been created using a wildflower turf. The park has also been enhanced by pupils from Boclair Academy who, as part of the John Muir Trust Award, have planted pot grown wildflowers and snowdrop bulbs. The wildflowers

add a splash of colour around the park as well as providing valuable nectar to pollinating insects and food for birds.

Future Work

The opportunity in the Open Space Strategy also highlights the need for new play facilities in the park. The Council's Streetscene Technical Support team is currently working with the local community through the King George V Park Group to create an action plan for the park which will provide direction for future improvements.

Green Networks

Balgrochan Marsh, Lennoxton

Opportunity identified in strategy: Restoration and enhancement

Opportunity status: Complete

2015 Open Space Audit score: 78.76 (excellent)

Funding and delivery of improvements so far: Council (Streetscene Technical Support, Countryside Rangers), WREN, local community

Balgrochan Marsh is a Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS), protected for its biodiversity value. The aim of the opportunity in the Open Space Strategy was to restore and enhance the marsh habitat for wildlife but by combining this with access improvements and community involvement, the project fulfils more objectives of the Strategy and contributes to the green network by promoting biodiversity, improving access and local amenity and contributing to community health and wellbeing. The site is now not only improved for biodiversity but also for the local community, allowing them to visit and use the site as a place to experience nature.

The habitat restoration and enhancement involved planting wildflowers at the site with local school children from Lennoxton Primary, removing encroaching scrub and creating 11 shallow pools throughout the marsh which will provide open water for breeding amphibians, dragonflies and damselflies. Members of the Whitefield Pond Group have also been involved in the project.



One of the new ponds for amphibians and dragonflies

To improve the site for people, making it more attractive and easier to access, a new 90m raised path was installed together with entrance markers and an information point showing the wildlife that can be found at the marsh.



New boundary stone at Balgrochan Marsh

Play

Skate parks (Lennox Park, Milngavie and Luggie Park, Kirkintilloch)

Skate parks provide areas of specialised play and have proven very popular with local children. Both Lennox Park and Luggie Park had existing skate parks. However, the skating facility in Lennox Park was in need of an upgrade and after requests from the local community the Luggie Park facility has been expanded to include a junior skate park for younger children and those learning.

Lennox Park, Milngavie

Opportunity identified in strategy: Improve design of the Skate park and improve recreational facilities and access

Opportunity status: Ongoing

2015 Open Space Audit score: 75.31 (excellent)

Funding and delivery of improvements so far: Council (Streetscene Technical Support)

The existing skate park was over 12 years old having been originally installed in 2005. The new skate park was completed in March 2017 at a cost of £120,000. The new facility has different zones for users with different experience levels meaning it can be used by both beginners and experienced skaters. It can also be used by those on scooters and BMX bikes too. Pupils from Douglas Academy and members of Milngavie Community Development Trust were involved in the design process and helped choose the final winning design.



Lennox Park skate park, before



Lennox Park skate park, after

Luggie Park, Kirkintilloch

Opportunity identified in strategy: Broadleaved woodland habitat creation, path enhancement and open space improvements

Opportunity status: Ongoing

2015 Open Space Audit score: 65.36 (very good)

Funding and delivery of improvements so far: Council (Streetscene Technical Support), sportscotland (Legacy 2014 Active Places Fund)

Luggie Park has an existing 1200m² skate park, built in 2009, which is well used by the local skating community and those from further afield. To compliment this facility a new beginners skate park has been built adjacent to the existing skate park, which allows new or younger users to develop their skills before moving on to the larger facility. The beginners skate park will hopefully encourage more visitors to the park to get active and enjoy the skate park.



