

The Greenway Community Park

Community Place-Making:
Exploring the future of Murrayburn and
Westerhailes Greenway

#GREENWAYOURWAY



Murrayburn
& Hailesland
Community Park
Association

WESTER HAILES
GROWING
COMMUNITIES



The Scottish
Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

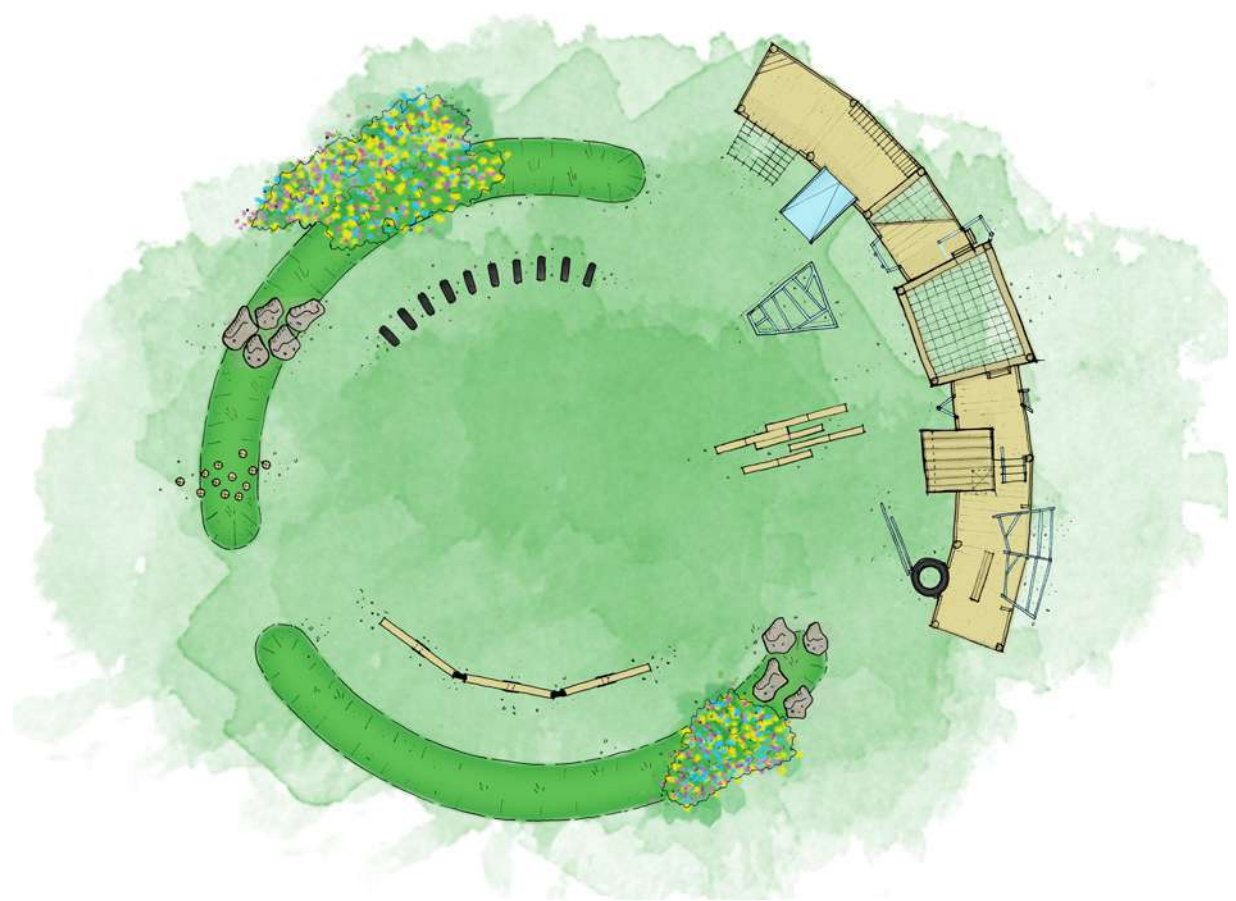
The City of Play:
www.thecityofplay.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the initial concept design for the Greenway Community Park in Murrayburn and Hailesland. The concept design has been derived from the outcomes of an extensive community consultation and engagement programme.

The study was commissioned by Murrayburn & Hailesland Community Park Association, and funded by the Making Places fund.

The primary aims of the concept design are to increase the use and inclusivity of local greenspace and to implement an exceptional yet achievable plan for the affordance of play and recreation. To aid in programming the prospective works - in respect to available and relevant funds for each respective means of improvement - the concept has thus far been separated into five separate improvement strategies.



Sketch plan of main adventure play area

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BACKGROUND

In 2016, Murrayburn & Hailesland residents worked with local organisations, South West Edible Estates and With Kids to deliver a series of community consultation exercises.

The consultations drew similar conclusions, residents wanted;

- **Improvements to local greenspace,**
- **Opportunities to grow fruit and vegetables,**
- **Options for children to play locally,**
- **Better use of the 'Greenway',**
- **Reduction of antisocial behaviour through positive activities for young adults to become involved in,**
- **Opportunities for better health and wellbeing.**

Further meetings resulted in the constitution of Murrayburn & Hailesland Community Park Association (MHCPA) in January 2017 to provide a focus for residents aspirations to improve local play and recreational opportunities. The committee is made up entirely of local residents.

With Kids worked with local children to make and install swings from trees across the Greenway. The swings were well received by the community and used by the children. Unfortunately the swings fell foul of health & safety requirements and had to be removed. Even so they created an appetite for the community to address these issues.

