Parks for People
Impact Evaluation

Main Report

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HLF Parks for People

Impact Evaluation

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1   Executive summary

The Parks for People programme started in 2006 and is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with the Big Lottery Fund contributing funding for projects in England only. The programme aims to regenerate public parks of national, regional or local heritage value for the enjoyment and recreation of local people and to date has awarded £254m to 135 projects across the UK.

This report considers the impact of this funding to date; on the parks, the people who use and work in them and the organisations responsible for their management. It considers progress towards the five programme outcomes, along with wider economic, social and environmental changes seen as a result of the investment. It draws on monitoring data collected from projects on an annual basis, alongside the results of a project survey and case study research of 8 exemplar projects.

Headlines

The evaluation of the Parks for People programme demonstrates:

• Over 50% of the investment goes to the 20% most deprived areas in the UK

• Parks have seen a significant increase in visitors; an increase of 3.7m annual person visits

• 87 buildings and 215 historical features have been restored to date and 28 buildings will be removed from at risk registers

• Around half the projects have carried out habitat improvements or species diversification projects

• The number of volunteers has increased from 3,400 to 6,500 in 3 years

• The highest number of volunteers are being recorded in more deprived areas

• 369 staff and 2,117 volunteers have benefited from training so far.

- The majority of projects have already achieved their training targets, suggesting that initial targets were pessimistic and it is likely many more people will benefit from training than originally anticipated

- The biggest increase in satisfaction with parks is in the most deprived areas

- 83% of parks didn't have a management plan before the Parks for People investment

- There is evidence that the programme is attracting additional investment to parks through in-kind contributions, additional grant funding and new income generation initiatives

1.1 Programme overview

Overall the Parks for People programme has received 265 Stage 1 or First Round applications between 2006 and 2013 of which 135 (51%) were successful. 71 applications were also made for project planning grants, and 41% of projects that received a planning grant went on to be approved. The majority of unsuccessful initial applications do not reapply, but of those that do around 76% are successful on resubmission.

The funding distribution shows that London has received the most awards (at 16% of the total), and the largest share of the overall allocation (at 19% of the total). Overall, almost 40% of projects and over 50% of funding goes to the top 20% most deprived parts of the UK at a local authority level.

Almost 60% of funding for Parks for People projects is provided by HLF or the Big Lottery Fund, with the remaining 40% being provided by partnership or match funding. And over 90% of applicants are from Local Authorities.

Of 135 projects, 15% (20) are in development stage, 80% (107)are in delivery and 5% (8) have completed.

A considerable proportion (58%) of projects are not allocating any budget for monitoring and evaluation work, and of those that do allocate a budget for this, around 60% have a budget of less than £10,000. This lack of resource for effective evaluation work is resulting in a significant number (23%) of projects submitting substandard or no annual monitoring data.

Collecting robust evaluation data is something that many parks departments have not been required to do in the past and the requirement to collect monitoring data is also not widely understood amongst HLF staff and monitors. Projects reporting poor quality or no data are not being challenged, and the data is not being used at an individual project level to assess progress or identify issues. There are also considerable challenges associated with collecting robust data on the profile of park users, which has resulted in some disparities between what the monitoring data shows and feedback from projects based on observation and anecdotal reporting.

Although we have sufficient data to draw conclusions about the progress of the programme, a review of what data is collected and how this is embedded within HLF's day to day monitoring processes would be beneficial.

1.2 Outcome 1: Increasing the range of audiences

Nearly all (99%) of projects will be running a range of activities and events as part of their project, with 92% employing a dedicated members of staff to engage with communities. However, only a small proportion (28%) have carried out any work to specifically engage under-represented groups, although 60% of projects plan to in the future.

When aggregated, the projects aim to increase in visitor numbers by 19%, from a baseline of 47.5m to 54.5m. Projects in the delivery stage (and reporting data) have already seen an increase of 3.7m annual person visits. The majority of park managers (60%) have reported an increase in visitor numbers and 75% of visitors completing our survey say they now visit their park more often.

Although the monitoring data collected by projects does not show a significant change to the profile of visitors, 28 parks have increased the proportion of BAME visitors and 25% of projects completing the survey state that they have increased the proportion of black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (BAME) visitors. Around a third of projects have managed to increase the proportion of disabled visitors using their parks, however the overall percentage of disabled visitors across the programme has not altered, with on average 6% or 7% of disabled visitors recorded between 2010 and 2013.

Although this is not backed up by the monitoring data collected, 59% of projects and 71% of visitors completing our surveys believe that the diversity of visitors in parks has improved as a result of the restoration project, with 49% of projects believe that the number of young people using the park has increased.

1.3   Outcome 2: Conserving and improving the heritage value

As a result of the investment, 156 buildings and 425 historical features are to be restored as part of the programme, with 87 and 215 completed to date. 28 buildings are also to be removed from at risk registers, 13 of which are on English Heritage's at risk register.

A large proportion (59%) of projects have incorporated innovative methods as part of their capital programme. These have included new manufacturing techniques, replicating historical methods (e.g. tuck pointing and lime rendering), constructing contemporary buildings alongside historical features and incorporating environmentally friendly technologies.