Luggie Park beginners skate park, before (with existing facility in the background)



Luggie Park beginners skate park, after

Park Burn Open Space, Lenzie

Opportunity identified in strategy: Upgrade play facilities and park space functions. Opportunity for broadleaved woodland and wetland habitat mosaic creation and core path enhancement

Opportunity status: Ongoing

2015 Open Space Audit score: 56.57 (good)

Funding and delivery of improvements so far: Council (Streetscene Technical Support)

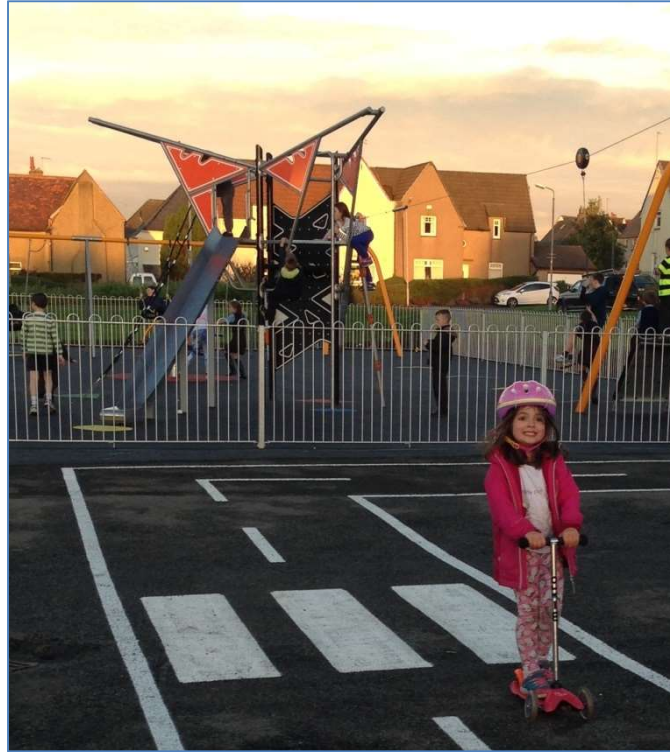
The play area at Park Burn Open Space was upgraded following consultation with local residents and pupils at Holy Family Primary School. The upgrade included new fencing and surfacing and the introduction of two separate zones for different age groups; toddlers and juniors. The new facility also comprises a ball court and an area of cycling and scooters. The play area is now a much more attractive and engaging space for children and families.



Park Burn Open Space play area, before



Park Burn Open Space play area, after



Park Burn Open Space play area, after – with new cycle and scooter zone in foreground

4. Conclusions

From the eight projects presented in detail and the full summary list of works in Table 3 it is clear the Streetscene Technical Support team have led and delivered a large volume of work over the first two years of the Open Space Strategy. The projects improve open space for the residents of East Dunbartonshire and also deliver on a number of additional Council priorities such as helping to fulfil statutory duties for biodiversity and climate change, and also provide multiple benefits to the area.


The implementation of the Open Space Strategy directly delivers on sustainability and health and wellbeing outcomes of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). It has involved partnership working across the Council and with external agencies. In addition local community groups and volunteers have played an important role in the delivery of a number of the projects.



Further progress reports will be presented to the Place, Neighbourhood and Corporate Assets Committee with a full mid-term review of the Strategy scheduled for 2018. This will include consultation with local communities on the success of project delivery and the selection of priority projects. This mid-term review will inform the final review and update of the Strategy in 2020.


Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate the importance of remaining flexible during the delivery of the Open Space Strategy to ensure additional opportunities for funding and/or partnership working can be taken advantage of. It is therefore intended that the Streetscene Technical Support team continue to identify and take forward additional opportunities where they are relevant to the Strategy objectives and priorities and where resources allow.



Due to the multiple benefits good quality open space can provide to local communities and the environment it may be appropriate to also report the progress of this Open Space Strategy through additional mechanisms to highlight the connections to other priorities and agendas. This could potentially generate further opportunities for partnership working. Additional reporting mechanisms will be investigated as part of the mid-term review.