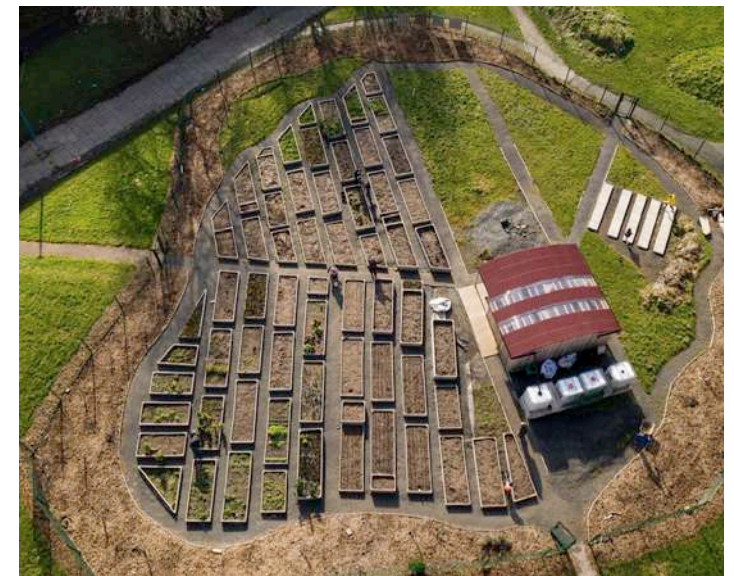
SWEE and MHCPA worked with local residents to establish a 'neighbourhood garden' in the Greenway which provides growing spaces for up to seventy households, and a community shed which can host meetings, workshops and other activities.

In 2019, MHCPA, supported by SWEE were funded by the Making Places programme to commission City of Play Architects to deliver a community park study.

In 2020, a natural play shed was built at the neighbourhood garden by a group of young adults supported by the Growing Youth programme. The shed will provide a base for outdoor play workshops in the Greenway.



The Greenway, tarmaced area is the location of the neighbourhood garden



The neighbourhood garden during construction, showing raised beds and community shed

CONTEXT

DUMBRYDEN, MURRAYBURN and HAILESLAND

Dumbryden, Murrayburn & Hailesland is located in Wester Hailes in the south west of Edinburgh. The 'Greenway' is a pedestrian route which runs South from Dumbryden through Wester Hailes to Clovenstone.

The focus of this study is the large area of greenspace where the Greenway broadens out between Murrayburn & Hailesland, and the adjacent greenspaces.



COMMUNITY CHALKBOARD

We held an introductory consultation session on the Greenway in June 2019. Chalk message boards were set up to capture feedback from locals while discussing what they would like to see in the community park.

"We are in an apathetic cycle at the moment where people here don't really care about the area..."

"The greenway should make me feel safe"

"Our neighbourhood gives the impression that no-one cares about the greenspaces"

"The amount of rubbish and lack of interest in the environment"

"Far too much dog poo not being picked up. Also vandalism to the garden."

"I would love to see a really big zip slide, for adults too"

"A little thing that I would enjoy would be some company for the older generation, people to talk to, not official people, but like a friend"



"I remember the Venchies, they were a great thing, something like that again would be great!"

"I love the ideas you have got here, this is what we need"

"I would suggest families to get involved in building a few dolls house/wee sheds out of recycling materials."

"A mega sandpit will also be great. The feeling of touching it, filling/ emptying buckets will keep kids entertained for hours."

"I watched local kids use a pile of whindust as a treasure island, rollercoaster, bike stunt ramp and just for digging in... That was just a pile of dirt but kids see the possibilities for play everywhere."

"When people are nice to each other. Less closed groups, More open minds"

"Have a Little Free Library, more books, less tablets".



CANAL VIEW ARTS WORKSHOP

We ran two 'rapid prototyping' workshops with sixty children from Canal View Primary School. One of our goals was to 'activate the space', encouraging children to think of the Greenway as a space from them to adopt.

This included exploring ground surface art and pendulum painting, and land art with painted pebbles. The children brought colour and pattern to the Greenway using stakes and ribbons to create hyperbola/ geometric art. They also prepared and primed tyre planters ready for use in the prototyping workshops.



PLAY PROTOTYPING WORKSHOPS

Inspired by the old school “Venchie” adventure playgrounds from the 70’s and 80’s, we worked with local children to create a pop-up play structure and seating area in the Greenway.

Over the course of four weekends in July and August 2019, we co-designed, assembled and painted structures. Steel tubing and key clamps provided an easy, effective, and adaptable means of construction.

The structure proved to be a very popular inclusion to the Greenway with locals reporting high levels of use (see overleaf). It became a focal point for local children and has shown the importance of providing an anchor point for their play.

During facilitated play workshops, the children used loose parts and adaptable elements to diversify the play structure. Most children showed a desire for creative/building and cooperative play with varying degrees of confidence and competence.

There was a strong appetite for risky and physically challenging play. Climbing and ‘monkey bars’ proved very popular. Other popular requests were for a ‘Zip Line’, ‘Swings’ (of various forms), ‘Slides’ and ‘Inclusive/ Accesible’ features.

The location of the adventure playground adjacent to the Community Garden entrance proved convenient allowing for ease of packing/ unpacking loose parts.



PLAY PROTOTYPING - FINDINGS

Play Structure

We asked local participants to keep a record of use of the prototype play structure and seating outside of the workshops.

The play structure was used heavily by the local children as the worn out grass underneath the structures testified. Children have been involved in litter packing prior to play sessions.

Age range of children using the structure appeared to be age 3 to 17. A few adults have been observed trying out/playing on the structure. Local lady observed using it to hang and beat dust from her carpet rugs.