A significant proportion of projects are also incorporating ways of improving parks' natural heritage. 48% of projects have carried out improvements to habitats and 53% have implemented species diversification methods. These include involving volunteers to build bird and bat boxes, incorporating wildlife tours and surveys as part of the events and activity programme, and interventions in the capital works programme, such as the creation of wildflower meadows, de-silting ponds and waterways, and creating more suitable habitats for amphibians and other species.

Projects are also implementing a range of methods to increase visitor appreciation and understanding of heritage, with 97% including interpretation panels, 95% carrying out guided walks or talks and 88% producing leaflets or printed materials. As a result 64% of projects agree that visitor understanding and appreciation of heritage has improved, and 80% of visitors completing the survey agree.

Overall 60% of projects believe that the visitor experience has improved and 58% believe that the improvements have met the needs of the community. It is likely that this will increase as more projects complete the capital works programme.

"Through interpretation and education people's awareness of the heritage value has been raised. Increasing public knowledge of something that is valuable is the greatest way of conserving it. What was once seen as an old ruin can now be put in its historical context and acquires greater value"

1.4   Outcome 3: Increasing the range of volunteers

The majority of projects (71%) started volunteering activities during the development stage of the project, with only 7% waiting until the capital works were complete. This demonstrates that the majority of projects understand the important role volunteering can play throughout the life of the project, with volunteers getting involved in design work, consultation and testing events and activities before the capital works start.

Overall the programme aims to increase the total number of people volunteering in park projects by 5,800, to a total of 9,700 volunteers; a 146% increase. Overall volunteering will increase from an average of 42 volunteers per park to 105, with volunteer time increasing from 75,600 to 155,600 hours over the programme as a whole. This equates to over £1m of additional investment through volunteering time.

Since 2010 the number of volunteers involved in projects has increased markedly, from 3,400 volunteers involved in 2010/11 to 6,500 in 2012/13. Using the 2012/13 data, there has been a net increase of volunteers of 2,600. The actual number of volunteer hours has also increased, from 58,600 in 2010/11 to 95,000 in 2012/13. This is a net increase of 19,400 hours, which equates to £129,000 of additional volunteer time.

The highest average number of volunteers per year is being recorded in the more deprived areas, which may indicate the demand for voluntary activities as a means to improving skills and confidence, particularly amongst unemployed people.

82% of projects have reported an increase in their volunteers as a result of the project. Most parks (72%) have Friends groups volunteering; however a significant proportion also attract volunteers from the wider community (62% of projects), schools (54%) and voluntary organisations (45%).

Although the monitoring data collected from projects doesn't show a change to the profile of volunteers, 69% of projects completing the survey believe that they have attracted a greater diversity of volunteers. Approximately a third of projects report that they have attracted a greater proportion of young and disabled volunteers.

Overall there is a good spread of volunteering activities. The most popular activities are maintenance, horticulture and one off events and least popular are retail and involvement in the capital works programme.

1.5   Outcome 4: Improving skills and knowledge through training

 The Parks for People programme is resulting in a significant investment in training and development for volunteers and staff. The most popular training activities are practical horticultural skills, leading guided walks and tours and events management.

Overall the programme aims to train nearly 700 members of staff and 2,600 volunteers and so far 369 staff and 2,117 volunteers have benefited from training. This demonstrates significant investment in skills development across the sector, which is particularly important in light of Local Authority cuts in revenue budgets.

Half of projects have already achieved their targets for staff training and 71% have achieved their targets for training volunteers; this indicates that the initial targets set were pessimistic, and it is likely that in reality many more people will benefit from training as a result of the programme.

As a result of the investment, the programme also aims to provide 530 work placements and 780 qualifications. So far 442 work experience placements and 530 qualifications have been achieved, again showing good progress. The target for increasing the number of third party organisations (such as schools, businesses and voluntary sector groups) using parks as training venues has been exceeded, with 4,500 organisations benefiting, against a target of 4,000.

As a result of the training 79% of projects believe that their staff are more skilled and 71% agree that volunteers are more skilled. In particular staff and volunteers now have a greater knowledge of heritage and conservation work and better skills around running events and activities.

"On a personal level the project has taught me an incredible amount in terms of skilling me in fundraising, project management, marketing, volunteer management. By my role as a lead on the project I have had to learn and expand my own skills set"

1.6   Outcome 5: Improved management and maintenance

A key element of the programme is ensuring that the investment in parks is sustained. As a result of the programme 67% of projects will employ more staff, 97% will increase the skills and knowledge of staff and volunteers and 75% will be seeking to secure additional funding to improve management and maintenance.

A key feature of the Parks for People programme is the requirement for each project to produce a 10-year management and maintenance plan. A significant proportion (83%) did not have a management plan in place before the investment, and many projects are reporting that the process of developing this plan will help ensure the park is better managed in future.