Table 3: All open space projects completed or in progress



Site	Settlement	OSS Opportunity	Works carried out	Status
Kilmardinny Loch	Bearsden	Car park upgrade and extension	Improvements made to the car park area including an extension.	Complete
Colquhoun Park	Bearsden	Redesign park: flood mitigation work, wetland creation, access improvements, biodiversity enhancements and relocation of play park	Large wetland area created including de-culverting of Ledcameroch Burn and former skating pond re-instated and enhanced for biodiversity. Play facilities upgraded. Invasive non-native species removed and access improvements carried out.	Complete
Baljaffray Open Space	Bearsden	Upgrade play facilities and park space functions	Play facilities upgraded 	Complete
Heather Avenue Open Space	Bearsden	Play area upgrade required	Play facilities upgraded including the creation of separate Junior and Toddler areas.	Complete


Site	Settlement	OSS Opportunity	Works carried out	Status
				
Thorn Park	Bearsden	New play area required	New play area installed including separate Junior and Toddler areas. 	Complete
King George V Park	Bearsden	Wildflower meadow creation, signature tree planting, upgrading of play facilities	Meadow and tree planting (56 light standards, 16 fruit trees and 600m ² wildflower turf). Wildflowers and bulbs also planted by Boclair Academy pupils.	In progress
Cluny Park	Bearsden	Access improvements, grassland and wildflower creation and maintenance,	Meadow and tree planting (4000m ² meadow and 28 trees). Wildflowers also planted by	Complete



Site	Settlement	OSS Opportunity	Works carried out	Status
		tree planting	Boclair Academy pupils. New 270m path, carved entrance feature and benches installed.	
Templehill Woods	Bearden	Path upgrade, woodland thinning and wetland creation	300 whips planted by Boclair Academy pupils. Ongoing removal of invasive non-native Himalayan Balsam with volunteers. Funding being sought from Woodland In and Around Times (WIAT) for the production of a woodland management plan.	In progress
Cairnhill Woods	Bearsden	Path upgrade, woodland thinning, outdoor classroom, rustic play, interpretation and wetland creation	Management plan produced following success Woodland in and Around Town (WIAT). Funding now being sought for implementation. Ongoing removal of non-native Rhododendron with volunteers.	In progress
Westerton Park	Bearsden	Upgrade park facilities: accessibility, shrub and bulb planting	Play park upgraded and new seating installed, poppy meadow creation (80 m ²), community tree planting with 27 trees planted. Fruit and ornamental trees have been planted instead of shrubs as more appropriate for the site. 	In progress
Antonine Gardens	Milngavie	Redesign landscape area/gateway	90m ² of new bedding plants/herbaceous	Complete


Site	Settlement	OSS Opportunity	Works carried out	Status
		feature in collaboration with Milngavie in Bloom	border installed restoration of signage and trees removed to open up views. 	
Baldernock Cemetery	Milngavie	Enhance the landscaping and create a memorial garden	40m2 herbaceous garden created. 	Complete
Milngavie Reservoirs	Milngavie	Work with the community and Scottish Water to help implement actions as set out in the Milngavie Reservoirs Conservation and Recreation Management Plan	Annual wildflower meadows created in raised beds. Bulb and tree planting carried out as part of community events.	In progress

Site	Settlement	OSS Opportunity	Works carried out	Status
				
Barloch Moor	Milngavie	Upgrade park facilities	Funding being sought from Woodland In and Around Times (WIAT) for the production of a woodland management plan. Ongoing removal of non-native Himalayan Balsam and skunk cabbage with volunteers.	In progress
Allander Park	Milngavie	Open space upgrades and wetland / grassland creation	Path repairs carried out on 300m section of the West Highland Way. Funding being sought from Woodland In and Around Times (WIAT) for the production of a woodland management plan.	In progress
Mains Park	Milngavie	Wildflower creation and woodland management, biodiversity improvements. Open space upgrades	Path repairs completed. Consultation being carried out with residents to find out what improvements they would like to see in the park.	In progress