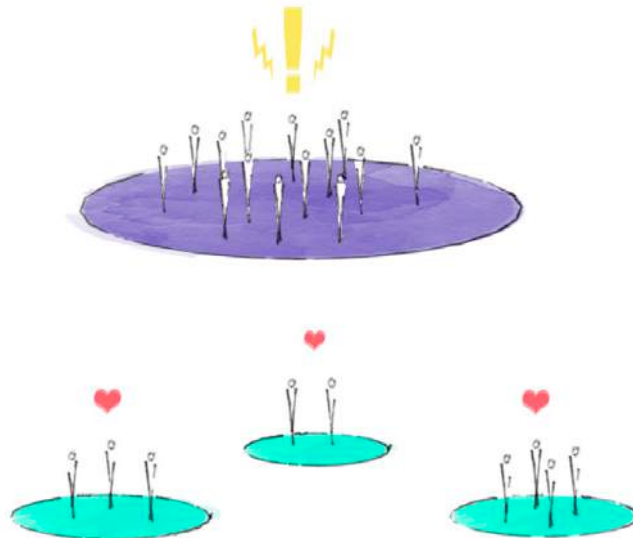
Locals were very supportive of the community self-build approach of the play structures when it was explained the community had raised the funds, and worked with local children and adults to install these items they were very supportive.

Dogs are still fouling in the area although it has been observed that most folks are keeping their dogs away from the play structure area.



Some issues arose from the play structure providing a singular point of interest for children, jostling, tensions and conflict were common. We recommend that there be play opportunities dispersed throughout a wider area of the Greenway through the installation of small play dens.

In this way territorial conflicts can be mitigated in giving children alternative places to play away from potential aggressors.



Seating

The prototype seating was used by parents watching their children on the play structure. Some teenage kids used them whilst chatting to each other.

A group of older ladies were observed having an evening bbq, picnic and glass of wine. (never seen before on Greenway)

Seating and structures have been tested to destruction by local children. Mostly damage free. The planters tipped over a couple of times, although those responsible helped reassemble.

Kids on bicycles use the seats for leaning bikes on. Children were observed using the seats to create play opportunities for themselves.

THE VENCHIES



THE PROPOSAL

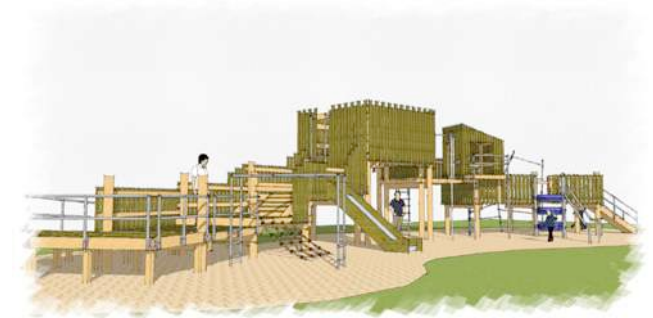
First and foremost our priority is to introduce a range of opportunities for a great variety of play throughout the Greenway and adjacent greenspaces to serve the health, development and happiness of the local children and community.

Our proposal includes the establishment of a large adventure play area in the centre of the Greenway with a variety of smaller 'play dens' distributed around the Greenway and adjacent areas.

The play structures are inspired by the 'Venchie' adventure play areas which were established through community action in council estates across the UK in the 70's and 80's. Similarly, the client group and its supporters are interested in having an element of community self-build in the delivery of the play structures. Alongside the concept design for the Greenway, City of Play have prepared detailed designs for these play structures to facilitate community self-build.

We have also designed the structures to accommodate the addition of loose parts play sessions led by play workers who will make use of the natural play shed in the adjacent neighbourhood garden for storage of materials.

This provision allows for non-conventional, risky, autonomous and creative play under adult supervision, while the fixed installations will provide permanent armatures for play conforming to the relevant BS En 1176 and 1177 playground safety standards.



A Large central Venchie Play Area



Play Dens distributed around the Greenway

THE PLAY STRATEGY



Lots of different and accessible swings!



Inspired by self built pallet dens



Unorthodox, Urban/Industrial Forms!



Zip Wires!



A few Cool Custom Gang Huts!



Made with standard treated timbers, key clamps and steel tubing



Lots of ways of going up and down, across, over and under!
A bit ramshackle in appearance but built soundly



Small Scale, ...Yet complex

THE PLAY STRATEGY



FREE PLAY ZONE



PRIMARY PLAY EQUIPMENT



PLAY DENS



FLYING FOX



NATURAL PLAY SHED

NEIGHBOURHOOD GARDEN

THE PLAY STRATEGY

FREE PLAY AREA

The Free Play Area would be established alongside the neighbourhood garden in the centre of the Greenway. It would be defined by a curved 'Venchie' play structure, and circular earth mounds and swings.

