

Summary

Recap - top priorities for park improvements, which we will definitely be doing, are:

- Playpark
- Paths – upgrading them and re-routing the NCN75
- Creating a new road crossing for the re-routed NCN75
- Replacing / updating signage
- Replacing all benches / bins
- Planting wildflowers and thinning thickets to increase biodiversity
- Thinning / cutting back vegetation to give clear sightlines throughout the park
- Upgrading underpasses / under bridges – to make them more welcoming and feel safer

If we have enough funding, our next priorities are (in order of popularity):

- 1) Measured walk
- 2) Viewing platform
- 3) Feature seating / Event space
- 4) Canoe launch
- 5) New path at skatepark

Also, to bear in mind:

- Lighting along the paths throughout the park (if we want to encourage people to walk / cycle in wintertime also)
- Cut back / remove vegetation particularly around the underpass (between bridge and underpass)
- Links with Howden Park, to create a feeling of one large park
- River focus - open up sightlines and make a feature of the river
- Measured walk to include distances and times of walks on signage
- Ensure strategically placed bins (for dog walkers)
- Ongoing maintenance - reduce litter. New features / vegetation to require minimal maintenance.
- Locations of new seating/benches to be carefully chosen, as they can be honey-pots for negative behaviour, as well as positive

Results from consultations in Nov/Dec 2014

Priorities

Item	Civic Centre votes	HPC votes	Online votes	TOTALS
Feature seating	14	4	8	26
Event space	16	6	4	26
New path at skatepark	3	1	2	6
Viewing platform	14	6	7	27
Measured walk	16	7	8	31
Canoe launch	10	2	4	16
Other	0	0	3	3
TOTAL VOTES	73	26	36	135

'Other':

- Clean up the river banks from plastic and paths from rubbish and broken glass
- facilities should be provided [see comment below about 'town park']
- Underpass murals

Officer comments

- Lighting at the East end of the Civic Centre, between the CC and the car park?
- How good is lighting along the cycle path? People don't feel safe going along there in the dark as it's secluded and dark.

Community comments

- Lighting along the path - NCN 75 (like canal footpath? If not, then streetlights)
- Path from underpass to Howden South Road – remove / cut back vegetation
- Missed initial survey. Looks nice but would rather see a large traditional park (which West Lothian lacks) like Callendar Park or Craigtoun Park with putting, paddling pool, tennis courts and boating lake. Could be in Howden and fenced off or patrolled if necessary. Would attract tourists if well run and lots of activities.
- Picnic tables
- All the proposals are fine, however I feel we still do not have a "town park" where one would take their family for the day. Almost every other sizeable town has a recreational focus, such as Callender Park in Falkirk. There should be activities provided such as a cafe, BBQ area, trampolines, mini golf, etc. The reason why Almondvale Heritage Centre is successful is because it has all of these things plus more. I feel it still will not be a place where I would plan a day out with the family. I also think large gateway features could be located on the east and west ends of Howden Road with a change of road surface which would help identify the whole area as a part. Howden park should somehow be linked to Almondvale park if possible. The whole area should be a park which you drive through as opposed to two pieces of land separated by a road.
- I would like to see less ornamental planting and a focus on the river which is a bit shut and confined at present. Rather than stepping up maintenance a design to reduce the need for cyclic maintenance is preferred.
- Priority for canoe launch but not at existing site as too steep and water current too fast. Alternative canoe launch site on north side, 200m east of existing site. Green Space Officer informed of alternative site. This would encourage Local Kayak club, other Council services such as outdoor education and High Schools to use this site as existing location presents difficulty in launching and does not promote use, especially with faster flow of water at the current location. Happy to provide more advice.
- Please state estimated times for walks rather than/as well as distances
- Some seating can attract antisocial conduct, eg drinking and litter.
- It seems that all the plans are near the center down from Howden Park.
- I am loving your snapshots of other parks featuring the wildflower walks, etc. Please could you remember us dog walkers as well!