

Agenda Item	5
Report No	N/10/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Nairnshire Committee

Date: 12 June 2019

Report Title: Nairn Links - Development Plan

Report By: Acting Head of Policy

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the draft Nairn Links Development Plan which provides a decision-making framework for the future development of the Links area in Nairn. The draft Development Plan is the outcome of a community consultation process agreed by the Nairn Councillors on the future uses and opportunities for the Nairn Links. The report also provides an update on the first project proposed to be taken forward under the new framework.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Consider and agree to adopt the draft Nairn Links Development Plan enclosed at Appendix A;
 - ii. Note the forming of a Project Team and Steering Group to develop a project plan for stage 1 of developing the Nairn Links;
 - iii. Agree the initial project proposal to redevelop the paddling pool site; and
 - iv. Agree that update reports on future projects be brought back to this Committee for consideration as required.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Nairn Links is an asset of the Nairn Common Good Fund (NCGF) and is held on the account of the NCGF. It is managed by the Highland Council on behalf of the fund. The Council has a duty to ensure that Fund assets are managed efficiently and effectively.
- 3.2 The Nairnshire Committee have already prioritised the management and development of the NCGF in their local Strategic Priorities which were initially set in December 2016 and reviewed in June 2018. The outcomes of work carried out by Sandy Anderson, Consultant, on behalf of the Committee in considering the future of the paddling pool, confirmed the need for a more formal approach. In this work, which has already been reported to this Committee, Sandy Anderson highlighted that development of the Links had been taking place organically over a long period of time and that there was a need for a framework within which any proposed developments could be assessed.
- 3.3 Further interest and support for developing the Links was highlighted through the engagement undertaken by local community group Team Hamish. Team Hamish were formed in 2017 with the aim of raising money to develop the Nairn Links area into a special place for all ages and abilities to enjoy.
- 3.4 A report was therefore brought before this Committee in June 2018 at which approval was sought and agreed to take forward a community consultation process to consider and explore options for each part of the Links and to create a decision-making framework set in the context of a Development Plan. This phase of formal consultation to determine community views was vital in establishing a Plan which would reflect the needs and views of the local community.
- 3.5 It was further agreed at Committee that the final draft plan be brought back to the Nairnshire Committee for consideration and approval.

4 Draft Development Plan and Consultation Process

- 4.1 Nick Wright, Nick Wright Planning, was selected and appointed to lead the consultation process, assisted by designer Paul Morsley, Iglu Studio.
- 4.2 The community consultation got underway in August 2018 with two 'community conversations' which were facilitated by the Nairn Members, with the support of officers. These sessions fed into the full consultation process led by Nick Wright which commenced in October 2018 and ran until December 2018.

The first phase of consultation involved discussions with individual organisations that had a direct connection with the Links area. The second and thirds phases involved public engagement events, and there was also opportunity to feed into the process online and by directly contacting the consultant.

- 4.3 A draft Development Plan was circulated to the Highland Council for comment in January 2019 and has now been finalised. This Committee is therefore formally asked to consider and agree to adopt the Development Plan.
- 4.4 The document intends to provide a decision-making framework and will complement other plans already in place for the Nairn Ward including:
 - Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance on Green Networks

- Strategic Priorities for Ward 18
- Nairn Town Centre Action Plan
- Nairn BID Business Plan
- Nairn Harbour Improvement Plan

It is proposed that, once agreed, the Development Plan can be adopted as non-statutory supplementary guidance as part of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

- 4.5 The Development Plan provides full context and background to the preparation of the document, and details how the community consultation process was undertaken. The plan also outlines the strategic principles that form the underlying basis for the document.
- 4.6 A series of 9 potential project packages are then detailed across three overlapping 'character areas' comprising the existing leisure park, the Links and beach, and the harbour. In conclusion the document outlines 'next steps' for consideration.

5 Project Proposals and Next Steps

- 5.1 Although the plan is still subject to formal approval, work has been ongoing in preparation to take forward elements of the Plan. A project team and steering group has been established. This steering group includes officer and member representation from Highland Council and community representation from Team Hamish, Nairn BID and Nairn Improvement Community Enterprise (NICE). The project will be project managed by the Council's Property team.
- 5.2 Initial meetings of the group have identified the need to view the Development Plan as an overall framework and that individual projects will be progressed in different stages. It is proposed that the first project to be brought forward is to replace the paddling pool with a high-quality water play feature. This was amongst the most popular proposals from the community consultation undertaken by Nick Wright and one of the key proposals from Team Hamish. Members are today asked to approve the initial focus on developing the paddling pool into a water play feature.
- 5.3 Next steps include engaging with potential suppliers and scoping out the potential costs of a water play feature, procuring a detailed design for the feature and identifying funding. As this is a partnership project, there will be different funding avenues pursued by the community and the Council and its public sector partners. It is proposed that any build work would not begin until the end of the main season in order to minimise disruption on businesses and users of the area. Engagement with local Links businesses will form part of the development of the project plan.
- 5.4 Project updates will be reported regularly to this committee and other projects will be considered by the Members in due course.

6 Implications

- 6.1 Resource – There will be resource implications including staff time. As noted in section 5, work is ongoing to establish costs for the first project. Once established, potential sources of funding will be identified. This will be through both public sector and community routes.

- 6.2 Legal – The Council will meet all its legal obligations under the terms of any contracts agreed and will comply with the Council’s Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders.
- 6.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – The Council will ensure that due regard is given to the requirements of the Community Empowerment Act. The Project Plan will include an early equality impact assessment as part of the design process.
- 6.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever – Opportunity to align with the Council’s policies
- 6.5 Risk – Project Management in place to manage and mitigate risk and will include a risk register.
- 6.6 Gaelic – No implications

Designation: Acting Head of Policy

Date: 3 June 2019

Author: Alison Clark, Acting Head of Policy
Liz Cowie, Ward Manager, Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey



NEW LIFE FOR NAIRN LINKS

a development framework for the future

Commissioned by The Highland Council

Prepared by Nick Wright Planning & Iglu Studio,
with thanks to the many local residents and
organisations who contributed.

February 2019



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INTRODUCTION

Context

Nairn Links comprise a large area of land between the town of Nairn and its central beach, focussing on the area shown in green in Figure 1 (below) between Nairn Leisure Centre to the west and Nairn Harbour to the east. The Links are held by the Nairn Common Good Fund.

The Links are an important feature of Nairn's attraction for tourists and residents. They provide access to the beach and sea, cherished green space and leisure facilities, and are home to Nairn Cricket Club, the Nairn Highland Games and other outdoor events. Various facilities exist at the Links including cafes, paddling pool, children's play equipment, putting green and crazy golf, historic bandstand, outdoor gym, toilets and car parking.

Development at the Links has taken place organically over a long period of time, responding to opportunity and funding, rather than fitting

Figure 1 Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan



within an overall vision or plan for the area. As a result, there is no framework within which potential investments or developments can be assessed, beyond planning policy requirements to:

- Safeguard the open space of the Links against inappropriate development (Highland-wide Local Development Plan: Policy 75).
- Create a Coastal Path for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders linking Inverness, Nairn and the Moray Coastal Trail, ideally 3 metres wide for shared use (Supplementary Guidance: Green Networks: Appendix 2).

Purposes of this document

The Highland Council has an important role in leading and managing the future development of Nairn, seen most recently through the Local Development Plan process. The Council wishes to continue this leadership role by ensuring that Nairn Links is sustainably planned and managed in the future for the benefit of the town as a whole.

Preparation of this development framework has been triggered by a number of circumstances.

These include the need for significant repairs to keep the paddling pool open, due to deterioration of its structure over the years; subsequent prioritisation of development of the Links by the Nairn Councillors; and the development of outline proposals by local community-led organisation #TeamHamish to create places and areas at the Links that all ages and abilities can experience and

enjoy. A number of other local organisations also wish to invest and enhance the Links, including cafes and watersports organisations.

This document intends to:

- Create a decision-making framework for the future of Nairn Links against which potential investment or developments can be assessed, within the overall planning policy aims summarised above.
- Provide a framework to support collaborative action for the future enhancement of the Links by local organisations.

The document aims to complement other plans which are already in place for Nairn including:

- Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance on Green Networks.
- Nairn and Nairnshire Locality Plan.
- Strategic Priorities for Council Ward 18.
- Nairn Harbour Improvement Plan.
- Nairn Town Centre Action Plan.
- Nairn BID Business Plan.

These documents, together with this development framework for the future of the Links, make up a comprehensive set of proposals for how the town should move forward in the future. With plans progressing towards the construction of a Nairn bypass as part of the dualling of the A96, these plans can help meet the opportunities and challenges the town faces through the diversion of through traffic away from Nairn.

How this document was prepared

This document was commissioned by the Highland Council, and produced by a planning/design team working closely with the local community in late 2018. It follows earlier work by the Council, including the Nairn Links Scoping Study in early 2018 which identified a need to:

- Create a **collaborative** framework [this document] for projects on the Links by the Common Good Fund and third parties, to reflect the aspirations of the local community & be accepted as a framework for action.
- Integrate the Links with the town.
- Build on the special nature of the area.
- Add to the historic value of the Links to Nairn as a visitor destination.
- Fit with the Common Good Fund's financial parameters & the plans of potential partners.