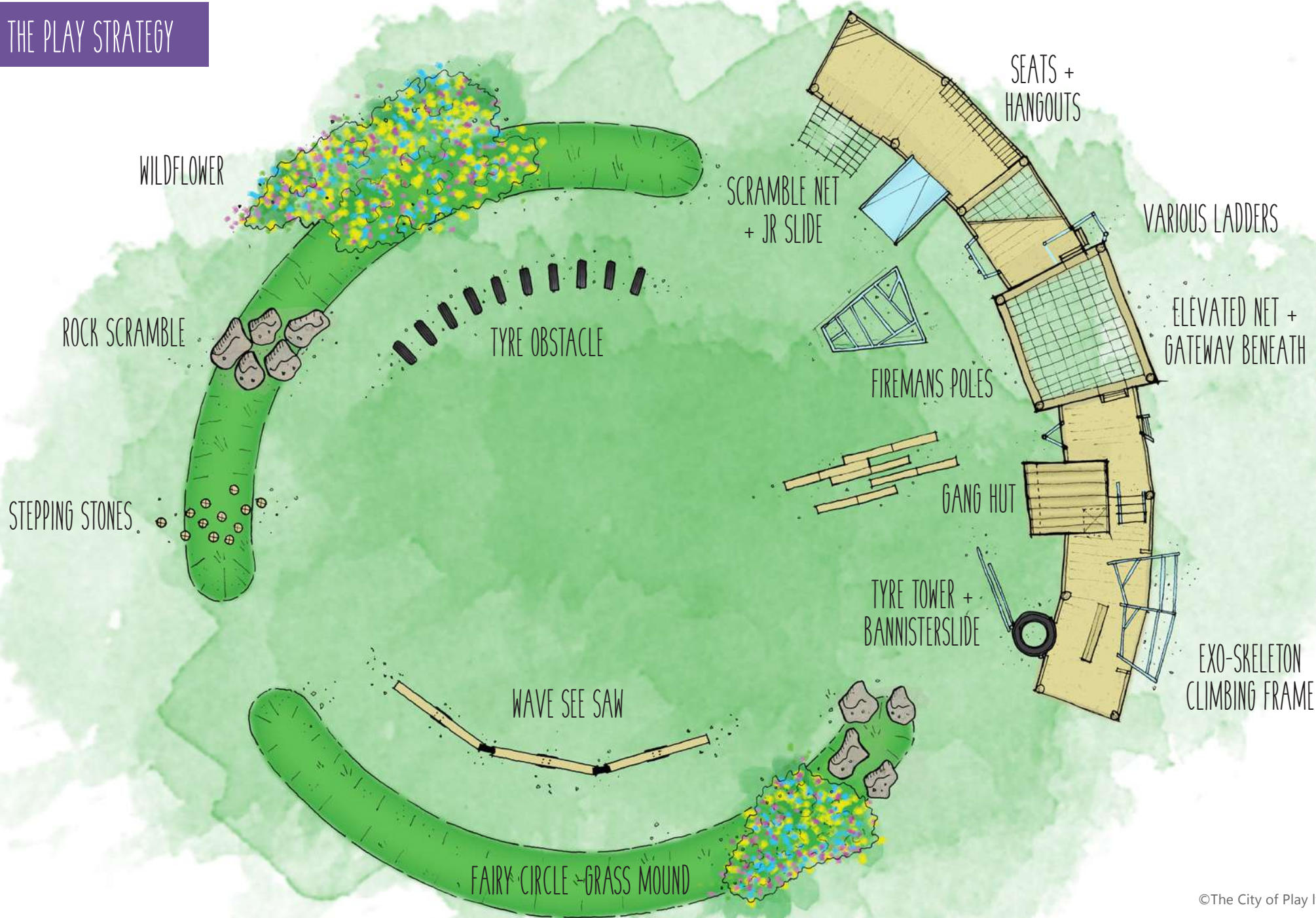
Efforts would be made to encourage dog owners to pick up after their dogs across the whole Greenway, but especially in the free play area. We would hope that this social pressure, and particular attention paid to the play area will keep it clean and safe.

The Free Play Area will be a place for children engage in creative free play. It could accommodate a variety of low cost play opportunities which can be easily maintained, repaired and changed over time, such as tyre obstacles, stepping stone logs, a wave see saw. Rock scrambles

The landscape of the Free Play Area would be maintained to create a place of colour and adventure, with long grasses and wildflowers.



THE PLAY STRATEGY



THE PLAY STRATEGY



Various Swings



Rock Scramble



Tyre Obstacle



Wave See-saw



Stepping Stones

THE PLAY STRATEGY

THE VENCHIE PLAY STRUCTURE

The Venchie play structure would provide a variety of physical and imaginative play opportunities for a wide range of children.

The structure features a gang hut, slide, rope ladders, exo-skeleton climbing frame, an accessibility ramp, and a large cargo net in the central tower.

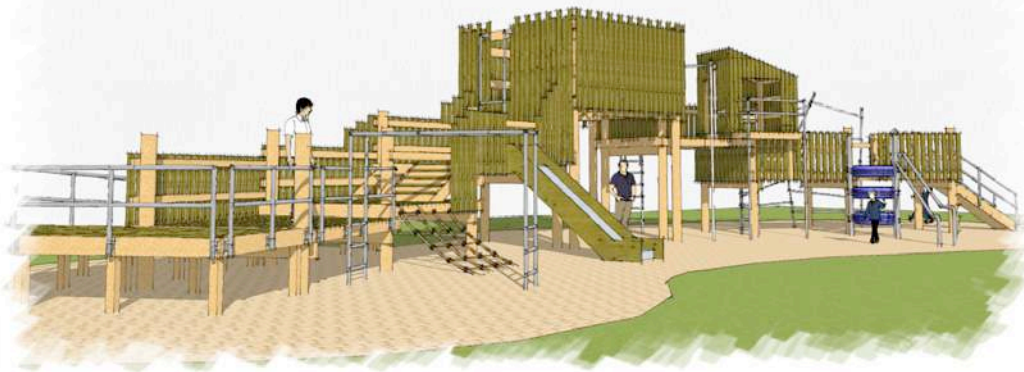
The play structure would be sited in a sand pit to provide a soft surface, and which other play opportunities.

The structure is constructed around a timber structure of round wood poles and timber joists, with timber decking, and slats. Steel tubing and key clamps provide additional features.