Each project is also required to obtain the Green Flag Award, the national quality standard for green space. However, only 32 projects (23%) have submitted a baseline score for Green Flag, indicating that most have not carried out an assessment against the criteria.

"With the introduction of an additional staff member, we are able to continue to undertake work to a higher level than was previously done. The frequencies and management input has also increased with regular management meetings with the community now taking place"

The pass mark for the award is 66 (out of 100). So far, 32 projects have submitted an actual score of 66 or above, with 7 projects achieving a pass mark that originally had a baseline of less than 66.

57% of projects completing the survey agree that the quality of the maintenance work has improved, and 54% agree that the frequency of maintenance work has increased.

The improvements to management and maintenance are also being reflected in visitor satisfaction levels. The baseline visitor satisfaction across all projects was an average of 66% and the aim is to increase this to 81%. To date, average satisfaction levels have increased; in 2010/11 the average satisfaction was 79%, in 2011/12 it was 78% and in 2012/13 it was 82%. The data also shows that pre-restoration visitor satisfaction was lowest in the more deprived areas. The annual returns show an overall picture that satisfaction is increasing in all areas with the highest gains in the most deprived areas.

1.7 Wider impact

As well as progress against the five programme outcomes, this report considers the wider impact of the Parks for People programme. There is a considerable amount of secondary evidence that indicates that investment in parks and green space can have a considerable wider impact; including economic, social and environmental. Although many projects haven't yet considered the wider impact, the research indicates that the investment is making a difference to local communities and the organisations that manage green space:

Economic impact	• There is anecdotal evidence of increases in house prices to properties adjacent to high quality parks, and developers are using proximity to parks as a marketing device • Some local businesses are reporting an increase in trade as a result of the restored park, and visitors are noticing that more people are now using town centre facilities (where the park is centrally located) • Parks are important tourist attractions; with visitor numbers in large parks competing with tourist attractions such as Alton Towers, Westminster Abbey and the Millennium Centre in Wales • Projects in more deprived areas are contributing to wider economic development initiatives • There is also a local economic benefit as volunteers gain employment as a result of engaging in parks projects • Many projects are also levering in additional funding; for other projects or activities, or to support maintenance in the future. And some projects are supporting the generation of social enterprise and other revenue generation activities within the parks.

Social impact	• Projects are reporting an increase in community pride, greater community involvement, an increase in people's awareness of leisure facilities, an increase in people socialising and greater community cohesion. Parks are becoming important community hubs for a range of people to interact, learn and play. • Projects are also having a significant impact on skills and confidence, with more than half seeing at least 50% of volunteers improving their practical skills and confidence levels. • Many projects are also engaging disabled people through the volunteering programmes, demonstrating a much more inclusive approach • Projects are also implementing activities aimed at improving health and wellbeing, and for some Local Authorities the link between green space and health has improved.
Environmental impact	• Projects are seeing an increase in biodiversity, with a greater appreciation for developing appropriate habitats for bird, plant, amphibian and other wildlife. • Projects are also implementing methods to reduce their carbon footprint, through using energy saving technologies and more efficient buildings • The programme has also had a significant impact on the way Local Authorities manage their heritage assets. There is better appreciation of the value of heritage and greater knowledge of conservation and management methods.

1.8   Conclusions and recommendations

Overall this report shows that the Parks for People investment is making a positive contribution across all outcomes. It is changing not only the country's heritage assets and ensuring they are in better condition, better managed and interpreted for current and future generations but it is also fundamentally changing people's lives through events, activities, volunteering and employment opportunities.

The challenge ahead lies on two levels, firstly getting more projects to supply more information both about outputs and also wider impacts so that future evaluations can be more robust, colourful and influential. Secondly how to ensure that projects do not start to lose match funding previously committed not only during the life of the project but also following completion. Historic parks are vital to the well-being and vibrancy of urban communities. They simply cannot be allowed to go backwards.

"It has exceeded expectations, surpassing all targets set and, more importantly creating a lasting connection between people and place. It's not just more people coming to the park, its more people having a better time, meeting new friends and giving their support. More volunteers have been engaged than predicted, learnt new skills and made a lasting difference to people's lives. The park is the catalyst for that and a safe common ground"

2   Introduction

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was set up in 1994 under the National Lottery Act and distributes money raised by the National Lottery to support projects involving the national, regional and local heritage of the United Kingdom.

Since 1994, HLF have awarded grants totalling £660m to nearly 800 public parks in the UK. The programme has its roots in the Urban Parks programme which began in 1998, and became Parks for People (PfP) in 2006. The Big Lottery Fund joined the programme in 2006 and fund parks projects in England only. The Big Lottery Fund is responsible for distributing 40 per cent of all funds raised for good causes by the National Lottery. Our money goes to community groups and projects that improve health, education and the environment.

To date this flagship parks programme has awarded £254m to 135 projects across the UK.

This report considers the impact of this funding to date; on the parks, the people who use and work in them and the organisations responsible for their management.

2.1   Programme summary

The Parks for People programme aims to regenerate public parks of national, regional or local heritage value for the enjoyment and recreation of local people.

