

For meeting on:

22 FEBRUARY 2022

Agenda **2022**

MUGDOCK PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



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East Dunbartonshire Council

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AGENDA

Mugdock Park Joint Management Committee

Tuesday 22 February 2022 at 10am

Cisco Webex Meeting

	Item	Page No's
1.	Welcome and Apologies	
2.	Presentation of the Draft Mugdock Strategy 2022 – 2027 by Gillian Smith, Technical Director, Ironside Farrar.	
3.	Minute of meeting of Mugdock Park Joint Management Committee of 19 October 2021. (Copy herewith).	1 - 4
4.	Matters Arising.	
5.	General Progress Report October 2021 – January 2022 – Report by Depute Chief Executive. (Copy herewith).	5 - 55
6.	<u>AOCB</u>	
7.	Date of next meeting –	

Minute of meeting of the Mugdock Park Joint Management Committee held via Cisco Webex on **Tuesday, 19 October 2021**

Representing
East Dunbartonshire
Council: Councillors **GIBBONS, MOODY, O'NEIL and THORNTON**

Representing
Stirling Council: Councillor **HUTCHISON**

In Attendance: A. **Davie** Depute Chief Executive
M. **Coulshed** Team Leader Mugdock Country Park
P. **Grieve** Development Officer – Mugdock Country Park
F. **Lambert** Committee Services Officer
T. **McMenamin** Executive Officer – Roads & Environment
G. **Morrison** Principal Accountant
J. **Robertson** Chief Finance Officer
G. **Telfer** Greenspace & Streetscene Manager

Also in
Attendance:

P. **Lindsay** Audit Scotland
I. **McAllister** Milngavie Community Council
M. **McFadden** Audit Scotland
K. **McFall** Audit Scotland
E. **McMullen** Mugdock Trust

Councillor Gibbons (Chair) presiding

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Ferretti and Fischer, Colin Mackay, Julia Hutchison and Iain Boardley.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Moody, nominated Councillor Jane Hutchison, Stirling Council as Vice-Chair to the Committee.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE MUGDOCK COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF 24 NOVEMBER 2020

There was submitted and approved Minute of Meeting of the Mugdock Park Joint Management Committee of 24 November 2020, copies of which had previously been circulated.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Minute.

**MUGDOCK PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE,
19 OCTOBER 2021**

5. FINANCE: 2021 AUDITED ACCOUNTS MUGDOCK COUNTRY PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

There was submitted Report CFO/024/21/GM by the Chief Finance Officer, copies of which had previously been circulated, presenting the Committee with Audited Annual Accounts for 2020/21, Audit Scotland's proposed Annual Audit Report and the required disclosures under International Standards on Auditing (ISA) 580. Full details were contained within the Report and the attached Appendices.

The Chief Finance Officer thanked officers for the work undertaken and Audit Scotland for discharging the draft through to the final accounts. He advised that it had been challenging for the Park and the auditors to complete this within the timescales and he thanked officers for the Report and for all of the diligence in the background.

M. McFadden, Audit Scotland, was heard in further explanation of the Report and she advised that the annual accounts had been completed. She advised of an adjustment of a trivial nature which had since been rectified. She highlighted that a draft letter of representation required to be signed by the Section 95 Officer and returned prior to the certificate being issued. With regard to Page 25, Future Funding, she highlighted that the Minute of Agreement required to be signed as soon as possible to ensure that future funding had been secured for the park.

Following consideration, Councillor Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Moody, moved approval of the 2020/21 Audited Annual Accounts for Mugdock Country Park.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed as follows:-

- a) to note the required disclosures under ISA 580 with Appendix B to this disclosure reflecting the letter issued to Audit Scotland on the committee date;
- b) to approve the proposed Annual Audit Report from Audit Scotland including the Action Plan at Appendix 1 and associated management actions therein;
- c) to note that following agreement of the proposed Annual Audit Report it be finalised for issue;
- d) to approve the 2020/21 Audited Annual Accounts for Mugdock Country Park; and
- e) to express thanks to Audit Scotland for their completion of this work.

6. GENERAL PROGRESS REPORT JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2021

There was submitted Report PNCA/086/21/MC by the Depute Chief Executive, copies of which had previously been circulated, providing the Mugdock Joint Management Committee with an update for the 3 month period covering July – September 2021 in relation to operational matters, events income generation and projects. The Report provided an update on the progress of this to date. Full details were contained within the Report.

Members noted that the Minute of Agreement, 2019 – 2024 had been agreed by the Legal Teams within East Dunbartonshire and Stirling Council and would now progress to signing.

**MUGDOCK PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE,
19 OCTOBER 2021**

The Team Leader Mugdock Country Park was heard in further explanation of the Report and in particular highlighted that progress was being made and usual activities were resuming. She provided an update in relation to the following matters: outdoor events; annual Panto; Forest Schools; the Walled Garden, pathways and lighting to the Bandstand; and the Observatory.

The Team Leader Mugdock Country Park referred to the new strategy 2022 – 2027 and advised that there had been liaison with a consultancy company regarding land management, business planning and income generation. She advised that she would be able to provide an update at the next meeting of the Committee.

With regard to ICT at the park, the Team Leader Mugdock Country Park advised that BT Openreach had been planning routes to improve the Broadband. In relation to anti-social behaviour at Craigend Quarry, she advised that colleagues in Community Safety were assisting in this regard, which had been welcomed by visitors.

The Team Leader Mugdock Country Park advised that she was hoping to obtain external funding to help with the cost of installing a defibrillator at the park. She undertook to provide an update in this regard.

With regard to the waste water treatment plant, and in response to comments from Councillor Gibbons regarding the requirement for this to be replaced, the Team Leader Mugdock Country Park advised that this was being dealt with by Major Assets Team. She hoped to provide an update at the next meeting of the Management Committee.

With regard to Paragraph 3.16, new observatory, and in response to a question from Councillor Moody regarding a specific date, the Team Leader Mugdock Country Park advised that there had been a walk through with the builder and they were trying to finalise a date, hopefully early November 2021.

Following further consideration, the Committee agreed as follows:-

- a) to note the content of the Report;
- b) to note progress made in delivering events, projects and income generation against a background of covid-19 restrictions;
- c) to note developments reported in relation to the new Mugdock Strategy 2022 – 27; and
- d) to note the update on the Minute of Agreement 2019 – 2024.

7. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

The Management Committee agreed the following dates:

Tuesdays, 22nd February and 14th June 2022 at 10am.

8. AOCB

**MUGDOCK PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE,
19 OCTOBER 2021**

In response to a question from Councillor Moody regarding the possibility of the meetings being held in person, the Depute Chief Executive advised that this was the aspiration, however, at present, she was unable to confirm when this would be the case. She advised that hybrid technologies were being developed and she was hopeful to provide an update to the Committee in the New Year.

With regard to the Clan Graham, the Team Leader Mugdock Country Park advised that the Clan were intending to visit the park in June/July 2022. She added that the Park would provide hospitality for the visitors.

MUGDOCK PARK 22 FEBRUARY 2022
JOINT MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE

PNCA/013/22/MC DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CONTACT OFFICER: MARY COULSHED, TEAM LEADER MUGDOCK
0141 956 6100

SUBJECT TITLE: GENERAL PROGRESS REPORT OCTOBER 2021 -
JANUARY 2022

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1** Mugdock Country Park is jointly owned and managed by East Dunbartonshire and Stirling Councils. The purpose of this Report is to provide the Mugdock Joint Management Committee with an update for the 4 month period covering October 2022 – January 2022 in relation to operational matters, events, income generation and projects. The report provides an overview of the development of the new Mugdock Strategy 2022-2027 and an update on the progress of this to date.
- 1.2** The Minute of Agreement, 2019-2024, has been agreed and signed by the Legal teams within East Dunbartonshire and Stirling Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Joint Management Committee:

- 2.1** Notes the contents of the report;
- 2.2** Notes progress made in delivering events, projects and income generation against a background of covid-19 restrictions;
- 2.3** Notes developments reported in relation to the new Mugdock Strategy 2022-27; and
- 2.4** Notes the update on the Minute of Agreement 2019-2024.

ANN DAVIE
DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

3.0 **BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

3.1 In the period October 2021- January 2022 restrictions relating to covid-19 have continued to ease at Mugdock Country Park. This has meant that a range of activities have been re-started in line with government guidelines.

3.2 **Visitor Statistics** - Visitor numbers are monitored on a monthly basis and form one of the key indicators for Mugdock Country Park. Table 1 details the footfall since Jan 2018 with the gap from March 2020 until August 2021 relating to counters failing at the start of lockdown and being replaced in 2021. It can be noted that there is a rise in visitor numbers compared with previous years and this supports other evidence that the Park has become a lot busier during the pandemic.

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
January	41,446	42,143	42,510		tbc
February	46,568	47,123	46,993		
March	44,369	46,346			
April	63,529	64,639			
May	65,040	63,032			
June	64,138	65,603			
July	63,104	63,647			
August	62,384	62,002			
September	59,244	58,284		67,162	
October	48,802	48,232		68,539	
November	41,714	42,877		65,532	
December	36,405	35,694		tbc	
Total	638,761	639,622	89,503		

Table 1

3.3 **Mugdock Strategy 2022-2027** – Following the appointment of Ironside Farrar (PNCA/86/21/MC) a process of review, benchmarking and visitor/stakeholder consultation has taken place to inform the first draft of the proposed new strategy. Having heard the presentation by Gillian Smith, Technical Director, Ironside Farrar, the Joint Management Committee has the opportunity to comment and request further information.

3.4 **Income generation:** Although income fell during lockdown it is picking up again through events, land hire, trading and rentals. Indoor space is starting to be hired out with the launch of the Mugdock Wellbeing Week, which may become a regular feature, if successful.

3.5 **Events** - the Park was able to carry out a winter programme of activities which took place mainly outdoors. These included nature events for children, crafts, guided walks, den building, stargazing and self-led trails.

3.6 The annual Panto came back to Mugdock in December and Fizzgig Theatre Company put on a well-received performance of Snow White and the Teeny Weeny McTitchies.

Only 3 performances were cancelled due to a change in guideline from Boxing Day onwards and some ticket holders were able to swap to earlier performances so didn't miss out. The theatre company also offered an online version for schools which reached 20 schools.

- 3.7 The main events programme at Mugdock from Oct 21-Feb 22 is contained within the Park's What's On Guide and covers a five month period. Copies of the guide are available in public buildings, the Visitor Centre, Park businesses and it is promoted through the Park's website, Facebook and social media. The range of events which took place can be seen in table 2 below. Ranger led events were attended by 287 people and brought in £728 with crafts and trails reaching 499 people and bringing in £1,196. The Panto was seen by 1690 individuals and 20 schools and brought in £4,300 which brings the events total for the period to **£6,224**.

WINTER EVENTS 2021-22		
Ranger led Events		
EVENT	ATTENDEES	AGE GROUP
Wildlife Weans, Mugdock: Den Building	20	5 years and under (adult supervision)
Wildlife Weans, Mugdock: Den Building	5	6-7 year olds (adult supervision)
Sensational Safari: Lennoxton	5	8-12 year olds
Sensational Safari: Mugdock	13	5 years and under (adult supervision)
Sensational Safari: Mugdock	5	6-7 year olds (adult supervision)
Guided Walk: Autumn Magic	6	Families
Forest School: Whittling around the fire	2	12-16 year olds
Forest School: Towering Trees	3	8-12 year olds
Stargazing at Mugdock x 2	34	Adults and 7+ years
Fungi on the Hill, Twechar	8	Families
Sensory Sunday – Forest School for wee folk	3	6-7 years old
Sensory Sunday – Forest School for wee folk	12	2-5 years old
Customer Services Events		
Craft with Clay (4 sessions)	33	6-10 year olds
Halloween Trail (self led)	245	Children (adult supervision)
Xmas Trail (self led)	221	Children (adult supervision)
Annual Events		
Panto: Sleeping Beauty	1690	Families/Adults
Special online version for schools	20 schools	School groups
Future Events		
A Wellbeing Week in the Park will take place from 21 st -28 th February and includes taster sessions for Qigong, Doodling for Relaxation, Yoga, Pilates, Forest Bathing and Mindfulness.		
The next What's On Guide will run from March to August 2022 with a packed programme for the next 6 months. Some of the events taking place will be: Stargazing, Forest School, Sensational Safari, Wildlife Weans, Easter Activities. In addition, there will be a range of external events which the Park will promote including Scottish Opera's Pop Up Opera, Bandstand music, Canifit race and a theatre performance by Tram Direct.		