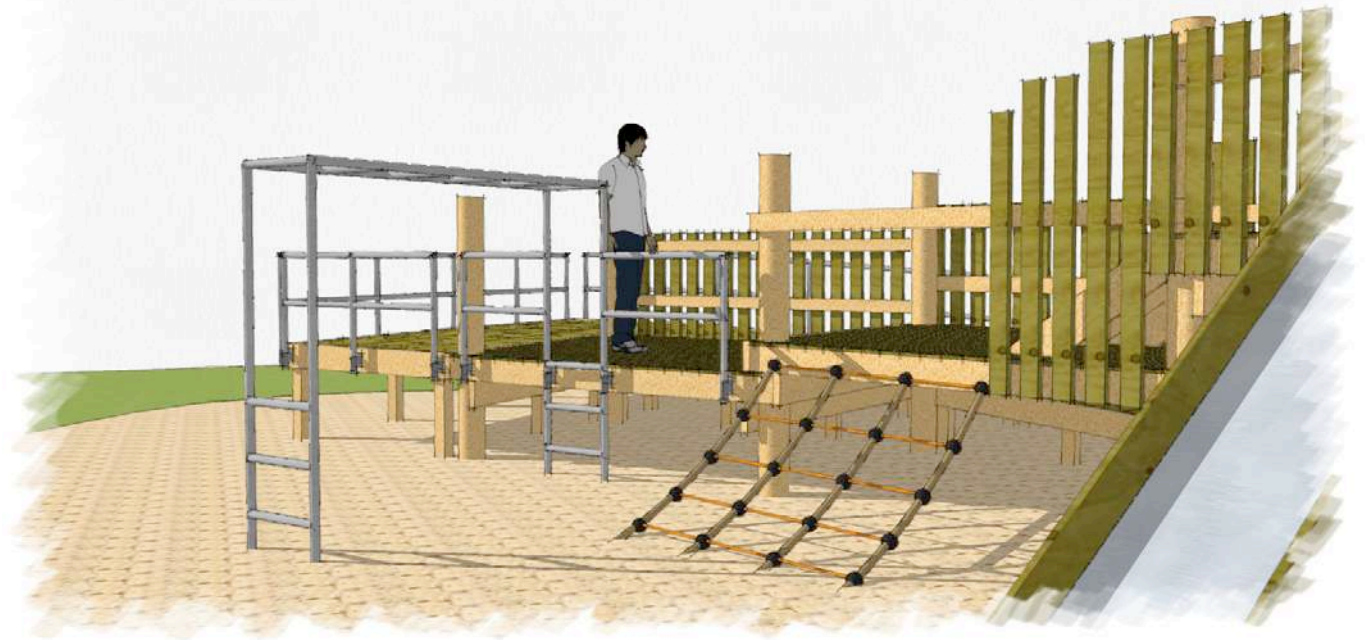
The Venchie has been designed to facilitate a potential community self-build installation by South West Edible Estates Growing Youth team. We have prepared a detailed instruction manual for the construction of the structure.



THE PLAY STRATEGY



THE PLAY STRATEGY



THE PLAY STRATEGY

PLAY DENS

The Play Dens would provide play opportunities at strategic vantage points throughout the Greenway and adjacent greenspaces. They are response to the finding that children would benefit from a variety of play spaces to avoid conflict.

They are designed using a steel pipe and key clamp system, with timber framing. We have prepared five variations, but these can be disassembled and redesigned in different forms over time.

Again, these structures lend themselves to community self-build and repair. We have prepared a detailed instruction manual for the construction of the dens.



Play Den Ver. 1



Play Den Ver. 4



Play Den Ver. 2



Play Den Ver. 5



Play Den Ver. 3



Play Den

THE SOCIAL STRATEGY

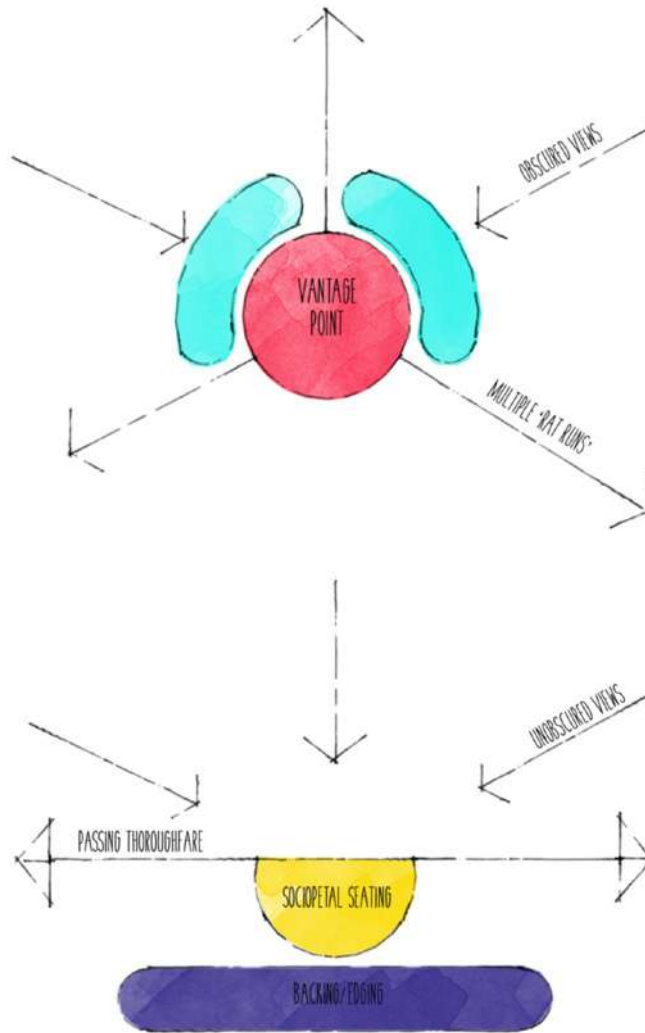
SEATING

It has been reported that the Murrayburn and Hailesland area has some problems with drug dealing/abuse, anti-social behaviours and crime. Measures have been taken to remove all seating/benches from the Greenway to deter such activity or make it less visible. However, this has left well meaning residents without somewhere to sit/meet/socialise.