The programme aims to ensure that every community has:

- access to a well-designed public park maintained to Green Flag Award standards;
- opportunities to learn about the heritage value of their park;
- opportunities to take an active part in managing and using their park

The programme began as a joint initiative between the Big Lottery Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), following the earlier success of HLF's Urban Parks Programme. Big Lottery funding enabled HLF to support additional projects in

England and HLF provided extra funding to support projects in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The SP2 and SP3 programmes offered grants of between £250,000 and £5 million for projects which involved existing urban or rural green spaces designed for informal recreation and enjoyment, which local communities value as part of their heritage. The parks must be freely accessible to members of the public, and actively involve local people in their running and activities. The funding is a mix of capital monies to enable physical restoration of the park and revenue monies to employ staff and run activities and events to engage visitors and volunteers.

The Parks for People programme has a two-stage application process. If applicants receive a first-round pass they can submit a second-round application. First-round projects can also apply for a development grant to contribute to the cost of planning and developing the project.

2.2   Evaluation overview

This evaluation has been commissioned for the following key reasons:

- To demonstrate progress of funded projects, to determine what has been achieved at a programme and individual project level

- To identify areas for improvement and areas where grantees may need more support, in order to inform the development of the new Strategic Framework

- To connect programme-level research with the State of the UK Parks research to demonstrate the impact of significant investment in parks

- To support the continued development of a business case for parks investment, particularly in light of the cuts to Local Authority budgets

As such, the purpose of the evaluation is to:

- Demonstrate the impact of HLF and the Big Lottery Fund's investment in public parks, as well as the effectiveness of time and resources invested in parks by many local communities;

- Inform development of HLF / Big Lottery Fund policy and support their advocacy of the value of public open spaces; and

- Support local authorities and other stakeholders in making the case for resources for parks and other green spaces.

The parks programme requires each project to achieve five outcomes:

- Increasing the range of audiences

- Conserving and improving the heritage value

- Increasing the range of volunteers

- Improving skills and knowledge through training

- Improving management and maintenance

Projects are required to collect data against a number of indicators relating to these five outcomes and submit this to HLF on an annual basis. They also need to complete a final evaluation report in order to claim the final 10% of the funding.

HLF and the Big Lottery Fund are keen to use the data collected from projects to determine the impact of the programme. In August 2013 they commissioned CFP and Shephard & Moyes Ltd to produce an evaluation report, to present a snapshot of the progress of PfP awards, using the accumulated programme data to establish the extent to which projects are delivering their aims and objectives.

To frame our research we produced a set of research questions, relating to each of the programme outcomes and shown in the table below.

Outcome	Research questions
Increasing the range of audiences	Are more people visiting parks?
	Are more under-represented groups visiting parks?
	Are individual parks seeing an increase in the diversity of their visitors? (in terms of age, ethnicity, gender)
	Are the reasons why people visit changing?
	Are the barriers to visiting the parks reducing (e.g. safety, lack of activities, quality of facilities etc.)?
	What difference has the project made on the wider community?
	What works well and not so well in increasing the range of audiences?

Conserving and improving the heritage value	What and how many heritage features have been restored/repaired?
	How are heritage assets being improved? Any examples of innovation?
	What methods have projects used to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of heritage?
	What difference has the restoration work made on visitor understanding/appreciation of heritage?
	What difference has the restoration work made on the quality of the visitor experience?
	Have the improvements met the needs of visitors and the local community?
	What difference has the project made on Local Authority approaches to managing heritage assets?
Increasing the range of volunteers	Are more people volunteering in parks?
	What volunteering opportunities are parks offering?
	Are more under-represented groups volunteering in parks?
	Are individual parks seeing an increase in the diversity of their volunteers? (in terms of age, ethnicity, gender)
	What difference is the volunteering making on individuals involved? Is it increasing confidence, skills, employability, and wellbeing?
	What is the economic impact of the volunteering work?
Improving skills and knowledge through learning and training	Are more staff and volunteers benefiting from training opportunities?
	How many qualifications have been achieved?
	How many work placements have been created?
	How many third parties are using parks as a learning/training venue?
	What training opportunities are projects offering staff and volunteers?
	What difference is the training making to staff and individuals?
	How many visitors have benefited from learning activities?
Improving management and maintenance	How many parks have achieved a Green Flag award?
	Has visitor satisfaction increased?
	What staffing/management changes are projects making?
	How are staffing/management changes improving park management/maintenance?
	What is the impact of the PfP project on staffing/management changes on Local Authorities?
	How many new jobs have been created?
	What additional investment have projects attracted?
	How will the investment be sustained?

To answer these research questions we designed an approach that used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods as shown below. This approach allowed us to combine the data collected by projects along with a more detailed review of a smaller selection.