Preparing this document focussed on three phases of consultation (see Figure 2, centre right).

The **first phase** comprised individual discussions with organisations who had a connection with the Links (e.g. through a lease or because they wished to enhance the Links). The organisations contacted are shown in Figure 3 (far right).

The **second and third phases** were public drop-in exhibitions on Saturday afternoons in Nairn Community & Arts Centre, staffed by the design team and local Councillors. Display materials were also made available online. The images overleaf give a flavour of these events.

At the **second phase**, a draft plan for the Links (an early version of that shown on page 9) was on display, together with examples from other places

Figure 2 Consultation process



(see Appendix 2) and opportunities to comment via postcards. Over 100 people attended the event; all of the completed feedback postcards can be viewed online at bit.ly/2rqEGYu.

Comments from that second phase of consultation were positive, with very few negative responses. Common concerns included:

- Don't overdevelop the Links or spoil their natural beauty and character.

- Maintenance is vital - how will it be paid for?
- Don't create a "theme park".
- Collaborative planning and delivery, with local organisations, are very important.

Popular suggestions included:

- Widespread support for #TeamHamish play-oriented proposals and focus on action (NB many people expressed the hope that colour would be used appropriately).
- Use natural materials wherever possible.
- Keep part of the Links "quiet" & natural.
- Some suggested more lighting, others less.
- Shelters & viewpoints for nature.

There were mixed views whether to keep the paddling pool or replace it with a splashpad.

At the **third phase**, the reaction of the 30 people was again largely positive. Feedback on the project areas can be seen in Figure 6 (see page 20).

Figure 3 Organisations consulted

Association of Nairn Businesses. Braeval Hotel. Green Hive. Inverness Orienteering Club. James' Cafe. Keeping Nairnshire Colourful. Links Tearoom. Nairn Academy. Nairn Access Panel. Nairn Area Sports Council. Nairn BID. Nairn Book and Arts Festival. Nairn Coastal Rowing Club. Nairn Community Sports Hub. Nairn County Cricket Club. Nairn Harbour Development Group. Nairn Highland Games. Nairn Kayak Club. Nairn Leisure Centre. Nairn Men's Shed. Nairn Museum. Nairn River Community Council. Nairn Sailing Club. Nairn Sports Club. Nairn Play. Nairn Rotary Club. Nairn Spa & Lido. Nairn Suburban & West Community Council. Nairn Youth Cafe. Nairnshire Telegraph. NICE. Phoenix Boat Trips. Police Scotland. Revolution Cycling Team. Sun Dancer. #TeamHamish. Visit Nairn. WASPS Studios. ...with apologies to any missing

NEW LIFE FOR NAIRN LINKS

We want to work with the local community on the future of the Links.

We'd like to bring everyone's ideas together into one collaborative plan.

Saturday 3 November 2:30-6:30pm
Nairn Community & Arts Centre

Saturday 4 December 2:30-6:30pm
Nairn Community & Arts Centre

See the first draft plan. What do you think? Is anything missing?

Check out the updated plan. What should the priorities be? Who's going to do what?

More information: @HighlandCouncil

Everyone welcome! Bring your ideas! Any to say yes!

The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

The Nairnshire Telegraph, December 4, 2018

Links plans moving forwards

Plans for the improvement of the Links took a step forward at the weekend when Highland Council held a second consultation session on proposals for the area.

Members of the #TeamHamish plans for the Links and central Nairn received a ringing endorsement when their entry won the FutureTown Design Competition 2018 run by Scotland's Towns Partnership.

Nick Wright, the consultant taken on by the council to progress ideas for the Links said that last Saturday's event at the Community Centre followed on from a similar session four weeks ago.

"We showed an initial plan for the future of the Links, including the proposal for a new viewing platform and shelters. Another was for refurbishing the area around the putting green and paddling pool. At the eastern end, various clubs are interested to join in a water sports facility, and Mr Wright. His next job was to write up a report for the council. "But the more important thing is that discussions should now start very quickly about progressing each of these projects."

Mr Wright told the Nairnshire: "One of the first projects is working with #Team Hamish on the area around James' cafe and the paddling pool. The council and #TeamHamish each have a role in this and they need to work together. The first stage is for them to sit down together and work out how to finish the design off, and make it happen."

Meanwhile, the #TeamHamish were celebrating winning the FutureTown design competition by a substantial margin.

Sam Hey commented: "We are absolutely delighted to have received the most public votes. This is such an honour, particularly when we see the high quality and thought that has gone into the development of the other shortlisted ideas."

The Nairn entry saw off competition from Drumchapel (Glasgow), Dunbar, Dunfermline, Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy, Lanark, Leith, Saracen Street (Glasgow), and Stenhouse (Edinburgh). Nairn received 1390 votes. Dunfermline was placed second with 613 and Glenrothes third with 315. Last placed Stenhouse received 36 votes.



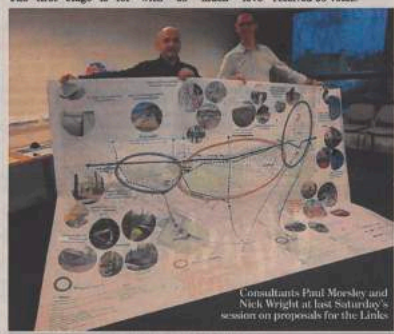
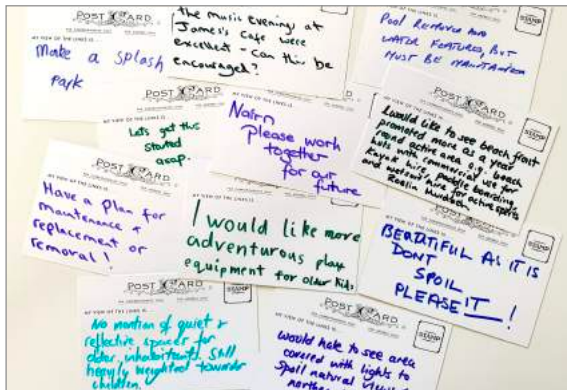
top left: Poster/flyer for public events

left: Feedback from 100+ respondents at 1st event (see bit.ly/2rqEGYU)

below: First public event

far right: Second public event

above: Press coverage of public events



A number of strategic principles emerged through two public engagement sessions conducted in August/September 2018 (see Appendix 1) and the initial phase of engagement for this document (see page 5). The principles are therefore based on local aspirations for the Links. They were tested at the community engagement sessions in November and December 2018, when the 'care and pride' theme was added in response to public feedback.

The principles are contained in Figure 4 (right). They have two purposes:

- To shape how individual proposals within the overall development framework are developed and implemented (such as the nine sets of projects described in section 4).
- To assess any future proposals which might emerge for the Links but are not contained in this development framework.

The centre of Figure 3 describes **how** proposals for the Links should be implemented, all of which are based in community aspirations:

- **Sustainable** in terms of ongoing maintenance, design, operation and environmental impact. The proposals also need to support and contribute to all different parts of Nairn's community.
- **High quality**, as befits Nairn's character and expectations, with a particular focus on good design and use of natural materials. Many local people reminded of the importance of not

destroying the very quality of the Links by cramming too much in.

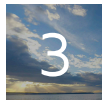
- **Community-led** in that any proposals for the Links should offer local organisations the opportunity to lead investment.
- **Collaborative** in the sense of the local community working together to deliver improvements, not least to maximise access to potential funding.

The outside of the diagram describes **what** proposals should deliver at the Links - the 'themes' that proposals should contribute to:

- Health and wellbeing.
- History and heritage.
- Nature.
- Care and pride.
- All ages and abilities.



Figure 4
Strategy diagram



PLAN

The overall plan for the future of the Links is shown in the full page spread overleaf. It summarises what proposals could happen where at the Links over the next decade, and provides a framework for the projects described in section 4.

Preparing the plan

The plan comprises aspirations for projects and initiatives which emerged from various consultations by the Council and #TeamHamish, mapped into a realistic spatial framework that shows how different aspirations could work together at the Links.

It was initially reviewed publicly at the first drop-in event in November 2018 and online, and was generally received very positively. Two small adjustments were made in response to comments from two organisations. The plan was then tested publicly again at the second drop-in event in December 2018 and online. Again, the response to the plan was overwhelmingly positive. No adjustments have been made to the plan since.

With so many people and organisations and individuals engaging in the process, incorporating every idea was unrealistic. It would have resulted in a plan which crammed too much onto the Links, so harming the openness and natural feel that many people value about the Links.

The plan therefore focusses on initiatives and proposals which commanded broad support during the consultation process. (NB: the consultation process focussed on ideas rather than statistical analysis; the aim was to work with the local community to co-design the future of the Links.)