It is the suspicion of this study that the factors determining the presence of this undesired activity are more than simply the existence of seating. The reported problem area, "The Circle" supported undesirable behaviour in giving the perpetrators an obscured vantage point with multiple exits or "rat runs", allowing activities to go unclearly seen and for an easy or inconspicuous escape from being caught.



The Circle



The proposal aims to introduce areas of seating within the Greenway that invites residents to linger within the greenspace, rest and socialise without inviting the adverse behaviours.

The proposal would implement seating arrangements allowing people to face one another and interact.

The seating would be sited along a singular route, in a high traffic location that is not obscured from view, and away from the 'rat runs' - removing the conditions that invite undesired activity.

Seating areas are to be bright and attractive areas with views of the parks major improvements inviting their use.



Prototype seating installed during the study ©The City of Play Ltd

THE SOCIAL STRATEGY



Engages people of all ages through playful, quirky design



Practical spaces for optimum engagement in social activities



Bright and colourful



Fixed securely to the ground

COMMUNITY HUB

A theme arising from the consultation was the lack of a place within the community for meetings and other activities. Whilst the 'community shed' in the neighbourhood garden is a valuable resource, it is not heated, and has no toilet or utilities.

The nearest community centre at Gate 55 is a 15 min walk. The provision of a small community hub in Murrayburn & Hailesland would be a real boon for the community and build community resilience.

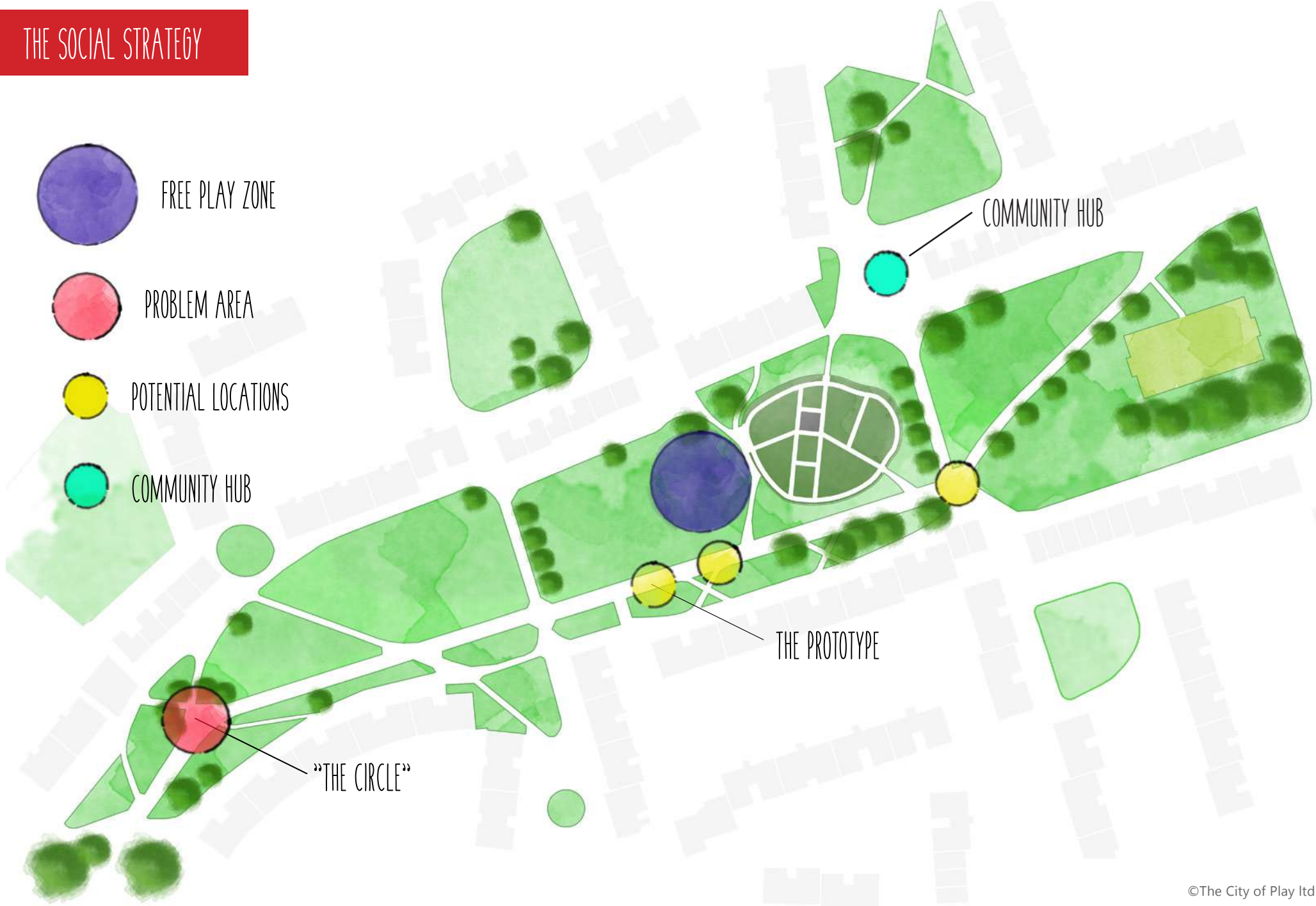
The Community Meeting Room in the Woodlands area of Glasgow (pictured) may provide a great example of what a small facility can provide. It has one large room, a small kitchen and a toilet. It is used for meetings, as a nursery, keep fit sessions, dancing and yoga.