Our work included:

- Reviewing programme level data collected by HLF

- Reviewing evaluation data collected from 135 projects

- Designing an e-survey for all projects; we received 76 returns, an excellent response rate of 60%

- Identifying 8 exemplar projects as case studies. The research included visits, collection of evaluation data collected by the projects and interviews with key stakeholders. The case study projects were selected to ensure a good spread of location, size and stage. The table below details the case studies selected; full case study reports are shown in appendix 1

- A visitor e-survey for the case study projects. This received 112 responses

Evaluation framework → Data review → Project survey → Case study visits and interviews → Visitor e-survey (case studies) → Analysis and reporting
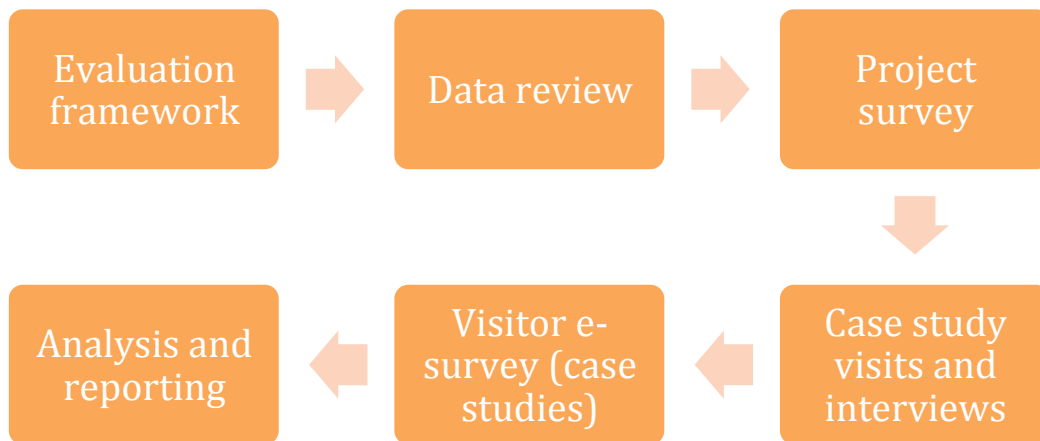
Project	Location	Size	Reason for selection
Burslem Park, Stoke on Trent	West Midlands	£2.9m	Capital works are complete and revenue activities have been carried out since the development stage. Good approach to monitoring and evaluation and have engaged well in our evaluation support. Project is part of a wider regeneration strategy for Burslem
Cyfarthfa Park, Merthyr Tydfill	Wales	£2.7m	Scale of project taking excellent approach to monitoring and evaluation. Project currently in delivery stage and progressing revenue aspects. Provides Welsh example in an area that experiences high levels of deprivation.
Dalmuir Park, West Dunbartonshire	Scotland	£0.86m	Capital works are complete and revenue activities well underway. Small capital project, with a focus on community development. Good approach to monitoring and evaluation.
Horniman Gardens, London	London	£978k	Example of a project not led by a Local Authority and run by a museum trust.
Avenham and Miller, Preston	North West	£4.45m	Well progressed project that provides an interesting case study due to scale or project, geographical spread and relationship between two spaces that have been lottery funded.
Stevenage Town Centre Gardens	East	£2.7m	Comparatively new town park opened in the mid-1960s.
Marine Cove Gardens, Burnham on Sea	South West	£0.5m	Well progressed project. Small park, however important tourist attraction locally. Have engaged well with monitoring and evaluation support.
Stewart Park, Middlesbrough	North East	£4.4m	Well progressed project. Focus on training and volunteer development. Large park with large catchment area and important heritage attraction.

Although we have received sufficient data to complete the evaluation, there are significant gaps in data being collected by projects. Collecting robust evaluation data is something that many parks departments have not been required to do in the past, and as such the programme has invested in supporting projects in understanding the value of effective evaluation and how to carry it out. This has had some success, with a large number of projects attending and providing very positive feedback from evaluation workshops. However, it is not always resulting in accurate returns, which reduces the validity of the data used in this report.

The requirement to collect monitoring data is also not widely understood amongst HLF staff and monitors; as such the data isn't used as part of the project monitoring processes. This means that projects reporting poor quality or no data are not being challenged, and the data is not being used at an individual project level to assess progress or identify issues. Although the majority of projects are now collecting some data, there are still gaps and quality issues which we have not had time to resolve within the scope of this contract. The table below summarises the data collected against each programme outcome for projects in the delivery stage only. It shows that on average nearly a quarter (23%) of projects are submitting insufficient data.

Outcome	Good projects (green) have submitted base line, targets and actual data across most factors	Fair projects (amber) have submitted base line, targets and actual data across a few factors	Poor projects (red) have submitted very little data – missing base line or targets and no actuals
Increasing range of audiences	57%	18%	25%
Conserving heritage value	41%	32%	27%
Increasing range of volunteers	38%	36%	26%
Improving skills and knowledge	29%	54%	18%
Improving management and maintenance	4%	76%	19%

There are also considerable challenges associated with collecting robust data on the profile of park users, which has resulted in some disparities between what the monitoring data shows and feedback from projects based on observation and anecdotal reporting.

Notwithstanding the above, the mix of monitoring data combined with the survey results and case study investigations means we have sufficient data to draw conclusions about the impact of the programme.