The main suggestions omitted from the plan are:

- Rather than refurbishing the paddling pool, it is proposed to replace it with a new water play feature (see page 11).
- Proposals with no apparent route to delivery. For example, creating a major spa/lido attraction by redeveloping the Leisure Centre (which does not support that proposal) or developing a heated outdoor pool (which has no organisation in place to take it forward).
- Proposals which are outwith the Links area, such as environmental/heritage improvements in Fishertown and Nairn Play's proposals alongside the River Nairn (although the plan does emphasise the need for good links with those valuable proposals).

Collaboration

Fundamentally, realisation of the plan must be collaborative. No single organisation can deliver it alone or provide all the funding required. The plan combines various organisations' proposals, and will need them to evidence co-operation to access funding and then deliver the plan.

Character areas and connections

The overall plan (overleaf) describes the Links in terms of three overlapping 'character areas'. Each of these areas has a different feel which influences what its future should be, in line with the strategic principles (see section 2):

Leisure Park

Combining quieter natural areas and activities around James Cafe and the putting green.



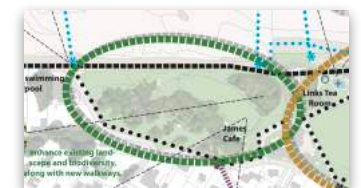
Links and beach

Open grass areas, dunes and beach with paddling pool & children's play near the Links Tearoom.



Harbour

The marina and mouth of the River Nairn, focusses for marine leisure activities such as sailing and kayaking.



Connections

The plan also shows the need to improve connections to the Links, especially for pedestrians and disabled people.



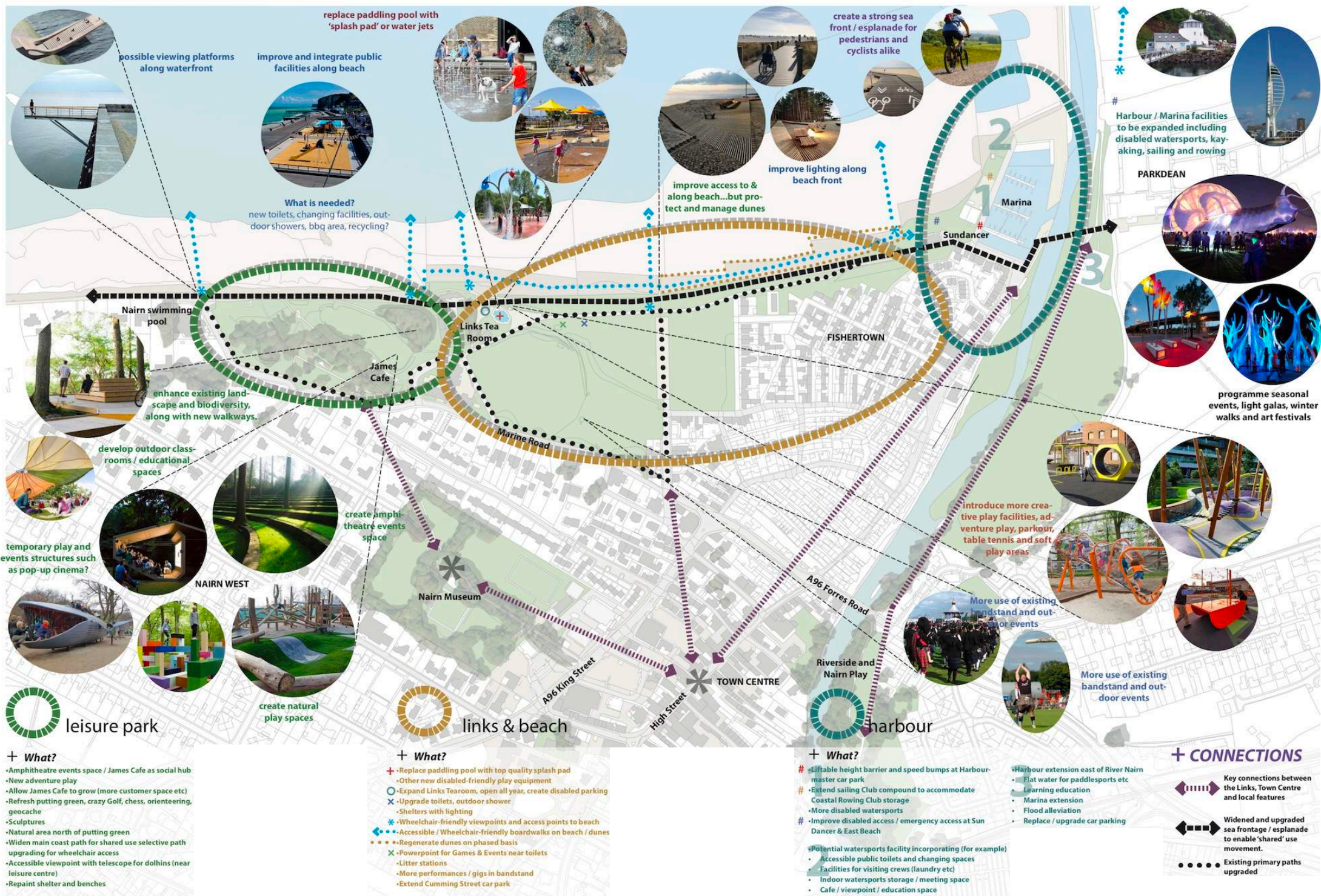


Figure 5 Overall plan

- + What?**
- Amphitheatre events space / James Cafe as social hub
 - New adventure play
 - Allow James Cafe to grow (more customer space etc)
 - Refresh putting green, crazy Golf, chess, orienteering, geocache
 - Sculptures
 - Natural area north of putting green
 - Widen main coast path for shared use selective path upgrading for wheelchair access
 - Accessible viewpoint with telescope for dolphins (near leisure centre)
 - Repaint shelter and benches

- + What?**
- Replace paddling pool with top quality splash pad
 - Other new disabled-friendly play equipment
 - Expand Links Tea room, open all year, create disabled parking
 - Upgrade toilets, outdoor shower
 - Shelters with lighting
 - Wheelchair-friendly viewpoints and access points to beach
 - Accessible / Wheelchair-friendly boardwalks on beach / dunes
 - Regenerate dunes on phased basis
 - Powerpoint for Games & Events near toilets
 - Litter stations
 - More performances / gigs in bandstand
 - Extend Cumming Street car park

- + What?**
- Replace height barrier and speed bumps at Harbour-master car park
 - Extend sailing Club compound to accommodate Coastal Rowing Club storage
 - More disabled watersports
 - Improve disabled access / emergency access at Sun Dancer & East Beach
- Potential watersports facility incorporating (for example)**
- Accessible public toilets and changing spaces
 - Facilities for visiting crews (laundry etc)
 - Indoor watersports storage / meeting space
 - Cafe / viewpoint / education space

- + CONNECTIONS**
- Key connections between the Links, Town Centre and local features
 - Widened and upgraded sea frontage / esplanade to enable 'shared' use movement.
 - Existing primary paths upgraded

possible viewing platforms along waterfront

replace paddling pool with 'splash pad' or water jets

improve and integrate public facilities along beach

What is needed? new toilets, changing facilities, outdoor showers, bbq area, recycling?

improve access to & along beach...but protect and manage dunes

improve lighting along beach front

create a strong sea front / esplanade for pedestrians and cyclists alike

improve lighting along beach front

Harbour / Marina facilities to be expanded including disabled watersports, kayaking, sailing and rowing

PARKDEAN

Nairn swimming pool

enhance existing landscape and biodiversity, along with new walkways.

James Cafe

Links Tea Room

Marine Road

FISHERTOWN

Sundancer

Marina

programme seasonal events, light galas, winter walks and art festivals

develop outdoor classrooms / educational spaces

temporary play and events structures such as pop-up cinema?

create amphitheatre events space

Nairn Museum

A96 King Street

TOWN CENTRE

A96 Forres Road

Riverside and Nairn Play

introduce more creative play facilities, adventure play, parkour, table tennis and soft play areas

More use of existing bandstand and outdoor events

leisure park

Nairn West

create natural play spaces

links & beach

High Street

Harbour

More use of existing bandstand and outdoor events

More use of existing bandstand and outdoor events

4

PROJECTS

This plan is intended to support collaborative action as well as being a decision-making framework.

With this in mind, the overall plan shown in the previous section has been broken down into nine 'packages' or project areas, each of which is described on subsequent pages.

Initial ideas of projects were derived from the various engagement activities between August and October 2018. They were subject to public comment or 'sense-checking' at the first public event in November, where people were encouraged to comment via postcards (all viewable online at bit.ly/2rqEGYu). Those comments helped to focus on the nine project areas shown in this section.

This section of the report aims to:

- Give definition and parameters describing them in more detail.
- Suggest how projects might work together as packages to be mutually supportive, e.g. for securing funding.
- Identify key players for project design and delivery (others may wish to participate too).
- Suggest initial actions for each project area.