The large slabbed area to the North of the Greenway (see plan overleaf), would provide an ample site for a hub. We understand that a similar structure could be installed for £100k.

www.woodlandscommunity.org.uk/woodlands-workspace



THE SOCIAL STRATEGY



THE ACTIVE STRATEGY

THE PROPOSAL

The Active Strategy aims to support active travel, sport and exercise within the green way; boosting the use of the park and health of the community.

The current and only existing sports provision, the MUGA, is well used however requires extensive maintenance and upgrading to the surfacing, fencing and lighting.

Upgraded pathways, new cycle lanes and bike racks would be implemented to improve accessibility and promote active travel.

Outdoor Gym equipment adjacent to pathways would provide a free and convenient place for physical exercise, social encounters, and for parents to occupy themselves as monitored children play.

THE PATHWAYS



THE MUGA



THE ACTIVE STRATEGY

THE MUGA



Damage to gate to be repaired and exposed metal work on ground at entry to be removed



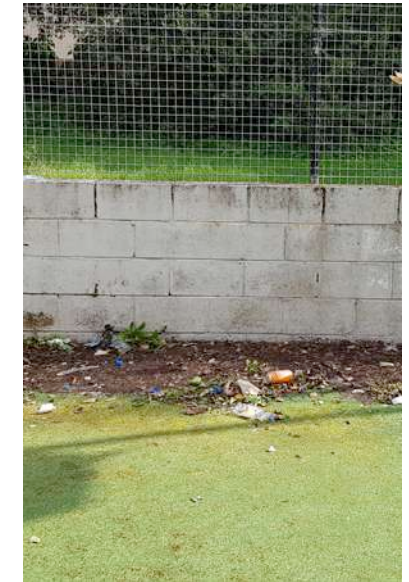
Several Mesh Panels Missing, to be replaced



Damaged floodlights to be replaced with new energy efficient, unobtrusive flood lighting



Weathered Back-board and hoops to be replaced



Debris on surface, surface may also be damaged. Surface to be relaid, blockwork to be repainted

THE ACTIVE STRATEGY

THE VIBE



Demarcated Cycle Lanes encouraging cycling and minimising conflict with pedestrians



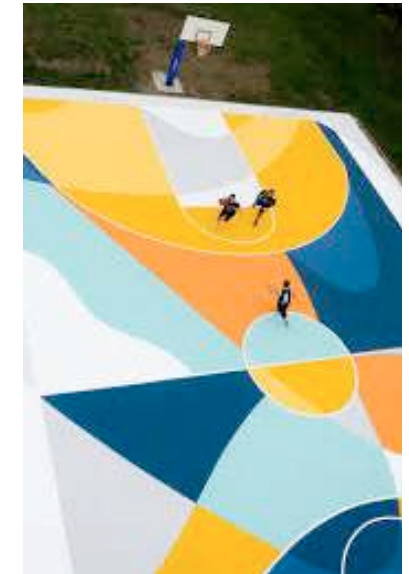
Loads of secure bikes and scooters!



A couple of zones with selected exercise equipment fitting in with the aesthetic style of the wider park design



Outdoor Sports and Games. Table Tennis tables activated during play sessions.



Artworks to reinvigorate and bring more value to the MUGA - continuing Mural theme from 'Michaels'

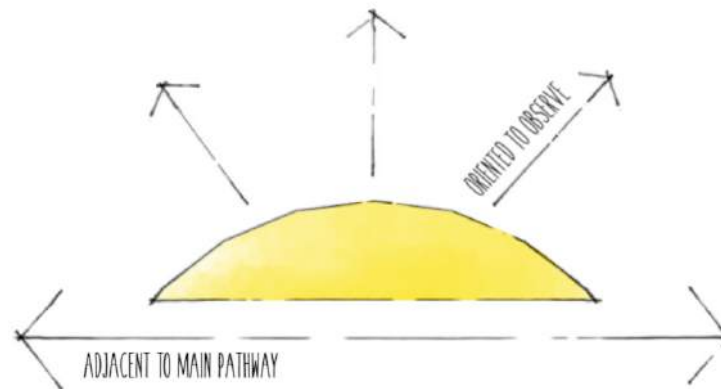
THE ACTIVE STRATEGY

THE OUTDOOR GYM

The proposed outdoor gym and sports equipment is an important element in boosting the use and inclusivity of the Green Way; not only providing a free and convenient place to exercise but providing a place for adults to socialise and to occupy parents as they observe their children playing.

The simple body weight exercise machines would be located adjacent to the main pathway, allowing for casual use, and oriented away from the path and towards the play areas, mitigating 'self consciousness' and allowing parents/carers the peace to exercise and the security of knowing the whereabouts of children.

THE DIAGRAM



THE EXAMPLE



THE ACTIVE STRATEGY



THE PROPOSAL

The Community Arts Strategy aims to inject some colour and character into the Green Way while improving wayfinding and most importantly continuing the engagement of the community in the improvement of the park.

The colour and abstract nature of Michael's Mural has served as an inspiration for our prototyping and designs to date giving a continuity and identity to the project. As with Michael's Mural, engagement throughout will be a key element in the Art Strategy going forward.