- 3.8 Education/Community Groups** - The following tables detail formal education and community groups, which participated in Ranger led activities over the report period within Mugdock Country Park. The sessions with Community Groups involved 35 Brownies and brought in £105 and the total amount from schools was £4,910 bringing the total for Oct 21 – Feb 22 to **£5,015**.

Community and Education Groups

Name of Community Group	Participants
1 st Bishopbriggs Cubs – Nature Games & Story Telling	20
23 rd Bearsden Brownies – Tree Trail and Story Telling	15
Name of School	Participants
OCTOBER 21	
Milngavie Primary School - Tree I.D, shelters, stories, minibeast hunting.	P1&2: 8 pupils x 12 sessions
Lennoxton Primary School - Tree I.D, shelters, stories, minibeast hunting.	P5: 8 pupils x 6 sessions
Balfron High School - Whittling, Tree I.D, wildlife discovering	S3: 8 pupils x 1 session
Mosshead Primary School - Whittling, minibeast hunting, storytelling,	P4: 12 pupils x 1 session
Meadowburn Primary – Nature walk & shelter building	P4/5: 19 pupils x 1 session and 22 pupils x 1 session
Balmuirdy Primary – Tree ID	P5: 8 pupils x 2 sessions
NOVEMBER 21	
Balmuirdy Primary School - Whittling	P5: 8 pupils x 8 sessions
Lennoxton Primary School - Whittling, natural craft	P7: 8 pupils x 8 sessions
Balfron High School - Whittling, fire building	S3: 8 pupils x 4 sessions
Meadowburn Primary - Nature walk and shelter building	P3/4/6/7: 25 pupils x 4 sessions P1/2: 30 pupils x 1 session P2/3 22 pupils x 1 session P2/3 24 pupils x 1 session P2: 19 pupils x 1 session
Mosshead Primary School - Natural craft, storytelling	P4: 12 pupils x 4 sessions
DECEMBER 21	
Balmuirdy Primary School - Tree I.D, whittling	P5: 8 pupils x 6 sessions
Balfron High School - Natural craft, fire building	S3: 8 pupils x 1 session
Mosshead Primary School - Tree I.D, wildlife discovering, storytelling	P4: 12 pupils x 2 sessions
JANUARY 22	
Meadowburn Primary School - Nature walk and orienteering	P7: 25 pupils x 2 sessions P1: 24 pupils x 1 session P4/5: 33 pupils x 1 session P5: 19 pupils x 1 session P6/7: 31 pupils x 1 session P4/5: 22 pupils x 1 session P6: 30 pupils x 1 session
Balmuirdy Primary School - Tree I.D, nature trail	P5: 8 pupils x 6 sessions

Table 3

- 3.9 Other Income: Room and Land hire** - Following a process of risk assessment and health & safety checks outdoor space was hired out although the colder weather meant this was limited. A number of outdoor bbqs took place as well as a fire walk and outdoor pilates. A small amount of filming also took place.
- 3.10 Rentals** – Rental income through leases to traders are reviewed regularly by East Dunbartonshire Council's Estates and Legal teams. Service charges are recharged on a quarterly basis.
- 3.11 Trading** – The gift shop, which is situated in the Park's Visitor Centre, has seen sales improve following the move to the empty unit within the Courtyard.
- 3.12 Marketing** – the aim of marketing the Park is to drive more business to Mugdock in order to raise awareness of the opportunities for leisure, recreation, education, retail and events. This is achieved through paper and social media, website development and targeted advertising. EDC and Stirling Councils are sent event details to share on their platforms as well. A selection of marketing activities and promotions carried out at the Park during the report period includes advertising in the Community Magazine, regular Facebook updates and posters placed around the Park's outlying noticeboards.
- 3.13 Projects** - Business development and asset improvement projects have been delayed during 2020-21 due to covid-19 restrictions. As detailed in the Technical note of 18 June 2021 the approved 5 year capital budget of £830k (report PNCA/037/20/DG, 17 March 2020) will be reviewed in light of the recommendations within the new Mugdock Strategy 2022-27. In the meantime the main areas to take forward include the new septic tank, improved car parking and security fencing at Craigend Quarry. Some smaller projects have been progressed over lockdown including the refurbishment of the Theatre, relocation of the Visitor Centre, Walled Garden refurbishment, improved signage and work to the Maintenance Yard. Capital invoices for 2 x £25k have been processed by Stirling Council and a final invoice for £25k should be issued at the end of the March. Due to the pandemic in 2020-21 there was an underspend which was carried forward by Stirling Council and is intended to be allocated against spend this financial year if possible.
- 3.14 Land management** – Work carried out from Oct 21 – Jan 22 is detailed below and carried out by Mugdock Conservation Volunteers Tuesday and Saturday groups with the help of Glasgow Mountain Bike Club volunteers and JP Morgan volunteers, led by the Ranger Service.
- Path Improvements - Mugdock Wood path leading from Mugdock Castle to West Highland Way Vegetation encroaching along length of path cut back. Two collapsed sections of Mugdock Wood railway sleeper boardwalk replaced. Rotten sleepers replaced and sides of boardwalk wired to secure sleepers in place. Stone drains and culverts cleared and water redirected. Scoured gully down length of steep surfaced path filled, 4 raised waterbars and runoff ditches constructed to prevent water erosion occurring again.
 - West Highland Way - Cross drains, culverts, side drains and lets cleared out and improved along the length of the Way through Mugdock Wood. Vegetation encroaching on the path track cut back along its length.