3 Programme overview

This chapter of the report looks at the profile of projects approved to date. It explores the distribution of funding, location of projects and current project status.

3.1 Applications

Overall the PFP programme has received 336 applications between 2006 and 2013 of which

- Project planning grant applications = 71
- Stage / First-round and 2 applications = 265

3.1.1 Project Planning Grants

Project Planning Grants ran from 2002 to 2008. The diagram below shows the outcomes of the 71 applications that were made during this period.
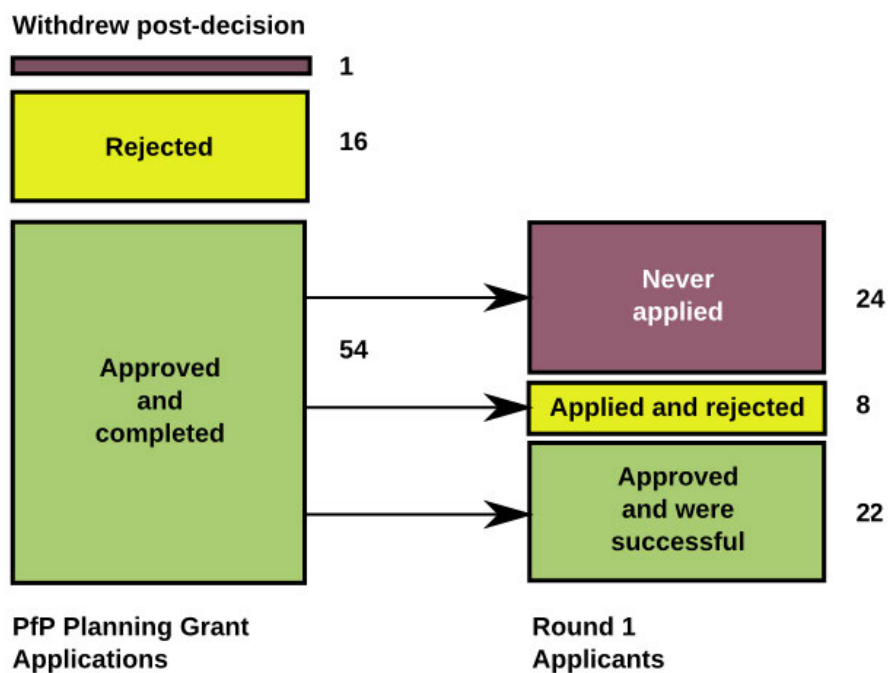
This shows that around 41% (22/54) of projects that received a project planning grant went on to receive a First-round / Stage 1 award.

3.1.2 Stage 1 / First-round applications

In total HLF has received 265 applications for Parks for People funding. These are split into two tables below, the first shows the rejections and withdrawals and the second shows the successful applications.

Rejections / withdrawal	Number
Withdrawn post decision	1
Rejected and did not re-apply	94
Rejected and reapplied and rejected again	6
Rejected and reapplied and successful	19
Total	120

The data shows that the majority of unsuccessful initial (S1/R1) applications do not reapply but of those that do around 76% are successful.

Approvals	Number
Approved and in development stage	20
Approved and in delivery stage	107
Completed	8
Total	135

The 135 awards form the basis of the impact evaluation across 134 sites (Mesnes Park, Wigan has received 2 awards).

3.2 Draw down and project status

The table below shows the current status of each project. Only a small number of projects are fully complete, with the majority in the delivery stage.

Stage	Draw Down	No. Projects
Complete	100%	8
Approved	>75%	38
	50-75%	13
	25-50%	10
	0-25%	46
First-round pass	N/A	20
Total		135

Compared to the interim report produced in 2011, a similar proportion of projects are in the development stage (13% in 2011 and 15% in 2013), however a larger proportion of projects have drawn down at least 50% of their grant (20% in 2011 and 44% in 2013). Although the programme has had more projects starting since the last evaluation report, overall the programme is more progressed.

3.3 Awards and deprivation

All 135 projects have been correlated against local authority level deprivation information. Local authorities have then been grouped in 20% bands i.e. the top 20% most deprived = A, top 20 to 40% most deprived = B and so on. The table overleaf shows the distribution by number of projects and amount of grant awarded.

Deprivation Banding		Projects	%	Grant Awarded	%
(Most Deprived)	A	51	37.8%	£131,133,100	50.2%
	B	34	25.2%	£62,088,000	23.8%
	C	23	17.0%	£31,744,600	12.1%
	D	17	12.6%	£24,692,200	9.4%
(Least Deprived)	E	10	7.4%	£11,694,800	4.5%
Grand Total		135	100.0%	£261,352,700	100.0%

What is clear is that almost 40% of projects and over 50% of funding goes to the top 20% most deprived parts of the UK at a local authority level

3.4   Geographical spread of awards

3.4.1   Awards UK wide

The table below shows the distribution of awards across the whole of the UK.