The Arts Strategy will engage several visual artists to create works for key locations throughout the site. Engagement strategies will be documented and assessed to better understand what models are successful within hard to reach communities.

MICHAEL'S



THE PROTOTYPE



THE ARTS STRATEGY

THE VIBE



Artworks inspired by the colour and aesthetic of Michael's Mural, giving the park its own unique identity



Wayfinding Ground Surface Artworks at major intersections



Sports Court Artworks to enliven space and inspire new games



Shipping Container Artworks



All Artworks involve the engagement and participation of the local community.

THE ARTS STRATEGY

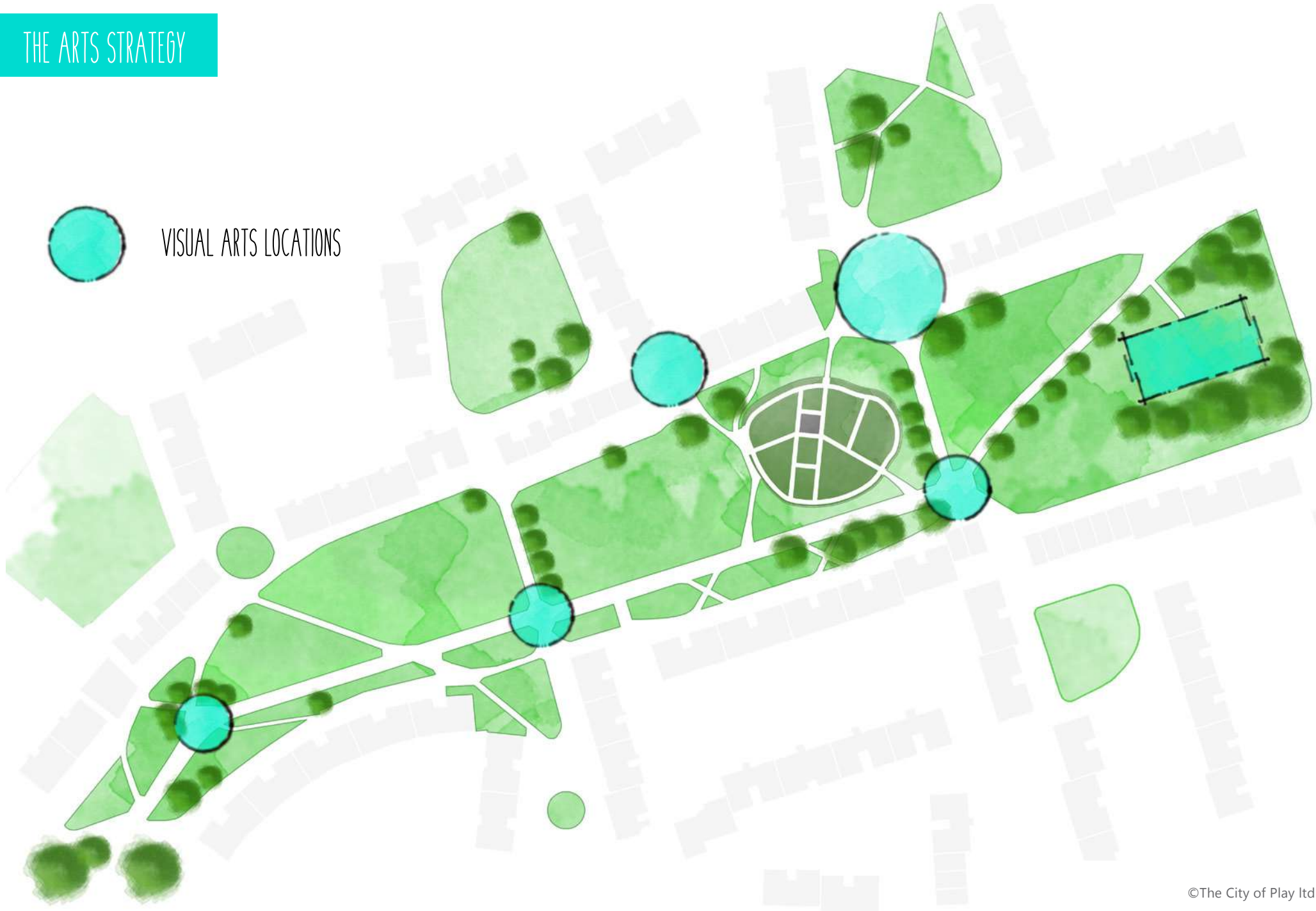
THE PROTOTYPING



THE ARTS STRATEGY



VISUAL ARTS LOCATIONS



THE PLANTING STRATEGY

THE PROPOSAL

The Planting Strategy aims to inject more colour into the landscape and improve biodiversity by planting large areas of wildflowers throughout the site and hedgerow around the perimeter of the community garden. It is also anticipated that planting a soft barrier around the play space will discourage dog fouling.

The planting strategy is intended to be lead and implemented by the local community. The proposal is to rotivate areas of grass and sow with various wildflower seeds. Through the prototyping phase, tyre planters proved to be a cost effective and successful inclusion and would be implemented in the future planting strategy. Tyre Planters would be prepared and planted by the community and wildflowers sewn by local children.

An application has been made to have hedgerow donated to bound the garden.

WILDFLOWER MEADOW



THE PROTOTYPE



THE PLANTING STRATEGY

THE VIBE



Path edges brightened with floral colour



Beauty \approx Biodiversity



Forgotten, overgrown areas transformed!



Community Created



Fenced areas could support more ornamental planting and handmade planters

THE PLANTING STRATEGY



HEDGEROW



WILDFLOWERS



BIN PROVISIONS





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