- Allander Water Path (Riverside path) - Strategic placement of natural objects and barriers to reduce the width and discourage braiding of this unsurfaced path
- Mugdock Wood - Encourage people to use the main paths through Mugdock Wood to reduce erosion and disturbance to the flora and fauna of the rest of this sensitive ancient woodland. Discourage the use of desire line paths through Mugdock Wood many of which first appeared during lock down.
- Burma Road - Create raised waterbars to prevent further path erosion.
- Craigend Avenue between Moot Hill and Mugdock Loch - Revet the embankment of the section of causeway to reinstate the badly eroded sides of the path. Cut back the encroaching and overhanging vegetation.
- Tree Planting and natural regeneration - Plant 60 holly and 40 hazel saplings in areas outwith the SSSI where invasive rhododendron has been removed. Guard each tree individually to prevent herbivore grazing and allow increased chance of survival. These trees and guards were donated by DTGen Milngavie. Construct and install 30 herbivore guards to protect naturally regenerating birch and oak seedlings in Mugdock Wood. Maintain 100 existing trees and guards in Mugdock Wood.
- Invasive Species -_On-going removal of Rhododendron below crag at north end of Mugdock Loch with the added bonus of views over Mugdock Loch opening up. Herbicide spraying of rhododendron regrowth carried out along Craigend Avenue, on-going drilling and herbiciding of rhododendron stumps throughout Park.
- Deer Management – due to continuing damage to the biodiversity in Mugdock Wood the deer cull numbers have been raised to 40 this year. NatureScot will undertake a Herbivore Impact Assessment in Spring.

3.15 In relation to storm damage -_The Park Wardens have felled and made safe many windblown trees since Storm Arwen struck in December. The number of fallen trees was such that felling is still on-going. Tree contractors dealt with two problem areas where the trees were large, complex and entangled.

3.16 Operational Matters – The renewed Minute of Agreement for the period 2019-2024 for Mugdock has been drawn up and agreed by the Legal teams of East Dunbartonshire and Stirling Councils. This details the management arrangements in place for running the Park and the financial contributions from both Councils for the period of the Agreement. This has been signed off by both Councils and commits them to 50% of capital expenditure up to a maximum of £75,000 per annum for the agreement period.

3.17 Burncrook Pipeline – The project is on-going in East Dunbartonshire with the Country Park section almost complete. Scottish Water will resurface Drumclog car park when all the work is finished.

3.18 Equipment – a programme of equipment renewal is underway tying in with health and safety practices. Reactec monitoring system tracks vibration from machinery and alerts staff when they have reached their limit.

- 3.19 Community Ultrafast Broadband programme** – new cables have been laid from the Milngavie Telephone Exchange to the main entrance to the car park at the Country Park. The next phase is to bring the cables into the buildings. There are still 2 external sections on Mugdock Road which require to be completed.
- 3.20 Partner Organisations**
Astronomical Society of Glasgow – Work has started on the new Eric Tomney Memorial Observatory (ETMO) which is sited at the top end of the overflow field. There was some delay due to the road closure and a change to the foundations of the building but it is on track now.
- 3.21 Mugdock Trust** – The Trust has been working with students from the City of Glasgow College to develop Virtual Reality information for Mugdock Castle. A winner was chosen out of 7 entries and will receive a prize from the Trustees.
- 3.22** Although the Trust was unsuccessful in obtaining funding from the Community Renewal Fund the aim of improving the visitor experience at the Castle is still one which the Park and the Trust hope to take forward. A report will be brought to a future meeting.
- 3.23 Clan Graham Society of North America** – The members of the Clan Graham society have had to postpone their 5-yearly visit from 2020 and they are hopeful that they will be able to travel in 2022. Dates have not yet been confirmed.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

The implications for the Council are as undernoted.

- 4.1** Frontline Service to Customers – no immediate implications
- 4.2** Workforce (including any significant resource implications) – no immediate implications
- 4.3** Legal Implications – no immediate implications
- 4.4** Financial Implications – no immediate implications, but approach to project programming and budget setting should be noted.
- 4.5** Procurement – work with procurement as necessary for projects to progress.
- 4.6** ICT – Continued support required to address connectivity issues at the Park.
- 4.7** Corporate Assets – **No immediate implications.** The programming of projects and possible future applications to the capital programme are reviewed on an ongoing basis as part of the delivery of the Park Business Plan and asset management.
- 4.8** Equalities Implications – no immediate equalities implications.
- 4.9** Other – n/a

5.0 MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The risks and control measures relating to this Report are as follows:-

- 5.1 The risks and control measures for the Park are detailed in the Mugdock Risk Register, which is reviewed and reported to the Joint Management Committee.

6.0 IMPACT

- 6.1 **ECONOMIC GROWTH & RECOVERY** - Tourism is a focus in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan for East Dunbartonshire. The work outlined in this report relates to activity and investment in the Park, which will support the draw of visitors from outwith and within the local area to the Park, as well as East Dunbartonshire's overall visitor offer.

- 6.2 **EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS** - The on-going programme and investment already made and planned aims to enable a sustained and vibrant Park with a range of businesses and employment opportunities.

- 6.3 **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE** - The Park offers a range of formal education opportunities for different age groups, with a focus on many initiatives and activities for children and young people. Promotion of place heritage through the use or presentation of older buildings and assets, and promotion of the Park's many natural assets - all create opportunities for young people and visitors to learn more and connect with the outdoors and the area.

- 6.4 **SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES** - Enhancements to the physical environment in the Park creates a more pleasant environment for users at different times of the day.

- 6.5 **ADULT HEALTH & WELLBEING** - The range of outdoor activities such as play, education, active recreation, volunteering and events on offer within the Park support physical and mental health and wellbeing.

- 6.6 **OLDER ADULTS, VULNERABLE PEOPLE & CARERS** - Opportunities exist within the Park for supported volunteering. Access to mobility equipment, such as scooters and wheelchairs, is available. Resources are provided to encourage self-led activities for carers and groups working with vulnerable individuals.

- 6.7 **STATUTORY DUTY** - Not a statutory duty.

7.0 POLICY CHECKLIST

- 7.1 This Report has been assessed against the Policy Development Checklist and has been classified as being an operational report and not a new policy or change to an existing policy document.

8.0 APPENDICES

- 8.1 n/a

Mugdock Country Park

STRATEGY 2022-2027



workshop session 1

Mugdock Country Park

Consultancy Brief

Strategy & Masterplan advanced with consultation & engagement and concluding with an Outline Business Case.