Site	Settlement	OSS Opportunity	Works carried out	Status
				
Lennox Park	Milngavie	Improve design of the Skate park and improve recreational facilities and access	Redesign and installation of new skate park completed. Ongoing removal of non-native skunk cabbage with volunteers.	In progress
Clon Crescent	Bishopbriggs	Play equipment upgrade	Upgrade of current facility completed involving the creation of separate Junior and Toddler Zones with an external zip-slide. 	Complete
Low Moss	Bishopbriggs	Access improvements, wetland creation, biodiversity improvements and interpretation required	Ongoing monitoring of peatland restoration works carried out in 2014.	In progress

Site	Settlement	OSS Opportunity	Works carried out	Status
High Moss	Bishopbriggs	Potential for improved access from Westerhill to Bishopbriggs along the southern border	Ongoing monitoring of peatland restoration works carried out in 2014.	In progress
West Balgrochan Marsh	Torrance	Potential LNR if appropriate management is undertaken (access improvements, wetland enhancement, grassland management, formation of Friends of Group etc)	10 amphibian pools created throughout site. Interpretation carving installed which shows images of species found on site Funded through CSGN grant from Torrance greenspace group. Fence erected and willow planted alongside path to deter dogs from entering wetland area and disturbing wildlife. 	In progress
Woodmill Park	Torrance	Opportunities exist to enhance recreational and biodiversity potential	Woodland thinning carried out, woodland trail created and 3 picnic tables installed by Torrance Community Initiative.	In progress
Woodhead Park	Kirkintilloch	Policy planting and ornamental beds	8 trees planted and a herbaceous border created.	Complete

Site	Settlement	OSS Opportunity	Works carried out	Status
				
Luggie Park	Kirkintilloch	Broadleaved woodland habitat creation, path enhancement and open space improvements	Mini skate park installed. Funding being sought from Woodland In and Around Times (WIAT) for the production of a woodland management plan.	In progress
Langmuir Park	Kirkintilloch	New woodland creation and open space enhancements	Play facilities upgraded involving the creation of separate Junior and Toddler areas. 	In progress
Rosebank Park	Kirkintilloch	Upgrade park facilities	New Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) created including adult fitness area.	Complete

Site	Settlement	OSS Opportunity	Works carried out	Status
Tintock Park	Kirkintilloch	Upgrade park facilities	Play equipment upgraded	Complete
Park Burn Open Space	Lenzie	Upgrade play facilities and park space functions. Opportunity for broadleaved woodland and wetland habitat mosaic creation and core path enhancement	Current facility upgraded involving the creation of separate Junior and Toddler Zones, Ball Court and Cycle Zone.	In progress
Lenzie Moss	Lenzie	Additional dams and upgrading of boardwalk, birch removal	Ongoing monitoring of peatland restoration works carried out in 2014. Further birch removal work carried out.	In progress
Easter Garngaber Open Space	Lenzie	Upgrade park facilities	New play equipment installed.	Complete
Whitefield Pond	Lennoxton	Additional planting of trees and shrubs	New entrance feature (stone wall and rustic gate) installed. Carved log seats installed. And meadow created. 	In progress
Redhills Woodland	Lennoxton	Upgrade the path network and entrances, signage to and around the site, woodland management	Path-side vegetation cut back. Funding being sought from Woodland In and Around Times (WIAT) for the production of a woodland management plan.	In progress
Balgrochan Marsh	Lennoxton	Restoration and enhancement	Construction of new raised path (90m), interpretation, information point (stone monolith) and boundary site marker stones	Complete

Site	Settlement	OSS Opportunity	Works carried out	Status
			installed. Wildflower planting with local school pupils and scrub removal via WREN funding. In total 11 shallow pools suitable for amphibians and dragonflies created. Tree thinning also carried out.	
Chapel Square	Lennoxton	Upgrade open space facilities	Recreational function of the space has been improved through access works and amenity planting. Funded by local community through Stalled Space grant.	Complete
Milton Public Park	Milton of Campsie	Additional recreational improvements required	Preparatory works being carried out for upgrading play area.	In progress
Antermony Rd (Craigfoot Field)	Milton of Campsie	Potential site for allotments	Preliminary investigation works carried out to test the feasibility of the site for allotments. Community consultation complete with much support for allotment from the local community.	In progress