

Biodiversity initiatives for the West End and across the city

Numerous constituents have contacted me and the City Council's environment team in Neighbourhood Services about trying to keep biodiversity gains as the maintenance of parks and other open-spaces re-starts. Residents will shortly notice the maintenance in parks and open space areas starts up again as there has been good progress with the re-start of 'phase one' of the resumption of services – for example in cemeteries and sheltered housing areas.

The Head of Environment has advised :

"... over the last 3 months, I have received substantial correspondence from residents requesting that the council actively considers not defaulting to previous grounds maintenance programmes, particularly in relation to reinstating grass cutting and herbicide usage. That, instead, the council takes this opportunity to consider a reset within our parks and green spaces which allows the further rapid development and expansion of bio-diverse and naturalised areas.

As the service emerges out of lockdown, in managing our environment there is also a requirement to balance active promotion of conservation practices and the desires of many within our communities with the need to maintain high environmental standards which also respects the wishes of our many other residents who wish to see a priority towards returning parks and green spaces to a high level of maintenance, preferably being restored at the earliest opportunity.

Recently, residents within the city's West End, through discussion with local members, their Community Council and the Friends of Magdalen Green, have been working with council officers to undertake a community consultation. This actively seeks the views of residents to determine the appetite for a number of naturalised zones to be created; and for their potential future development as biodiversity areas which actively promotes the preservation of species and development of wider ecosystems.

Please see the link [here](#).

It is hoped that the Magdalen Green consultation will provide a useful benchmark from which similar community initiatives, where required, can be replicated across the city to ensure that local spaces are managed to meet the aspirations of the wider communities, which they serve.

In the meantime, however, there is a requirement, prior to commencing with the wider reinstatement of grass cutting operations, to consider the immediate opportunity for additional locations throughout the city to be re-evaluated to support the wider introduction of biodiversity and naturalised areas at a quicker pace. This window is only available at this time due to

the unique circumstances that have arisen over the last couple of months through routine maintenance having ceased, due to the pandemic.

In preparation, officers have undertaken an extensive citywide survey which has initially identified over 700,000m² of parks and green spaces (around 17.5% of the overall grass that is currently maintained within Dundee's parks and green spaces), which can be immediately designated as provisional Biodiversity or Naturalised Zones. These areas have been carefully selected from within each ward in the city.

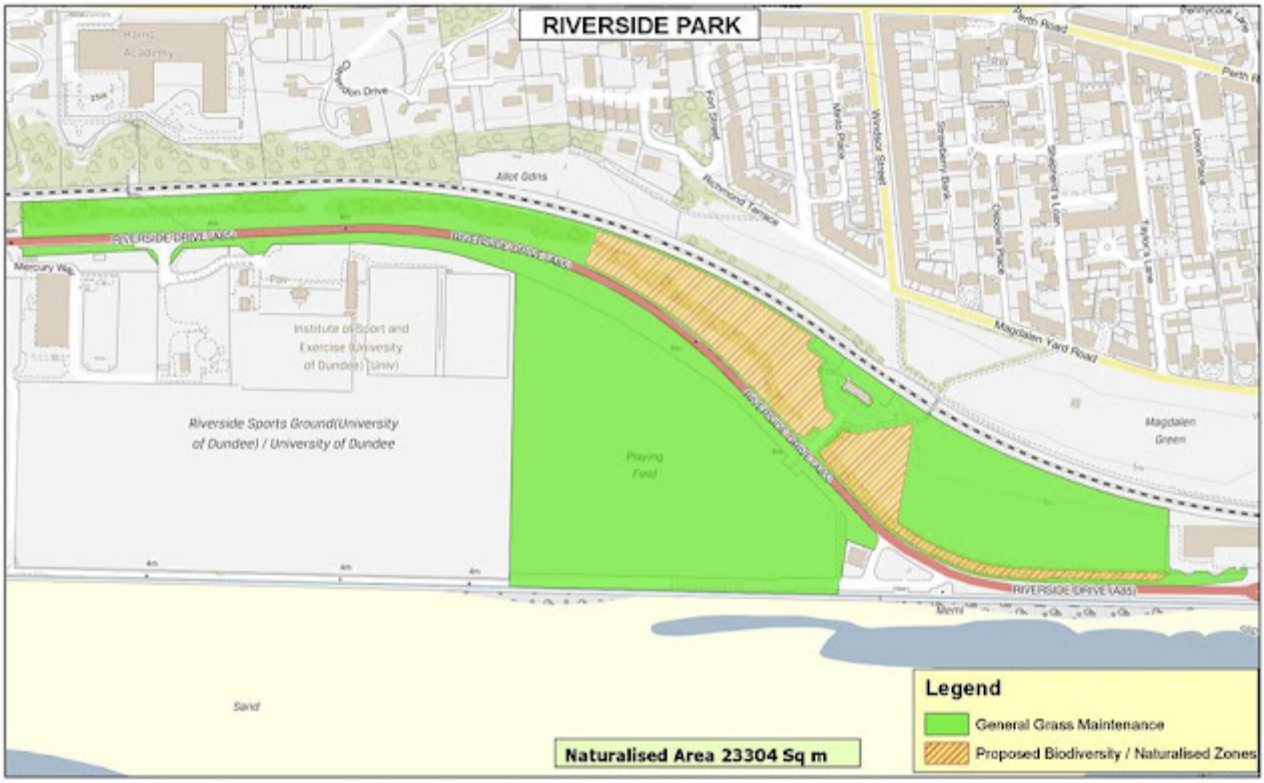
The proposal initially is that as wider grounds maintenance activities resume citywide, these zones will be clearly defined and no further grass cutting or herbicide treatment will take place forthwith. It should also be noted that, through careful selection, these zones are being created within wider areas where a full range of grounds and parks maintenance activities will resume. It is therefore anticipated that these will not impact in any significant way to the overall appearance of the park or green space which they contribute towards. Indeed, it is likely in many cases, through the development of biodiversity zones and wildflower areas, these areas will actively enhance the beauty of our parks and green spaces.