Current Stage: Elements Completed

- *Country Park Assessment & Benchmarking*
- *Key Client Requirements & Objectives*
- *Mugdock Evaluation*
- *Outline Recommendations to Client Team*
- *Stage 1 Consultations underway*

Next Steps: Adding Value

- *Stage 2 Consultations*
- *Refining the Strategy*
- *Developing the Masterplan*
- *Preparing a Business Case*

Context

Mugdock Country Park is a 260ha Asset costing £500K/ annum and is managed by c10.5 staff and is visited by >600,000 visitors

Council changing priorities and needs:

- Prioritising Available Funding
- Delivering KPI's & Outcomes
- Demonstrating value to communities
- Partnership working

Country Park changing priorities and needs:

- Rights of Access / Accessible Countryside / Networks
- Environmental interest and engagement
- Changing consumer demographics & interest
- Safe and marketable
- Sustainability



Mugdock Country Park

STRATEGY 2015-2020

The Strategy built on previous engagement and made recommendations for:

1. Car parking maintenance and provision
2. Renewal and maintenance of public toilets
3. Adventure Trail and paths network, especially in terms of provision for older children and access by wheelchair and pram/buggy users
4. Waste management, including greater provision of litter bins and dog waste bins
5. Improved procurement
6. Better public information and consultation about volunteering opportunities and development plans, especially in relation to Craighend Castle and car parking

Vision

Mugdock is consistently ranked amongst the five most popular country parks in Scotland. Mugdock Country Park is a leader in outdoor education, management and enterprise; it delivers tangible social and economic benefits for local communities in East Dunbartonshire and Stirling, is renowned for its cycling network, adventure trail and night observatory, and is a model of sustainability in the organisation of boutique festivals and events.

Mission

Improving Scottish lives by embracing natural opportunities

Mugdock Country Park

The Asset

Key Park Zones – vary greatly in character and habitat

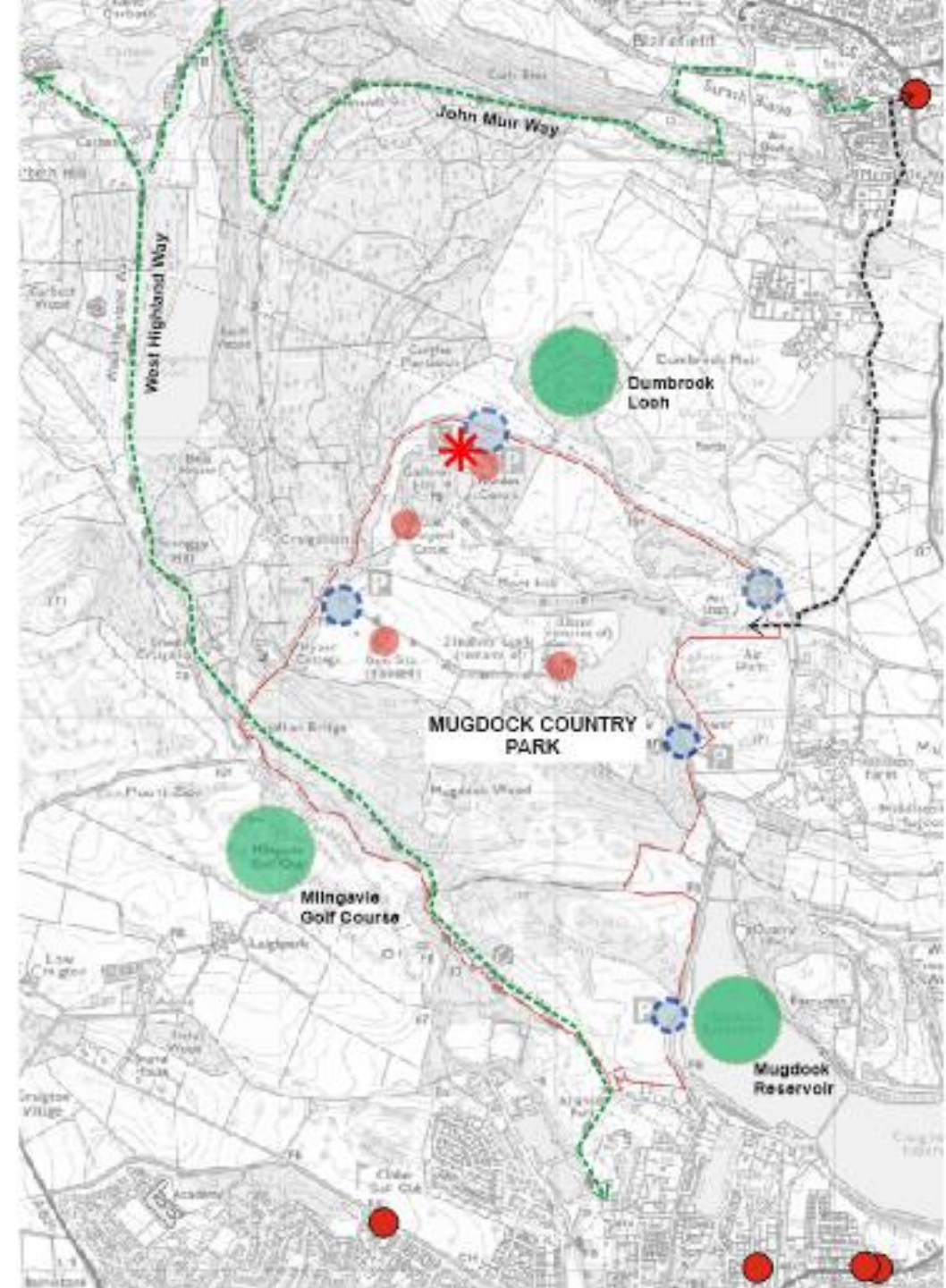
Land Uses – combine Woodland, Open Water, Heath & Mire

Visitor Facilities – considerable provision centred around the Craigend Stables Car Park

Path Network – Extensive with varied length options. Mobility scooters available. Trail waymarkers and signage provided. On West Highland Way

Play – combines Adventure & traditional with associated trails for children

Ecology – wide range of habitats



Activities

MUGDOCK	
Walking/ Dog Walking	Most popular activity, paths mainly unsurfaced.
Running	Paths not surfaced/ no changing facilities, use limited.
Cycling	No on site cycle hire
Play	2 areas, at visitor centre & within woodland area
Wildlife/ Bird Watching	Offering opportunities to see a variety of animals/ birds
Toadstool Sculpture Trail	In Woodland areas
BBQ	Covered BBQ areas, popular and well used
Picnic Areas	Well used, in proximity to play area
Horse Riding	Paths used by local stables
Seasonal Trails	Fairy Trail in Craigend Wood. Christmas Trail & Santa Workshop
Wildlife/ Bird Watching	Offering opportunities to see deer, badgers, pine martins, birds of prey etc
Forest Schools	Offering education in the Park
Ranger led activities	Held regularly in the park for all interests/ ages
Orienteering	Maps available at Visitor Centre