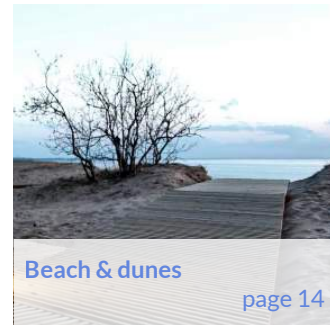
Water play park page 11



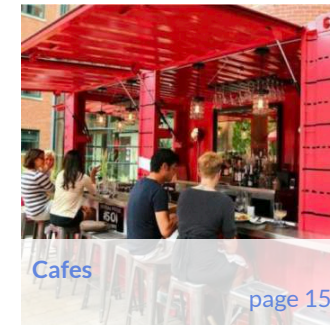
Leisure Park: nature & woodland page 12



Leisure Park: amphitheatre & putting green page 13



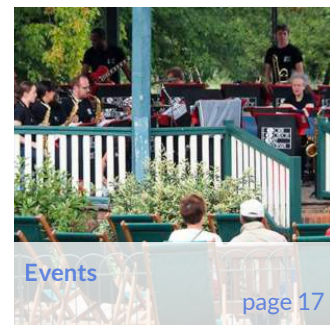
Beach & dunes page 14



Cafes page 15



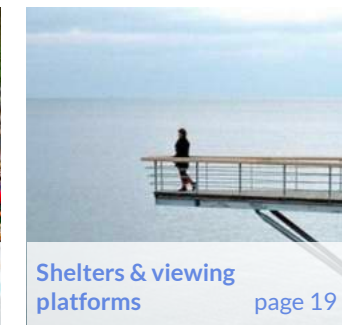
Paths, accessibility & connections page 16



Events page 17



Watersports page 18



Shelters & viewing platforms page 19

Water play park

The centrepiece here is replacement of the life-expired paddling pool with a high quality water play feature, designed to appeal to a wide range of visitors and residents, be accessible to all, usable all year and have lower operational costs.

Linked to this would be an upgrading of existing play facilities, a greater potential role for the Links Tearoom (see page 15), and repurposing of the underused former Tearoom building.

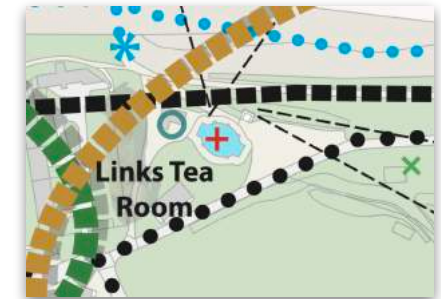
Key proposals

- Replace paddling pool with 'splashpad' – pop-up fountains in summer, temporary ice skating in winter, wheelchair-accessible.
- Upgrade & extend play park, creating some shelter where the hill & slide were.
- Incorporate play opportunities for younger, older & disabled kids – including new activities like chalk drawing area, freerunning/parkour, multiplay facilities, graffiti wall, skatepark.
- Keep & upgrade toilets, add disabled changing.
- Disabled parking close to play park / Tearoom.
- Potential management role for Links Tearoom.



Key players?
 Council / #TeamHamish / NICE
 Links Tearoom
 Cricket Club

First step?
 Agree collaborative way forward on design, consultation, funding, delivery, management & maintenance



Leisure Park: nature & woodland

This set of proposals covers the Leisure Park, focussing on the more 'natural' areas to the west and north. The proposals aim to retain and enhance the quiet natural character of the area, making the area more accessible for wheelchair users and introducing appropriate artworks and seating.

Key proposals

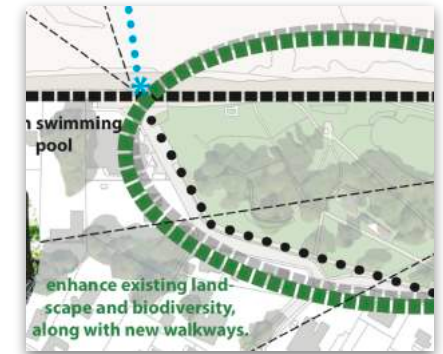
- Maintain existing landscape.
- Make selected paths wheelchair-accessible.
- Freshen up benches & shelters, more seating.
- Sculpture / artwork.
- Enhance plant stock.
- Create small nature education areas, picnic/ BBQ tables.

Key players?

Council / Green Hive
Keeping Nairnshire Colourful
Schools
#TeamHamish / NICE
Men's Shed

First step?

Meet to agree initial priorities and a plan of action



Leisure Park: putting green area

The former quarry at the eastern end of the Leisure Park, now occupied by the putting green, lends itself perfectly to becoming an amphitheatre for outdoor theatre and music by local groups. The crazy golf would need to be adjusted to enable this, giving an opportunity to update it.

Other outdoor activities could be refreshed or introduced, with James' Cafe sensitively extended and potentially taking on a management role for the area (see page 15).

Key proposals

- Create amphitheatre next to James' Cafe for performance and temporary play/arts structures.
- Managed programme of appropriate seasonal and evening events and activities, remembering proximity of residential property.
- Refresh putting green, crazy golf, chess, orienteering etc.
- Potential management roles for James' Cafe and/or other event organisers (see Events, page 17).

Key players?

Council / #TeamHamish / NICE
James' Cafe
Leisure Centre / High Life Highland
Keeping Nairnshire Colourful

First step?

Agree collaborative way forward for design, consultation, funding, delivery, management & maintenance



Beach & dunes

The beach is one of Nairn's best assets, but it isn't accessible to everyone - wheelchair users in particular. As well as improving access to the beach using natural materials, concerns about litter and dune erosion should be addressed.

Key proposals

- Stabilise and rehabilitate dunes as necessary with new fencing, grass planting etc - taking account of coastal erosion and impact on sea defences.
- Accessible timber walkways to beach and through dunes (permanent and/or temporary).
- Recycling stations and beach cleans.
- Outdoor beach showers near Cumming Street car park or paddling pool.

Key players?

Council / Access Panel
Green Hive
#TeamHamish / NICE

First steps?

Agree initial action priorities.
Design study for beach access.
Feasibility study for dune stabilisation and beach erosion.



Cafes

Cafes are an important part of the Links' attraction for locals and residents.

The two cafes actually on the Links, the Links Tearoom and James' Cafe, are keen to contribute more to the Links by sensitively extending their premises, opening hours/seasons and management of leisure activities immediately around them. This could relate to existing activities such as the putting green and play facilities, as well as potential new activities such as performances in the proposed amphitheatre or other things like bike hire.

These proposals link with improvements to the areas immediately around the cafes (see pages 11 and 15).

Key proposals

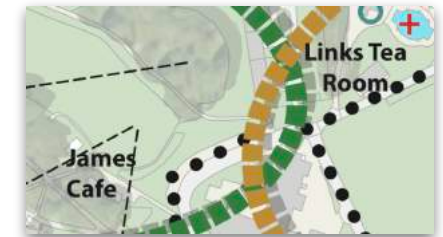
- Expand / extend Links Tearoom & James' Cafe & to create more customer space and facilities.
- Cafes have potential management role for leisure activities in immediate areas.
- Easier disabled access to Links Tearoom (e.g. closer disabled parking or drop-off).
- Selective thinning & pruning of trees around James' Cafe.

Key players?

Council
James's Cafe
Links Tearoom

First steps?

Agree management roles and lease arrangements.
Discuss roles in future projects like water play park and amphitheatre.



Paths, accessibility & connections

The Links are one of Nairn's best-kept secrets: better signage from the town centre and A96 will encourage more visitors to stop and enjoy what the town has to offer.

Improving pedestrian routes and connections, particularly for disabled people, will also help more people to enjoy the Links and create longer walking loops via the riverside and Viewfield. The area around the junctions of Marine Road, Cumming Street and the A96 is particularly challenging for wheelchair users.

Planning policy has an aspiration to sensitively upgrade the main esplanade path as part of a longer shared-use pedestrian/cycle coastal trail.

Key proposals

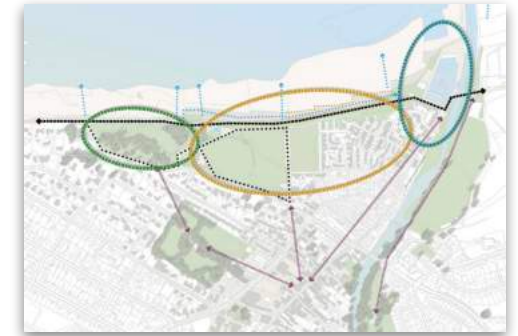
- Upgrade main "prom" path as accessible walking and cycling route with sensitive low level lighting, as part of longer coastal route.
- Improve other main paths for wheelchair use.
- Improve pedestrian/wheelchair routes to/from town centre (via Cumming St/Viewfield and across A96) and to riverside/Nairn Play.
- Improve signage & wayfinding within and to/from the Links and East Beach car park, incorporating dementia-friendly design.
- Possible extension to Cumming Street car park if required in the future.

Key players?

Council / Access Panel
#TeamHamish / NICE
External funders
Revolution CT cycling club

First steps?

Inclusive design of audit of path network & connections.
Agree plan of action for path improvements & signage.



Events

People love an event, and many already happen on the Links - from the Nairn Games, Book & Arts Festival and Beer & Music Festival to pop-up gigs. Creating a year-round events programme would give more opportunities for local talent and be attractive to visitors.