Region	No Awards	%	Amount	%
London	22	16.3%	48,953,500	19.3%
North West	20	14.8%	39,605,100	15.6%
West Midlands	14	10.4%	35,145,200	13.8%
North East	10	7.4%	20,800,100	8.2%
East Midlands	11	8.1%	18,879,100	7.4%
Yorkshire and Humberside	7	5.2%	18,499,700	7.3%
Eastern	12	8.9%	17,894,400	7.0%
South East	10	7.4%	15,730,900	6.2%
Scotland	14	10.4%	15,447,200	6.1%
Wales	7	5.2%	13,013,800	5.1%
South West	6	4.4%	8,130,500	3.2%
Northern Ireland	2	1.5%	2,081,300	0.8%
	135	**100.0%**	**254,180,800**	**100.0%**

he data shows that London has had the most number of awards and the largest share of the overall allocation.

If population is taken into account the following table can be produced.

Region	population	population %	population rank	Spend per head	Spend per head rank
London	8,173,941	12.9%	2	£22.00	1
North West	7,052,177	11.2%	3	£20.00	2
Scotland	5,295,000	8.4%	6	£14.00	3
West Midlands	5,601,847	8.9%	5	£14.00	3
Eastern	5,846,965	9.3%	4	£12.00	5
East Midlands	4,533,222	7.2%	9	£11.00	6
North East	2,596,886	4.1%	11	£10.00	7
South East	8,634,750	13.7%	1	£10.00	7
Wales	3,063,456	4.8%	10	£7.00	9
Yorkshire and Humberside	5,283,733	8.4%	8	£7.00	10
South West	5,288,935	8.4%	7	£6.00	11
Northern Ireland	1,810,863	2.9%	12	£2.00	12
	63,181,775	*total population*		£11.25	*average*

This shows that London is receiving most investment at £22 per head of population, and Northern Ireland the least at £2 per head. It is also interesting to note that although the South East is ranked number 1 in terms of population, it is only receiving £10 per head of population of grant and is ranked 7th out of the 12 regions in terms of investment. Per head of population the South East is receiving the same level of investment as the North East, which is ranked 11th out of 12 in terms of population density.

3.4.2   Location of awards

The plan overleaf shows the geographical spread of all awards.