Events

MUGDOCK	
Walks/ Talks/ Activities & Events	Programme of Formal/ Informal Learning offered by Ranger Services including Lads & dads Map reading/ Sensational Safari/ Wildlife Weans/Forest Schools
School Outings	Nursery Groups & Lower Primary School outings
Traditional Craft/ Woodland Courses	Hosted by Rangers
Volunteer Days	Opportunities to work in wider park
Stargazing at Mugdock	Led by Rangers with future Astrological Society connections
Pantomime	Hosted at Mugdock
Pop Up Opera	Scottish Opera
Cross Country Dog Agility	Covering wide areas of the park
Theatre Events	Plays & Filming
Weddings	Held in Walled Garden and available marquee for use

Visit Scotland Evaluation 2018

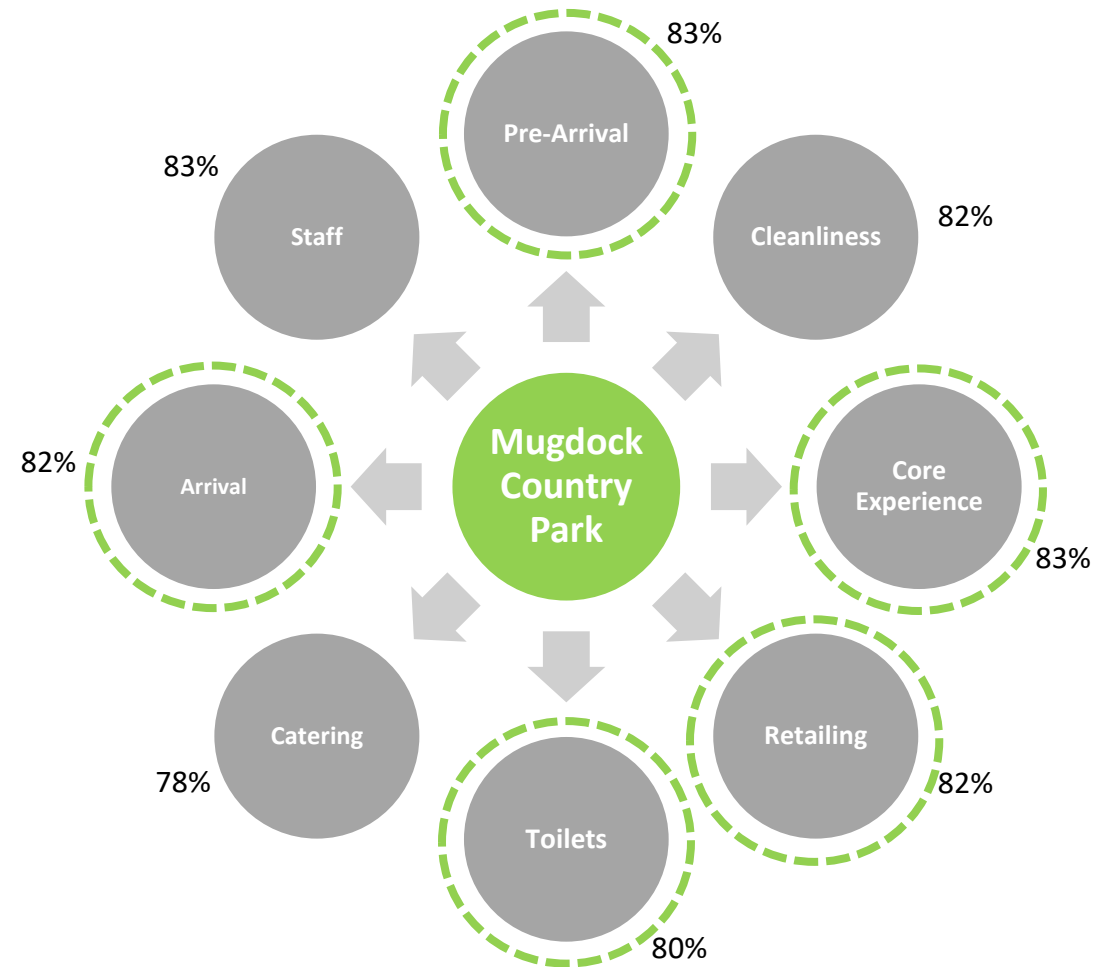
Visit Scotland Assessment score of 81% classed as 'Excellent'. Slight increase from 2016 80% score.

Assessed as a 4-Star attraction the category scores were identified as shown opposite

Opportunities identified:

- Accessibility/ Inclusivity
- Sustainability
- Taste our Best

5-Star attractions are considered 'Exceptional' with a score of 85-100%



Core Strengths

Key strengths and assets need to be re-assessed in shaping a future strategy / masterplan.

Country Parks to be successful need to offer:

- *Multifunctional activity and appeal based on quality experiences*
- *Engagement with natural environment*
- *Freedom to roam in a safe environment*
- *Connections to wider greenspace network & communities*
- *Destination Offer*

Mugdock key strengths are assessed as:

Heritage Assets

Natural Environment Assets

(Woodland incl. SSSI/ Wildlife Interest / Ecological Value/ Scenic Value)

Activities (Play / Walking Environment/ Ranger Led Activity)

People / Staff

In benchmarking against other Central Belt Country Parks Mugdock has few distinguishing elements or capacity to offer anything other than a local attraction without significant investment.

Core Weaknesses

Key weaknesses need to be re-assessed in shaping a future strategy / masterplan.