As well as developing the events programme, supporting work should include marketing, event organiser guidance and support, and improvements to physical infrastructure.

Key proposals

- Develop varied year-round events programme for visitors and local community (music, arts, entertainment, sport, culture).
- Marketing to visitors and local community.
- Update guidance and approvals process for event organisers using the Links.
- Create amphitheatre by James' Cafe / putting green (see page 13).
- Extend public space / events provision at bandstand.
- Install locked electrical power point for Highland Games etc near toilets.

Key players?

Council | Nairn Games | Nairn BID | Nairn Book & Arts Festival | local businesses | community groups | schools & youth groups | NICE/ #TeamHamish

First steps?

Develop events programme
Update events guidance & approvals protocols for use of the Links
Installed electrical power point for event organisers



Watersports

As well as being part of Nairn's visitor offer, watersports are a big part of community life: the town has at least half a dozen active community watersports organisations. The Sailing, Kayaking and Coastal Rowing Club together have 400 members.

The clubs are keen to lead the phased development of ambitious new watersports facilities which would increase local membership, attract more visitors and enable more activities to be organised such as disabled watersports and other educational activities.

Phase 1: immediate improvements

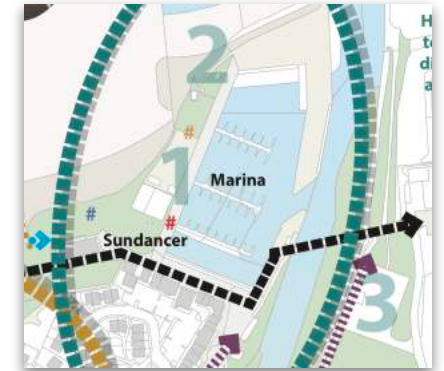
- Lifiable height barrier and speed bumps at Harbour car park.
- Small extension to Sailing Club compound to accommodate Coastal Rowing Club skiff.
- Improve wheelchair/emergency beach access at Sun Dancer and Parkdean.

Phase 2: new watersports building comprising:

- Club meeting spaces & storage.
- Accessible public toilets & changing spaces.
- Public viewing gallery, meeting rooms, education space and possibly cafe.
- More disabled watersports activities.
- Facilities for visiting sailing crews (laundry etc).

Phase 3: harbour extension east of River Nairn

- Create flat water for paddlesports and watersports education.
- Education facilities.
- Marina extension.
- Flood alleviation.
- Relocate/upgrade East Beach car park.

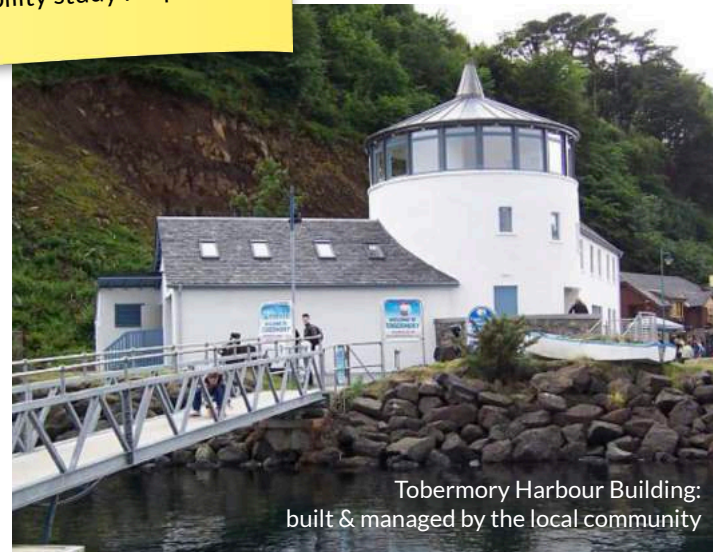


Key players?

Council
Sailing Club
Kayaking Club
Harbour Group
Coastal Rowing Club
Access Panel

First steps?

Implement phase 1.
Initiate feasibility study for phases 2 and 3.



Tobermory Harbour Building:
built & managed by the local community



The Spinnaker,
Portsmouth

Shelters & viewing platforms

The existing shelters in the Leisure Park have great character and should be restored, with subtle lighting so they are accessible after dark.

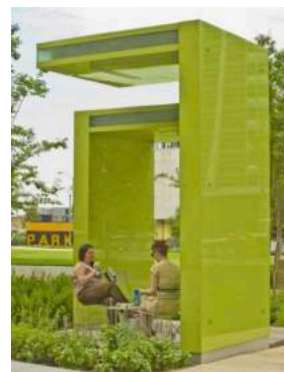
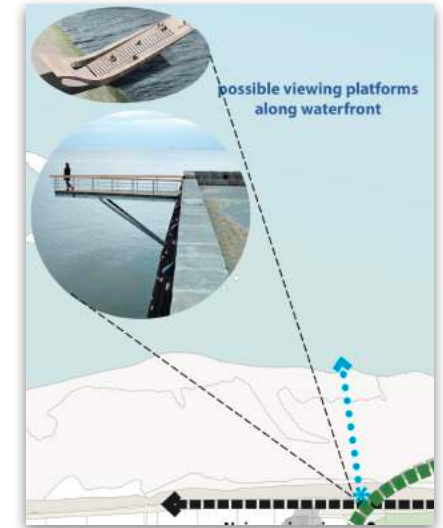
A small number of new shelters / viewing points could also be created along the esplanade for watching dolphins or simply looking at the view, with an emphasis on inclusive design and natural materials.

Key proposals

- Smarten up existing shelters.
- Create accessible viewing platforms at key points along the seafront, with built-in seating, subtle lighting, recycling and cycle parking.
- Potentially start with programme of temporary popup shelters to best locations and design requirements, then create permanent installations.

Key players?
Council / Access Panel / Green Hive
#TeamHamish / NICE
Men's Shed

First steps?
Refresh existing shelters.
Agree strategy for new popup/
permanent viewing platforms/shelters.
Popups programme.
Design competition for new viewing
platforms.



5

NEXT STEPS

This document is both a decision-making framework and a framework for collaborative action. What is critical now is that action happens, and that it happens collaboratively.

Each group of projects in section 4 has first steps noted to progress those particular projects. The key players noted against each project are encouraged to progress their plans in collaboration with each other and the Council, using this document as both a brief and endorsement.

Principles

The strategic principles must be at the heart of delivering this plan (see diagram on right and further detail on page 7).

Whatever proposals are brought forward for the Link in the future, they must be:

- Sustainable
- High quality
- Community-led
- Collaborative



Wider actions

A number of wider actions are needed to progress the more ambitious projects:

- **Funding and resources** #TeamHamish has already gathered sufficient funding for detailed design work and some project implementation. The Council and other organisations need to raise funds and, certainly in the case of the Council, secure staff resources.
- **Management and maintenance** Although the Common Good Fund may be a source of finance to maintain existing facilities at the Links, it currently has a limited income stream. Budgets for new facilities should therefore incorporate maintenance funding. There is potential to involve local businesses and community groups to help maintain and manage land and activities at the Links.

'Quick wins'

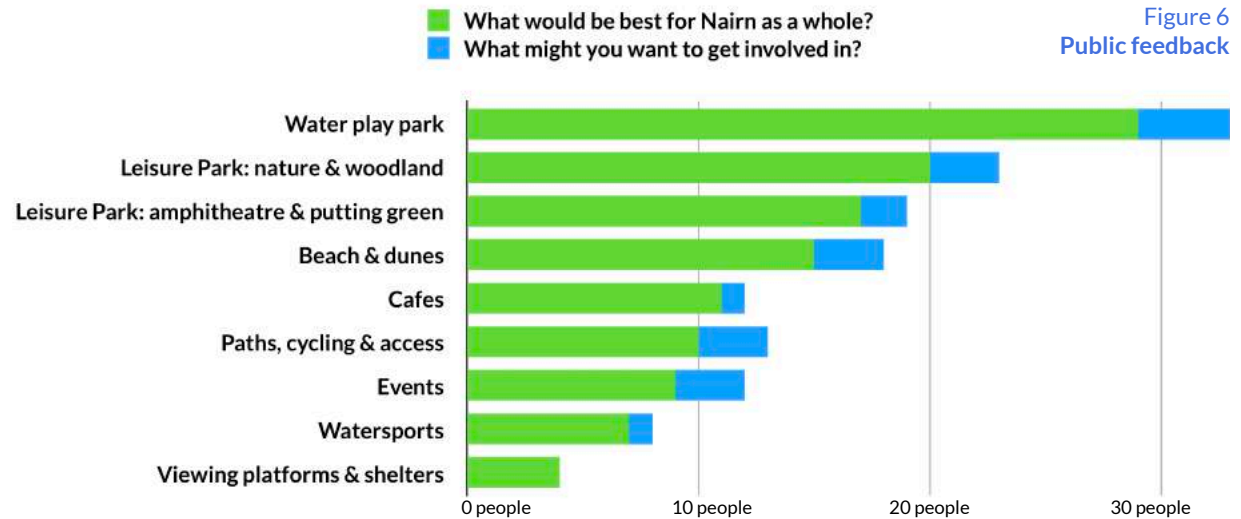
These are important to build confidence. At the second public event, participants were asked: Which of the nine groups of projects would be best for Nairn as a whole? And which might they want to get involved with?