It is also worth noting that careful attention has been taken, in identifying these proposed zones, that they will not impinge on existing pathways, sight lines, or within close proximity of residents homes. Similarly, care has been taken to ensure that the existing natural desire lines used by park users and particularly dog walkers will be unaffected by these proposals. There may also need for similar community engagement, to that currently underway at Magdalen Green, where required, however it is anticipated that there equally may be broad acceptance of these proposals, given the current collective support towards the protection and enhancement of our environment.

In summary, I believe that the above represents a significant and positive shift towards delivering upon actions that have been identified both within the city's Biodiversity Plan and underlines a renewed focus towards our wider responsibility to the environment and reinvigorating our parks."

In the West End, the actual proposals for naturalised areas are below. They cover part of the area on Riverside Drive near the playing fields and sections of Lochee Park, Victoria Park and at Elliot Road. There's also Magdalen Green as the Head of Environment has alluded to above and you can see the areas consulted upon there at the link in his above comments.

I have spoken with the Head of Environment about this and given him some feedback. For example, the Elliot Road proposals, in my view, have the potential to look untidy and some residents on Eton Street look right out onto this. However, what is important is that, once open space and parks maintenance is fully back up to date, residents see what these actually look like, give their views and the council listens to any concerns and is responsive to them.



RIVERSIDE PARK
Proposed Biodiversity / Naturalised Zones

11/06/2020

0 62.5 125 250 Meters

CHANGING THE FUTURE
Sustainable Services, Equipment,
1 City Square Dundee, DD1 1AA



LOCHEE PARK
Proposed Biodiversity / Naturalised Zones

11/06/2020

0 25 50 100 Meters

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1 City Square Dundee, DD1 1AA

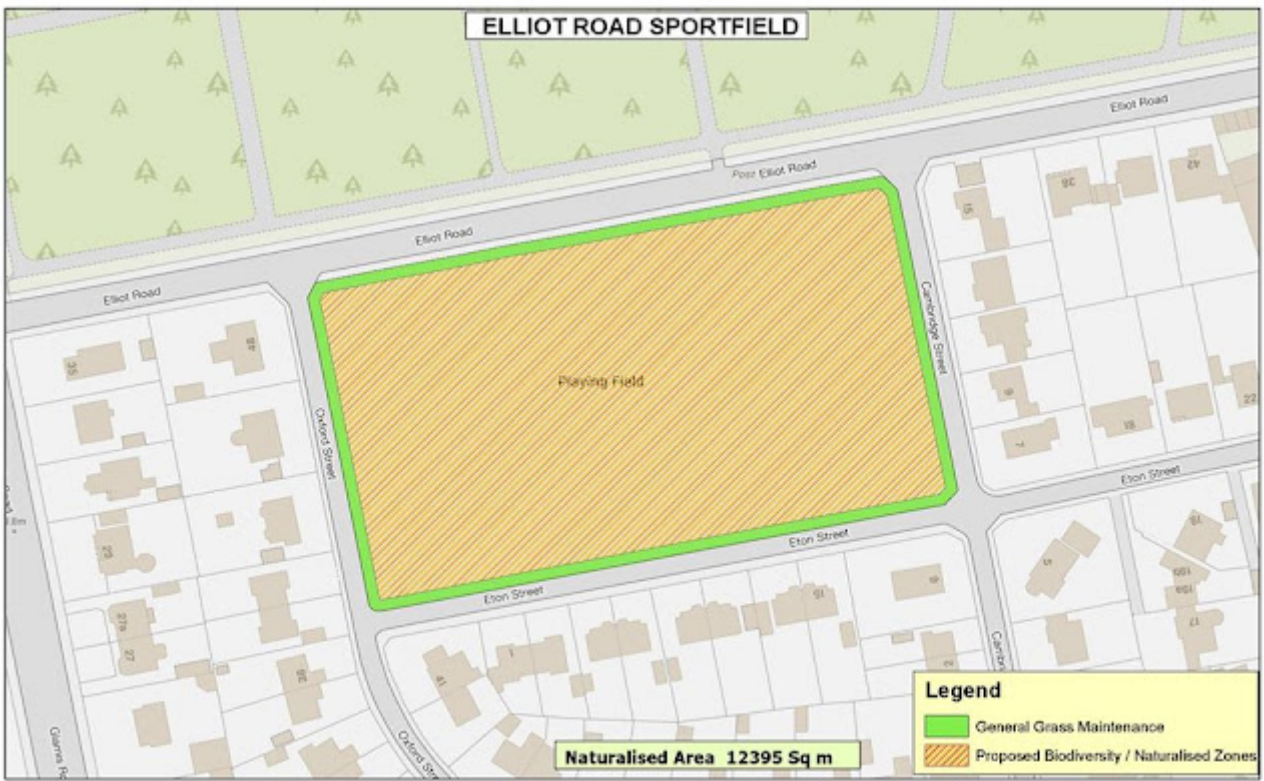


VICTORIA PARK
Proposed Biodiversity / Naturalised Zones

11/06/2020

0 50 100 200 Meters

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ELLIOT ROAD SPORTFIELD
Proposed Biodiversity / Naturalised Zones

11/06/2020

0 12.5 25 50 Meters

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