Country Parks to be successful need to offer:

- *Multifunctional activity and appeal based on quality experiences*
- *Engagement with natural environment*
- *Freedom to roam in a safe environment*
- *Connections to wider greenspace network & communities*
- *Destination Offer*

Mugdock key weaknesses are assessed as:

Location & Accessibility

Public Transport Connectivity

Notable Quality

Level of Activity / Facility

Legibility - Brand-Profile

Investment

Services primary local need

Interim Assessment

Elements Core Facilities	Assessment of Asset			Notes
	Weak Requires Investment	Good Requires Investment	Positive Requires Investment	
Access/Town Connections				Weak connections.
Public Transport Connectivity				No public transport. No direct connections from Town Centre or Station
Internal Path Networks / Trails				Good range of paths surfaced and unsurfaced trails / routing clear but lacking hierachy
Wider Green Network Links				Wider network connections unclear. Mid forest connections. Legibility poor
Visitor Centre Facilities				Requires consideration regarding relocated facility
Theatre				Unique offer.
Secondary Bldgs / Facilities				Hireable facilities & Educational use primary purpose
Mugdock Castle				Adds to site character and offer
Craigend Castle				Good interpretation would benefit from more work on setting
Play Facilities				Lack accessible play and site specific character
Interpretation & signage				Good quality information would benefit from creation of legible sign family
Woodland Assets				Core environmental assets
Ranger Service				Positive comment. Enthusiastic and customer focussed team. Dedicated sense of commitment and interest
WWII Gunsites				Lacks Interpretation

Interim Assessment

Elements Core Facilities	Assessment of Asset			Notes
	Weak Requires Investment	Good Requires Investment	Positive Requires Investment	
Commercial Arrangements				
• Caulders Garden Centre				Brings a lot of people to MCP
• Mugdock Makers				Good quality range of merchandise
• Charlies Coffee Shop				
• Stables Tearoom				

Mugdock Country Park

Benchmarking



Culzean Castle & Country Park
Dalkeith Country Park
Kelburn Castle & Estate, Largs
Chatelherault Country Park
Beecraigs Country Park
Pollock Country Park
Calderglen Country Park
Grizedale Forest

c42 Country Parks – Scotland
c30 Competing Country Parks
Mugdock consistently ranked in Top 5

CULZEAN CASTLE & COUNTRY PARK

Known for its dramatic coastal location



DALKEITH COUNTRY PARK

Known for its woodland play experience



KELBURN CASTLE & ESTATE

Known for its Graffiti Art Castle & Children's facilities



CHATELHERAULT COUNTRY PARK

Known for its Heritage buildings and its landscape



BEECRAIGS COUNTRY PARK

Known for its Mountain biking, walks and children's play



POLLOK COUNTRY PARK

Known for housing the Burrell Collection



CALDERGLEN COUNTRY PARK

Known for its Zoo & Landscape



GRIZEDALE FOREST

Managed by Forestry England

Known for its Public Art trails and children's activities



Mugdock Country Park

Benchmarking

The most successful of the examples considered have a clear Vision. They know their USP.

Those being run privately have invested heavily in facilities to maximise turnover and attract the widest audience possible.

What is MCP's USP?

Heritage/ Woodland/ Landscape what can we do to strengthen these?

What is the Ambition?

To further reduce maintenance where possible but also to maximise spend

What level of Investment is considered achievable/ realistic in the next 5-10yr period?

<£500K / £500K - £1M / £1M +

Mugdock Country Park

Masterplan 2022

Six years on, a more strategic review of purpose, long term objectives and sustainable investment/ development opportunities for the Country Park is now necessary

We need to reappraise the role and objectives for the park going forward.

COUNTRY PARK ORIGINS

Countryside (Scotland) Act 1969 initiated the creation of Country Parks, with 3 key objectives:

- To give easy and local access to open air for leisure & recreation
- To ease pressure on remote/ sensitive locations
- To reduce risk of damage to the countryside

COUNTRY PARKS – NEW FUTURES

Creating a new dynamic building on natural environment and user values & experiences for all

- Active Leisure / Health & Wellbeing
- Conservation & Education
- Quality of Place
- Leisure Tourism

SWOT/ SCOPE analysis

Opportunities / Constraints & Barriers to Success ?

<p>S</p> <p>SITUATION:</p> <p>Attraction showing clear signs of under-investment and losing market share/ visitors to newer and stronger attractions and destinations.</p>	<p>C</p> <p>CORE COMPETENCIES:</p> <p>Strong ranger services.</p> <p>Heritage Assets</p> <p>Woodland assets and ecological management strong assets</p> <p>Current USP unclear.</p>	<p>O</p> <p>OBSTACLES:</p> <p>Investment commitment and recognition of historic legacy of under-investment.</p> <p>Lack of a clear Vision redefining Country Park purpose for Mugdock</p> <p>Any lack of commitment to investment suggests moving forward with a significantly reduced facility</p>	<p>P</p> <p>PROSPECTS:</p> <p>Mugdock needs significant investment to secure sustainability and create a Country Park asset of quality.</p> <p>Strategic choice is either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reinvestment New Country Park 2) Major reduction in scope/scale of facility 3) Create a smaller more tightly defined project 	<p>E</p> <p>EXPECTATIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) EDC/ SC Investment 2) Private Sector Investment 3) Third Sector Investment 4) Grant Aid <p>Has to have a clear offer</p> <p>Has to be best-in-class</p> <p>Distinctive appeal</p> <p>Delivered with quality</p>
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Proposition

value proposition storyboard

<p>A</p> <p>AUDIENCE</p> <p><i>Who is the primary audience? What is important to them?</i></p>	<p>N</p> <p>NEED</p> <p><i>What need is the Park fulfilling?</i></p>	<p>S</p> <p>SOLUTION</p> <p><i>What is the solution to address need? What are we providing to the visitor?</i></p>	<p>W</p> <p>WHY BETTER</p> <p><i>Why does the solution offer improvement?</i></p>	<p>E</p> <p>EVIDENCE</p> <p><i>How can we prove ability to deliver?</i></p>	<p>R</p> <p>REMARKABLE</p> <p><i>Why is the solution a must-have?</i></p>
<p>Broad Based Inclusive Family market Inter-generational Children</p> <p>Outdoor Leisure Environment</p>	<p>Activity leisure Access to countryside Day Out Children Based Activity</p>	<p>Full range of facilities capable of competing with the best of comparable attractions</p> <p>Family-centric</p>	<p>Re-define Mugdock as a Country Park</p> <p>Reconnect to Milngavie and national access networks</p> <p>Best-in-Class</p>	<p>Requires a significant commitment from EDC & SC</p>	<p>Builds on current assets</p> <p>Creates a distinctive offer national/ regional + local levels</p>

Strategy

Developing a clear strategic direction for Mugdock is critical.