The results are shown in Figure 6 (above). Although not sufficiently robust as a basis for decision-making, they do nonetheless provide a useful indication of community feeling.

Two project areas stand out as ready for action:

1. The proposed **water play park** is clearly seen as being valuable for Nairn. Since the current paddling pool's lifespan is severely limited and its replacement is an ambition of both the Council and #TeamHamish, progressing this project is an obvious starting point. Design, sourcing funding and construction is likely to take until at least 2020, but the key players announcing that collaborative work is starting would send an important signal.
2. Improving **paths, accessibility & connections** (including signage and wayfinding) could also be progressed immediately. Nairn Access Panel, #TeamHamish and the Council all have important roles and aspirations here, and funding may be available from organisations like Sustrans, Hitrans and Smarter Choices Smarter Places. In the medium term, re-routing of strategic traffic via the proposed A96 by-pass may offer opportunities to create better pedestrian connections between the Links and the town centre; those discussions should start now with Transport Scotland.

There is no reason to delay starting other projects, of course: from progressing the watersports facility / marina extension to extending cafes and refurbishing shelters... work could start now!



APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1

Summary of feedback from earlier consultation events

The Highland Council held two public events at the Links in August/September 2018, between completion of the initial Scoping Study and the process of preparing this document. The graphic on the right summarises the main points, and was displayed as a poster at the public drop-in event in November 2018.

Initial consultation events were held at the Highland Games in August and the Cricket Club pavilion in September. 100 people came to each event. What did they say?



CHILDREN'S PLAY

Many people welcomed improvements and #Team Hamish's proposals were widely supported. People miss the big slide. A popular idea was to group play facilities so one parent can supervise children of different ages. Adventure play, rock climbing and creative play (e.g. outdoor musical instruments) were suggested. The Falkirk Wheel, Ardersier & Inshes Park were cited as examples



FACILITIES

Suggestions included keeping the public toilets open, improving them with baby changing and disabled changing facilities, and providing outdoor showers, more recycling and waste bins, and a BBQ area



SHELTER

Shelter from sun, rain and wind was suggested as important by many people. For example, shady areas for families and picnics, and more shelter from the wind - especially where the hill with the big slide was removed near the paddling pool



ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

People want to see the the putting green and other facilities upgraded, and new things like petanque and table tennis. Many people wanted more outdoor events, with a new space like the proposed #TeamHamish amphitheatre near James' Cafe. More use of the bandstand by local musicians was suggested



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment should be respected, many people said, even if the Links does need to be improved. Open spaces, trees and views should be protected. Wildlife and plants should be nurtured, for example trees retained and less weedkiller. People would like the dunes and beach to be protected and managed responsibly



MAINTENANCE

Maintenance was seen as really important. Many folk said that existing shelters, picnic tables and public toilets need to be improved or replaced - and any new features must be well maintained. It was suggested that groups like the men's shed, Keeping Nairnshire Colourful, golf clubs, Green Hive and youth organisations could help



PADDLING POOL

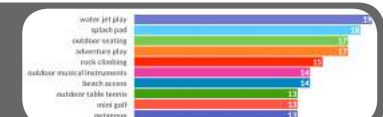
The paddling pool is dear to many people, but many thought it could be replaced with a more modern water play feature that could be used through the year. The idea of water jets or a "splash pad" that children can play in was really popular. Some people suggested using renewable energy to provide power



PATHS AND ACCESS

Good access for disabled people of all ages to the beach, viewpoints, play equipment and throughout the Links were seen as really important. Many folk wanted better connections between the Links and Viewfield, the town centre, the river and the harbour. Sculpture and heritage trails with local artists and interpretation were suggested

Images of examples from other places were shown at each event. The graph on the right shows the most popular ideas (the numbers indicate how many people liked a particular idea). It gives a flavour of what people were most interested in



APPENDIX 2

Exemplars from elsewhere

The graphics on subsequent pages were displayed as posters at the public drop-in event in November 2018.

Granary Square, Kings Cross

Granary Square is located in the new Kings Cross development at the top of King's Boulevard, on the banks of Regent's Canal. The square was originally a canal basin where barges unloaded their goods for transportation onwards to the homes and businesses of London.

The square is designed with a strong, simple design using salvaged materials that respond to the historic context and are a reminder of the site's industrial past. Planting has been kept to a minimum to reflect the original industrial character of the Goods Yard.

The focus of the square is four banks of fountains with over 1,000 choreographed fountains – each individually controlled and lit at night. Arrive at daybreak, and the mood is serene with mist and fog setting the scene. The fountains become more and more animated as the day goes on. Granary Square fountains are open daily and are on during daylight hours. You can have a go at controlling the jets yourself with the Granary Squirt app, which turns the fountains into a giant playable game of Snake.

Townshend Landscape Architects designed the square, the fountains are designed and built by The Fountain Workshop and lighting design by Speirs + Major.



Precedent examples - Water Feature

Rule Water Street, Nanchang, China

Located at the city of Nanchang in central China. A starting point of Rule Lake urban renewal project. Rule Water Street combines its historical evolution with the memories of the mother river, Gan River, of the site, and aims to rebuild a new modern bonding between the water and people. The Rule water street features in three main areas: "the plaza of thunder dance", "the shower of lights", and "the colour blocking rain garden". The design of the three parts is inspired by the imagination of the water history: the rocky bound at the shore, the shimmering light above the morning river, and the movement of the waves.

Plaza of Thunder Dance

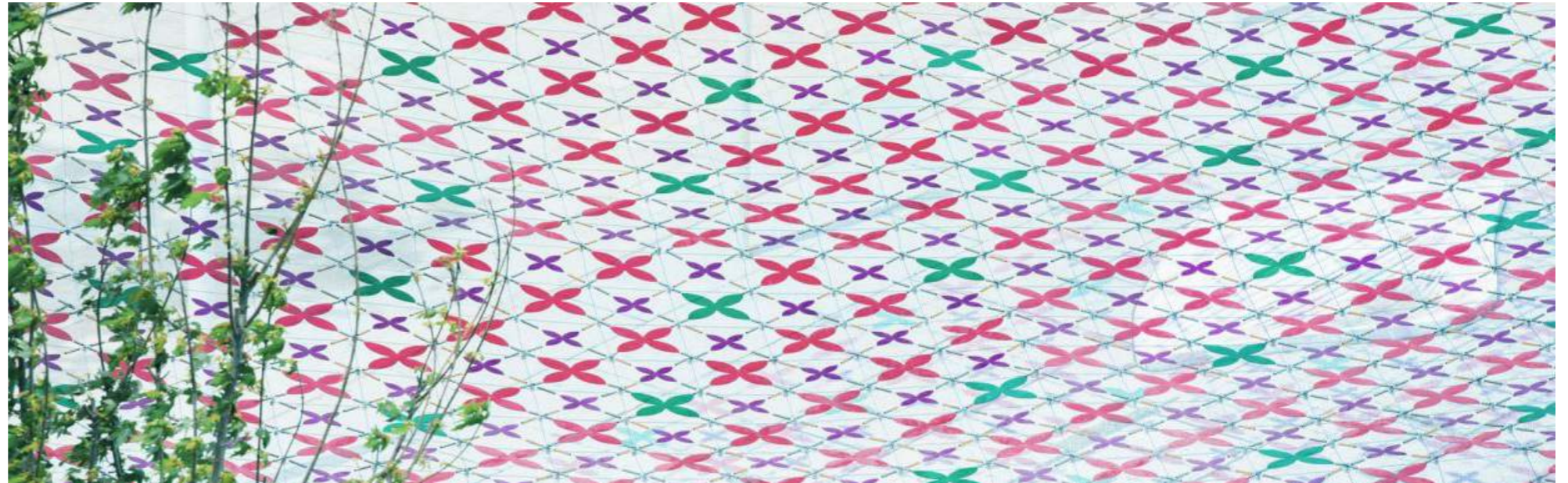
The design of the square that consists of terraces and benches using level changes and the stone blocks, the water wall generates cascading splashes, to mimic the dramatic expression of the waves. The fountain combines numerous interactive water jets, by using bright pink, purple, and blue lights, to perform the theme of "the thunder dance"

The shower of lights

Inspired by the shimmering lights above the morning river, the light plays the main character of the design, filtered by a canopy composed of thousands of transparent acrylics panels, the sunlight transforms into countless colourful butterflies.

Colour Blocking Rain Garden

The last part of the exhibition area is the colour blocking rain garden. The rain garden is designed for rain collection for irrigation of the garden. The garden consists of a grid system of aquatic planting beds with recycling gabion and gravels. By mixing colourful aquatic flowers and stones from the construction site, the waste transforms into a sea of lives with colourful flora waves.



Precedent examples - Water Feature

Place Lazare Goujon

In Situ Architectes Paysagistes: At the heart of the “Gratte-ciel” (skyscraper) neighbourhood, between Villeurbanne’s City Hall and the Theatre National Populaire: a vast clearing. The Lazare Goujon square redevelopment restores the unity of a generous pedestrian area.

