

7 Enhancing nature, leisure, access: community value

The key function of this scheme is to reduce flood risk within the Smithton and Culloden areas.

However, our proposal allows some exciting and innovative enhancements to public spaces that will benefit the wider community. We will ensure that our designs maintain and, where possible, increase the amenity, aesthetic and recreational value of those locations where works will take place.

Water is a natural focal point within the landscape. It provides interest through sound, movement and visual quality. It also creates opportunities for new habitats, increasing biodiversity and ecological value.

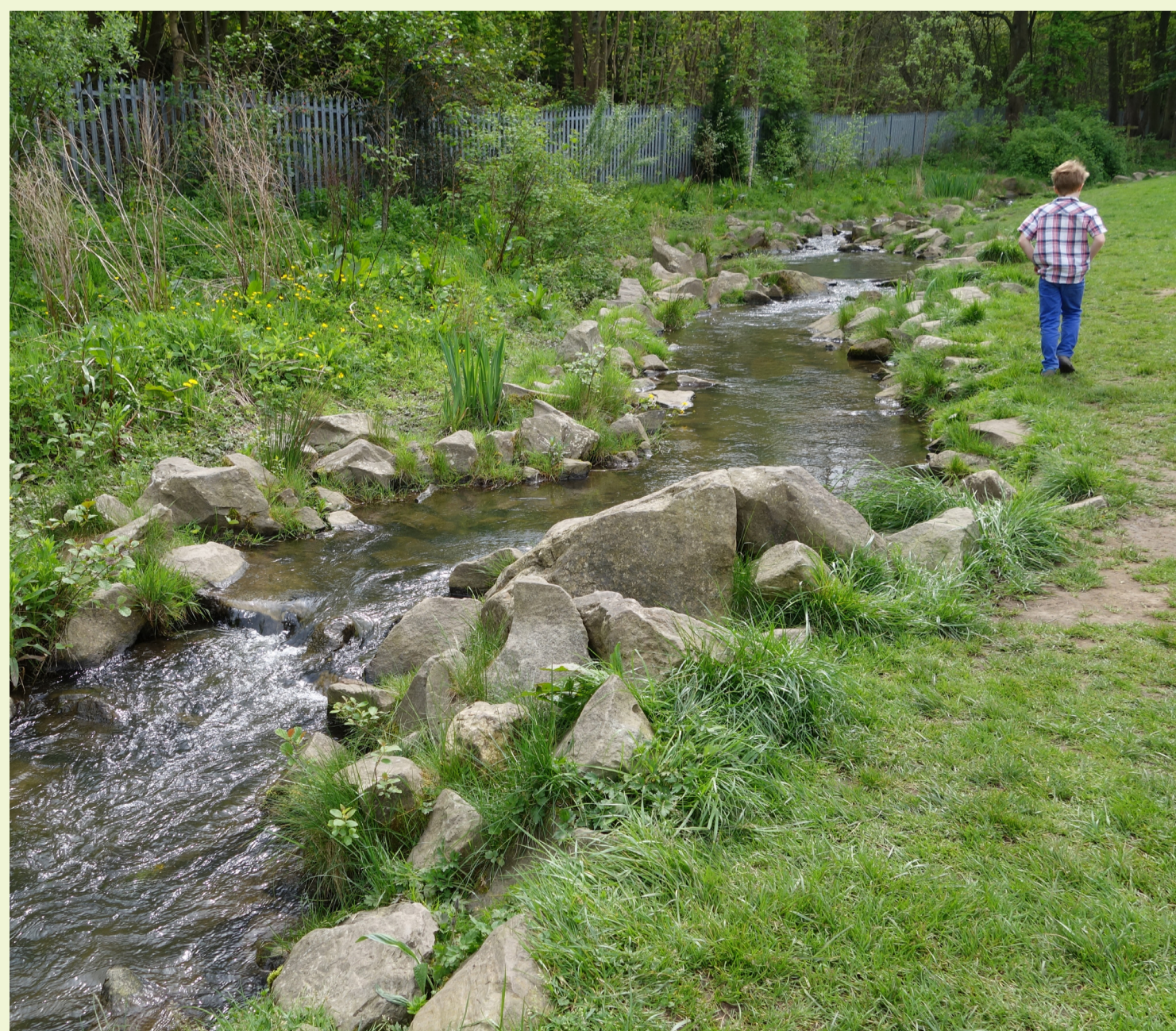
When integrated into public spaces or parks, these benefits can offer an opportunity for people to appreciate a wider range of natural environments, provide valuable educational resources and encourage an understanding of how water and drainage can be used in sustainable ways.

With sensitive and considered landscape input, our schemes in Smithton and Culloden have the potential to provide a series of exciting and innovative assets for the community, enhancing otherwise uninspiring and ecologically poor amenity spaces. Good, naturalistic design will offer richness, appeal and encourage ownership and positive interaction with the new scheme.

Our designs will take account of existing site activities, including formal sports that use the pitches in Smithton and Culloden Parks, as well as more informal pursuits such as sledging. Future management requirements will also be a key requirement of the detailed designs. Storage areas and new habitats require very different maintenance regimes than amenity grass, although in many cases this may represent reduced annual costs. We will ensure that communities and stakeholders are engaged and informed throughout the design process and understand who will look after the site once it is complete and in operation.



Restored channel through Kilbogget Park, Dublin during high rainfall and flow levels



Naturalised channel in Milhouses Park, Sheffield



Dipping platforms offer educational opportunities

Water provides a new dimension for outdoor activity, offering wider opportunities for observing wildlife and interacting with nature, developing skills and discovery through education.

Our scheme should be seen in the wider context of Smithton and Culloden. By making public green spaces more interesting, we can encourage people to take greater interest in their surroundings and community, particularly where these spaces are linked by existing footpaths. More activity through walking and cycling leads to improved physical and mental well-being.



Informal water features based on a natural spring in north London