To Build on Strengths / Address Weaknesses suggests:

1. Need to build **meaningful experiences** out of assets through education and interpretation – connecting/ linking visitors with the asset.
2. Build and **enhance distinctive offer** through activities and facilities that together develop the offer
3. Address the **locational challenge with stronger connection** to Milngavie with a revised entrance/ entry park
4. **Reinvestment is an essential requirement** to develop the quality / re-create a regional asset of distinctive appeal
5. **Inclusive barrier-free use** on suitably defined trails / path networks
6. Consider **management structure** or working arrangements single integrated operational responsibility
7. Need a clear **Business Case based** on developing the destination

The Vision

Can we develop a Vision?

How is it specific and relevant to Mugdock?

Vision

Mugdock is consistently ranked amongst the five most popular country parks in Scotland. Mugdock Country Park is a leader in outdoor education, management and enterprise; it delivers tangible social and economic benefits for local communities in East Dunbartonshire and Stirling, is renowned for its cycling network, adventure trail and night observatory, and is a model of sustainability in the organisation of boutique festivals and events.

The Mugdock Country Park Strategy 2022-2027 aims to:

- recognise and celebrate the heritage of Mugdock;
- build capacity to best utilise our outstanding natural assets;
- improve access and facilities for all;
- create new opportunities for our local community and visitors to enjoy and connect with Mugdock Country Park.
- create a sustainable and welcoming place for all



Options

The role and objectives for the park need to be re-considered in terms of high-level brand and offer.

The review has highlighted 6 potential options.

Each describes a core function and activity that sets the Parks profile.

Option 1 Do Nothing

Manage the park as existing with only minor changes to current vision and operating plan based on woodland management and non-intensive Country Park activity



Option 2 Mugdock Heritage

Develop the history and heritage of the Park creating first class facilities and develop a range of tourism options



Option 3 Mugdock - Eco-Park

Manage the park as an Eco-Park focussed on education/ interpretation/ natural environments and as a unique natural environmental resource



Option 4 Mugdock - Edu-Park

Manage the park as a centre for Outward Bound / Scouting/ Duke of Edinburgh training focussed on education, schools, skills, bush-craft, and as a centre of excellence



Option 5 Mugdock – Play

Develop the concept of play as a multi-themed element running through the whole Park (adult/ young people/children) so all park elements embrace inter-active 'play' connecting interpretation, traditional, adventure and experience play .



Option 6 Mugdock – Active Leisure

Manage the park for a suite of active leisure activity including Play / Orienteering / Fitness Training / Zip-wire/ GoApe etc

Objectives

Mugdock is an established park. Changing user needs suggest it needs re-defining through new investment if it is to succeed.

Country Park Objectives

1. Create a *quality /distinctive/marketable* Country Park destination with strong visitor appeal based on core heritage and environmental assets and user facilities
2. Develop *'best in class'* quality of facility' that is comparable or better than current best attractions in Scotland (public or private).
3. Promote *'special experiences based on strong attractions'* and special events to re-build the core audiences / visitors to the park
4. Secure *additional visitor spend*
5. Facilitate the best *management structure* to deliver above through public-private-public partnership and single strategic management

Initial Thoughts

Arrival/ Welcome

- Rationalisation of car parking/ clarity between Caulders & Country Park areas
- Improve orientation and legibility of access to Visitor Centre
- Accessibility improvements

Heritage Focus

- Improvements to surroundings of Stables to emphasise quality and maximise location open up views to Pond and beyond
- Connect to Walled Garden south entrance to avoid visitors accessing through plant sales area
- Focus Biodiversity and Zoo related sculptures and surfacing inlays around Craighend Castle
- Develop proposal for lower terrace at Mugdock Castle, create centrepiece artwork to Clan Graham, potential maze laid out in surfacing.
- Create raised footway platform/ viewpoint at WWII Gunsites to allow elevated position and improved awareness with associated viewpoint signage

Initial Thoughts

Site Quality

- Establish a suite of signs for Trails through remounting of interpretive signage within timber structures to provide consistency
- Introduce brass rubbing elements on key waymarkers to add interest for children
- Establish Path hierarchy
- Create seating areas at key locations

Play Area Upgrades

- Remove fencing and create a destination play facility spilling into the adjacent area of woodland
- Add excitement / multigenerational play
- Introduce Natural Play to encourage imaginative play
- Accessible surfacings to ensure maximum inclusivity

Biodiversity

- Introduce floating planted islands at Craighend Quarry with school involvement for planting and awareness raising
- Establish bird hide/ viewing areas

Initial Thoughts

Add Facilities

Income generators?

- Explore potential for Go-Ape
- Segways
- Zorbing
- Boats/ canoes/ pedalos on Pond
- Allotments
- Events barn
- Farmers Market opportunity
- Car Parking charges
- Rental of polytunnels
- 'Unleashed' Dog fields
- Gruffalo Trail
- Wellbeing/ Tranquillity Hub

Create *Welcome*

Case Study: Fowlmead Country Park



Heritage Setting

Case Study: Dalkeith Country Park





Woodland *Play*

Case Study: Whinlatter Forest, Cumbria

Kids like discovery, challenges, movement and adventure. They thrive on being in nature – playing with water, climbing trees, jumping through puddles, hiding in dens.

WILD Play

A child wearing a blue raincoat and hood is playing in the rain. The child's hands are raised, and water droplets are captured in mid-air around them, creating a dynamic and joyful scene. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Unstructured play is essential for healthy development of children because in it, they 'explore', and are driven by their own interests and imagination. Through trial and error, children teach themselves how to navigate a pathway, take manageable risks and help others along the way. These formative opportunities are being lost for a variety of reasons – a lack of access to nature, fear of risk, and over-scheduling of children's free time



Woodland *SCULPTURE*

Case Study: Grizedale Forest Sculpture Trail, Cumbria

SWT
Cumbernauld
Living
Landscapes
project at Forest
Wood





Woodland *ACTIVITIES*

Safari guides, on mixture of twisty trails and making most of wide open, straight tracks & circular routes.

A - PRIMARY

Etched illustration into back of ember for Signs A - Primary. 1800 mm high.



B - SECONDARY



C - FINGERPOST



Wilderness Trails & Interpretation

Consistency of wayfinding information and signage family



Wilderness

Trails

Hides and lookouts





Wilderness Trails & Interpretation

Clarity of interpretation style and message

Mugdock Country Park

STRATEGY 2022-2027



workshop session 1