On either side, two planted rows set an intermediate scale between the two main buildings, thus creating a more intimate place. At the foot of the City Hall, albizzias and their foliage provide some shade and shelter where gardens of cypresses and roses bloom. On the south side, where the imposing Theatre National Populaire stands, a more aerial mesh allows occasional events (flea markets, summer festivals, podium).

In the center, two square basins, the water of which is level with the skyscrapers’ stone base, mirror the towering buildings. At the bottom of these ponds, which are coated in polished blue, the artist Philippe Favier drew a heavenly constellation of painted glass scattered throughout the basins. As a finishing touch for this light limestone glade, a few randomly placed fountains subtly emphasise the sense of verticality.



Precedent examples - Water Feature

Georgswall, Germany

The redesign of the Mayor Muller Plaza is the centerpiece in the ongoing renovation of the historic city and the Georgswall Park in Aurich (Germany)

The shape of the filled in basin is made visible on the surface of the plaza. Four pools with huge letters inside proclaim the former existence of the harbor. The words "OLL HAVEN AU-ERK" (Old harbor Aurich in low German) dive under the water surface, describing a sunken place. For the pavement, mostly used and given material were used for authenticity. By the setting up of the pools, the formerly harbor flanking buildings are brought back in their historical context. Besides that, the letters inside the pools are fragments of larger possibilities of a chapter in timeless history. Nevertheless the Mayor Muller Plaza represents the first shared spaces in northern Germany.

The adjoining Georgswall emphasizes the former running of the canal ending at the basin. Accompanied with a small age-differentiated playground and a chain of benches and hedges, the park combines active participation with passive reflection. Twice a week the fountain play area, connecting the old and the new city part, makes place for the use of a farmer market. The design integrates play value with landscape experience



Precedent examples - Water Feature

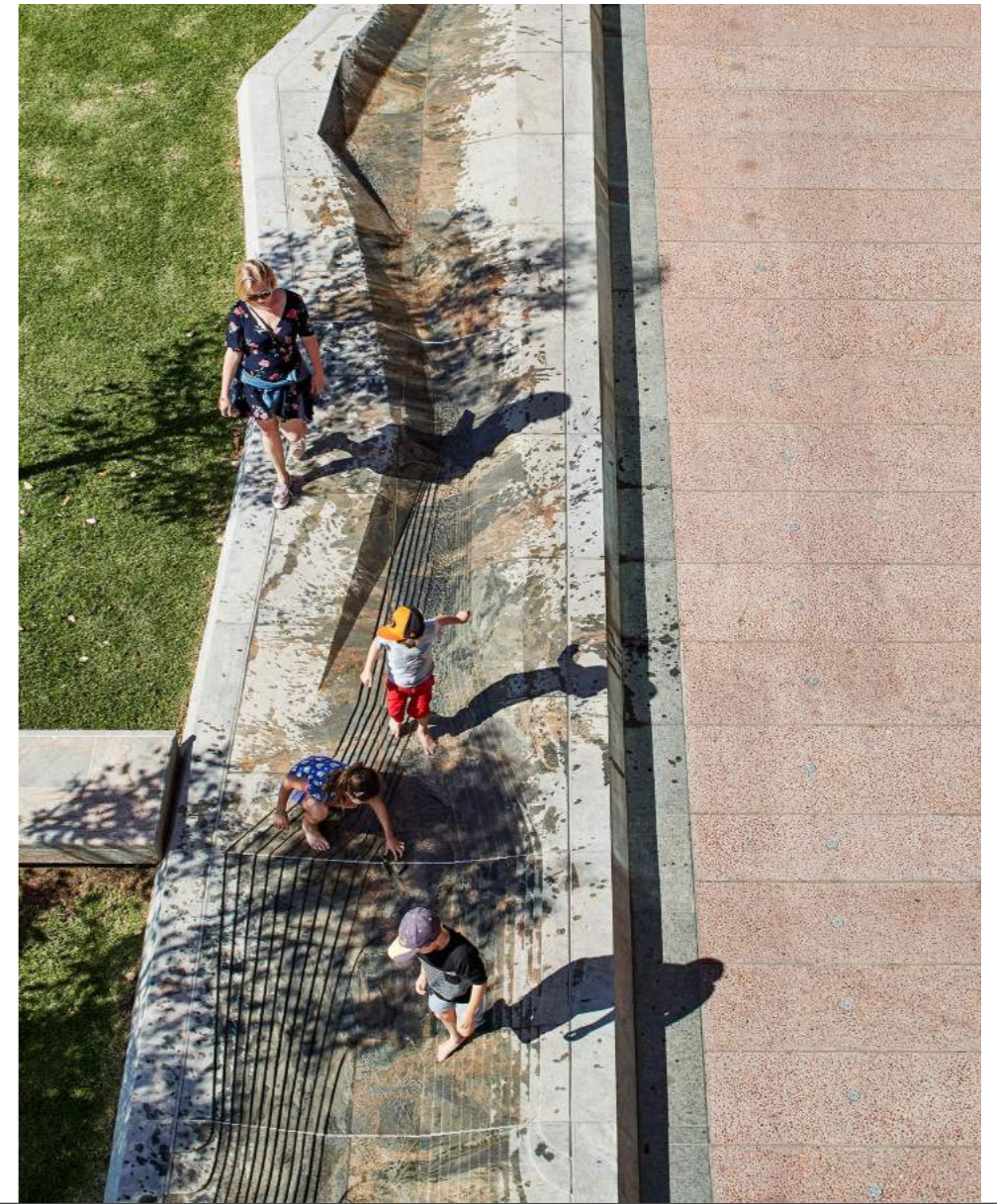
Yagan Square, Perth, Australia

An inclusive \$73.5 million project that links Perth's CBD to Northbridge, embodying all the characteristics of the local area. A 1.1 hectare site, Yagan Square is one of Perth's primary community, meeting and celebration places and tourist destinations.

The design concept is representative of the ideas of convergence: of geologies, tracks, narratives, indigenous and non-indigenous people and culture within the Square itself. Native gardens showcase the unique and diverse qualities of Western Australia flora and landscape. The planted gardens also heighten the seasonal characteristics and colours of Western Australia. A large-scale water sculpture forms the centrepiece

of Yagan Square, consisting of a series of interconnected stone elements, approximately 190 metres long that descend from the upper levels of the square to the mall below, encouraging the visitor to look, touch, feel and enjoy.

Yagan square is the result of a collaborative design process which included with an online tool used to identify/capture community feedback, attracting more than 2,200 community responses, community engagement and public and stakeholder consultation

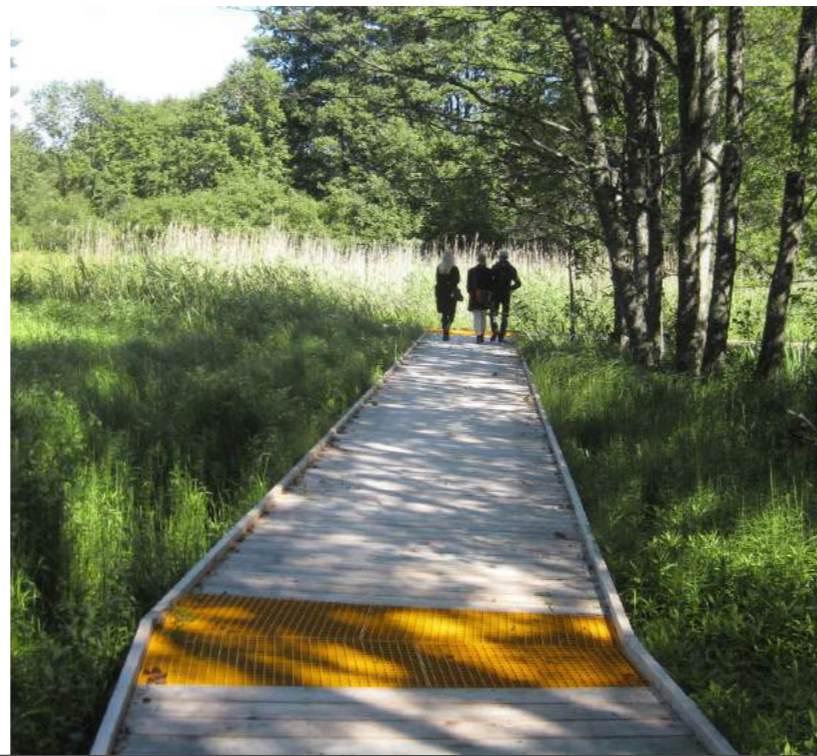


Precedent examples - Water Feature

Strandskogen Arninge Ullna

The Arninge-Ullna Riparian Forest Park project is part of a new urban district in the municipality of Täby. It is a new neighbourhood park which combines biological conservation with the functions of an urban park.

The park opens the forest up to the public while minimising potential impacts on the landscape by making a few careful additions to the landscape. such as wooden walkways to improve accessibility to the forest with platforms and jetty's providing vistas over the Ullna Lake. The park is lined by pillars and signs of weathered steel, backlit and engraved with ecological information and poetic descriptions of nature in the form of haiku-poems by Nobel Laurate Tomas Tranströmer.



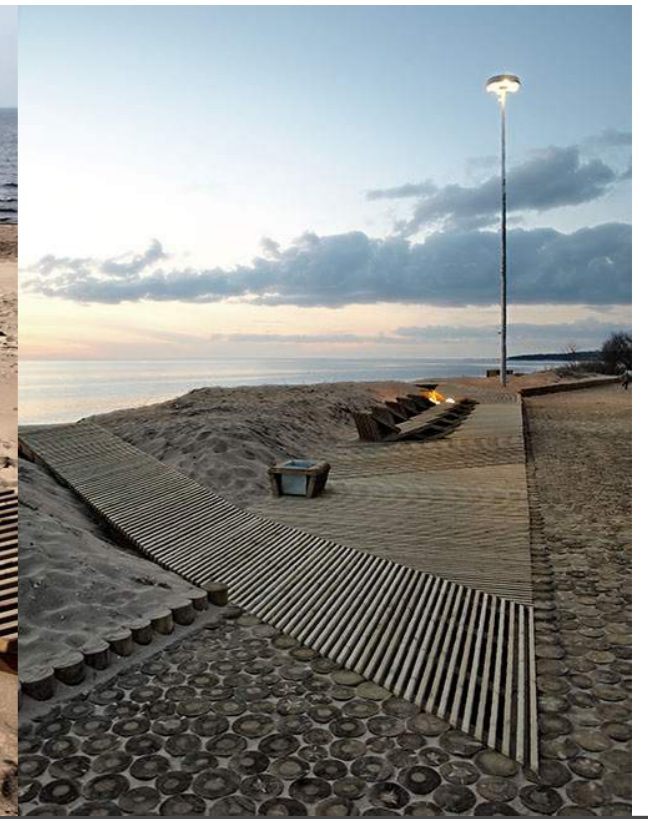
Precedent examples - Woodland / Walkways

Possible walkways through wooded areas, coastal dunes and and grassland

Sea Park - Saulkrasti, Latvia

A development at Saulkrasti, Latvia among the seaside towns focused on tourism, recreation and various annually organized entertainment events. A spacious venue directly near the sea with sports and cultural activities.

The project involves the improvement of the central part of the beach territory, creating a Sea park. The key element of the design is the wooden footbridge and path structure which covers the entire territory. Wooden deck planks are reinforced vertically with slits corresponding to the thickness of the boards in order to avoid the formation of desert stripes under the footbridges. The deck becomes a matrix which can integrate all of the park's small architectural forms – benches, loungers, bike – racks and waste bins, which are also made entirely of wood. The sea park includes two beach volleyball courts with small, two-level terraces / podiums, outdoor fitness area, beach showers, gymnastic tools and children's playgrounds.



Precedent examples - Beach / Dunes

Possible walkways through wooded areas, coastal dunes and and grassland

Hvidovre Standpark, Copenhagen

Hvidovre Strandpark is a unique city beach in the metropolitan area of Copenhagen, at the waterside of Hvidovre. A small artificial beach area has been upgraded to a new improved beach park. The new project consist of an extension of the sand area, a new layout of the path through the meadow, and a new concrete edge between sand area and the green landfill area behind

With the new beach park project, the beach has been expanded, so that the sand area stretches along the entire coastline between Hvidovre Harbor and the small channel 'Mørtelrenden'. A new concrete edge is a poetic element that interprets nature's properties in new form, as well as a pragmatic element that solves the function of securing the grassy meadow against leaching and erosion from the water of the sea. The concrete edge serves as a terrain support wall, as a huge step with a good height for seating, between the grassed landfill area and the new beach area. The project is designed based on the calculated future water rises, so that the border element is not affected by daily water fluctuations, but can withstand the rise of sea level in case of extreme weather events.

The new path and the concrete edge separate and define the beach area from the rest of the area, and provide more space for recreational stays. The concrete edge creates a clear boundary, but the artwork also unites the beach and meadow into a coherent artful beach park, as the necessary support wall is shaped into a beautiful and site specific landscape artwork. And apart from being a support wall and a big step, the concrete artwork is also meant for seating, playing, jumping, leaning on....

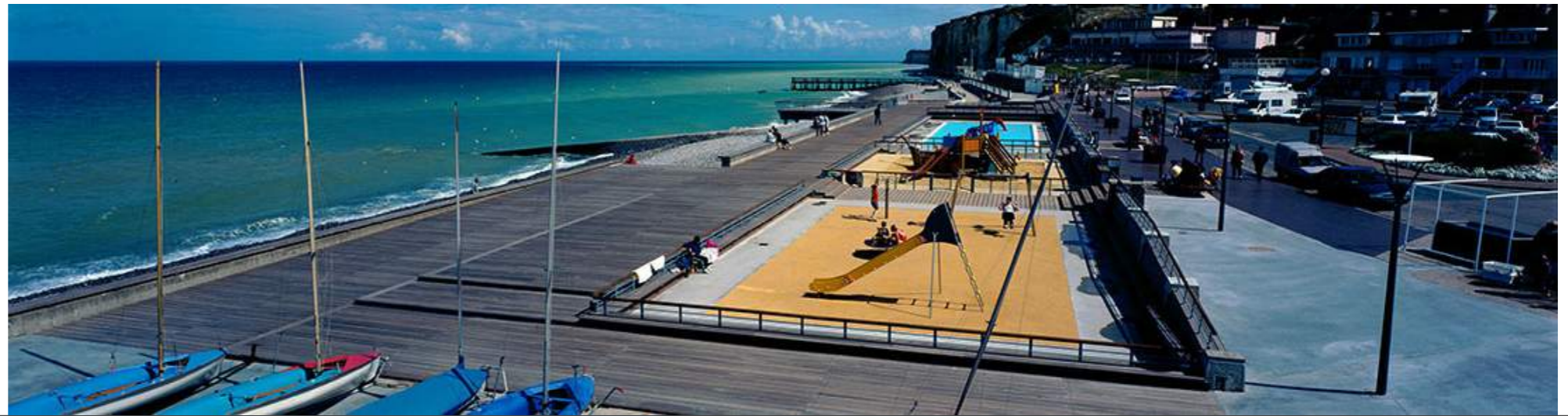


Precedent examples - Sea Front

Potential artwork structures along the beach frontage.

Sea Front in Veules-les-Roses, France

The small resort of Veules-les-Roses suffered from bomb damage during the Second World War and then from the post-war reconstruction, which channeled the river and cover it with a parking lot. A regeneration scheme has realised a large wooden deck, evocative of an ocean liner, with rounded and comfortable benches, a viewpoint on a pier extending into the sea, playgrounds and paddling pool for children. Liberating the River Veules. The last phase uncovers the river, which had been channeled and hidden under a car park. Breaking up the car park gave way to a freshwater garden along the river.



Precedent examples - Sea Front

Meet you at the Ropes Copenhagen

Meet you at the ropes is a temporary interventions after the old Carlsberg brewery in the Vesterbro neighborhood of Copenhagen moved its operations elsewhere, leaving the site empty.

The project began as an invited competition. The planners at Carlsberg had plenty of research, master plans, phasing ready to go but then the economy tanked and no development happened. The site as a former factory felt like it was not a place that people could be in. It seemed more like trespassing than a place to hang out.

To activate the space and create identity in the area they decided to develop a temporary project with 3 "squares" each with different programs to bring people to the area and use the space. The first two squares have a stronger focus on motion and physical activity and on developing an area to both generate identity and activity. Initial program ideas were for a gallery or an outdoor theater for watching movies but the final solution became more of installation that did not have a specific program but rather invited people to use it as they saw fit.

The field of ropes are cut at different lengths so groups can gather in the center and each time the ropes are used in new ways.

Everyone knows the spot as "the ropes" and it has been a place that has been sought out so it very much has created an identity. The ropes are an 'equalizer' for events that have been held there "everybody is between the ropes and you are more likely to talk to people because you are, in a funny way, all in this together"



Precedent examples - Play - Temporary Event

Potential artwork structures along the beach frontage.

Zorlu Playground

Carve Landscape Architecture

Carve collaborated on the largest playground development in Istanbul starting back in 2012. The starting point for Carve's design was for children to be able to completely dive into their own world of imagination: stimulated by other worldly shapes, colours and an unprecedented play experience. It should be a playground visible from afar, yet a world in its own right. This resulted in a playground that is one of a kind: everything, from concept to layout, from play equipment to landscaping, was designed specifically for the Zorlu playground. With this, Zorlu Center offers a unique chance to create a backdrop for unforgettable play experiences.

The playground consists of various zones and changes its look: from low, bright and colourful at the entrance zone it gradually transforms into a more adventurous, high and natural looking play environment. Within this gradient, the playground is divided into different 'worlds', who all have their very own character. While the parents are sitting on the neighbouring terrace or the elongated bench that embraces the playground, children can safely explore the whole playground on their own



Precedent examples - Play