Inset: London
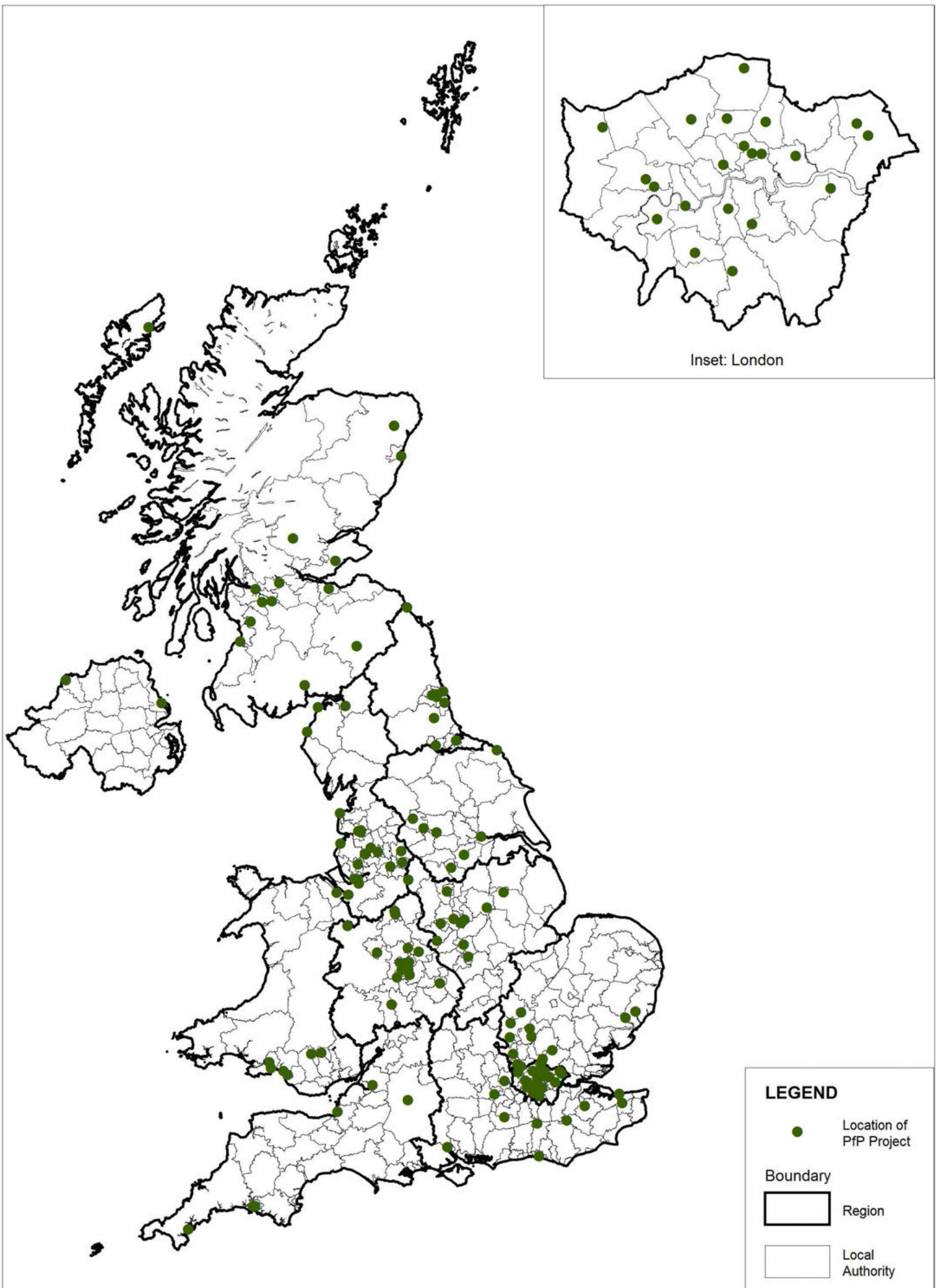
LEGEND

● Location of PfP Project

Boundary

☐ Region

☐ Local Authority

HLF Impact Evaluation	Figure 1 Location of Parks for People Projects	heritage lottery fund	cfp people spaces places		Drawn By : NE	Checked By : IB
					Drawing No : 1	Date : 10/09/13

3.5 Partnership funding

The table below shows the split between HLF/Big Lottery funding and match funding from project partners. Almost 60% of funding for Parks for People projects is provided by HLF or the Big Lottery Fund.

Description	Amount (£)	%
Total project costs	441,796,105	n/a
Total HLF/Big Lottery Awards	261,352,700	59
Partnership Funding	160,675,186	36

The vast majority (94%) of grants are led by Local Authorities, with only 8 projects run by other organisations, including museums, Groundwork and charitable Trusts.

3.6 Evaluation budget

All projects are given the opportunity to allocate a budget for monitoring and evaluation at the delivery stage. However, a significant proportion do not include any funding for evaluation work in their budgets. This can cause problems for projects when in the delivery stage, as they find they do not have sufficient resources to carry out effective evaluation work.

Evaluation budget (£)	No Projects	% Projects
0	79	58%
Up to 5000	20	15%
5001 to 10000	13	10%
10001 to 15000	12	9%
15001 to 20000	3	2%
20001 to 25000	5	4%
Greater than 25000	3	2%
Total	135	

The data above shows that:

- 79 (58%) of projects still are not allocating any budget for monitoring and evaluation.
- Of those that do allocate a budget around 60% (33) have a budget of less than £10,000
- The average amount is £10,846 (excluding the zero allocations), including the zero allocations it becomes £4,499.

When the amount of evaluation budget is compared to the overall project costs this provides a useful insight as to whether the guidance of allocating "around 1% to 3%" is influencing applications.

Evaluation Budget as % of total project costs	No Projects	% Projects
up to 0.5%	39	70%
0.51% to 1.0%	12	21%
1.01 % to 1.5%	3	5%
1.51% to 2.0%	1	2%
2.01% to 2.5%	0	0%
2.51% to 3.0%	1	2%
Total	56	

What this shows is that

- 70% of projects (39) who have allocated an evaluation budget have a budget that is less than 0.5% of the total project costs
- the average allocation is 0.47% of the total project costs (excluding the zero allocations) including the zero allocations it is 0.19%

There are also reports from projects that following approval the evaluation budget can often be squeezed as part of cost engineering exercises, further reducing the project's ability to collect robust data on the impact of their project. It is important that HLF case officers and monitors understand the importance of having sufficient

resources to undertaken effective evaluation work, and that this budget is protected as much as possible.

Summary

- 41% (22/54) of projects that received a project planning grant went on to receive a Round 1 / Stage 1 award

- The majority of unsuccessful initial (S1/R1) applications do not reapply but of those that do around 76% are successful

- Almost 40% of projects and over 50% of funding goes to the top 20% most deprived parts of the UK at a local authority level

- London has had the most number of awards and the largest share of the overall allocation.

- Almost 60% of funding for Parks for People projects is provided by HLF or the Big Lottery Fund.

- 79 (58%) of projects still are not allocating any budget for monitoring and evaluation.

- Of those that do allocate a budget around 60% (33) have a budget of less than £10,000

- Of 135 projects, 15% are in development stage, 80% are in delivery and 5% have completed

4 Progress toward outcomes

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of progress towards achieving the five programme outcomes. It draws on the monitoring data collected by projects, along with results of the project surveys and case study research.

4.1 Outcome 1: Increasing the range of audiences

4.1.1 Outcome overview

All projects are required to produce either an Audience Development or Activity Plan, which details how they will seek to engage a range of audiences in the project. Projects use the revenue funding to develop a range of activities and events to either increase visitors or engage under-represented audiences. During the development stage projects should collect accurate baseline data showing the number and profile of visitors and set appropriate targets based on the aims of the project.

Projects carry out a range of interventions to increase the range of audiences. 99% of projects have or will be running a range of activities and events and 92% of projects have or plan to employ dedicated staff to engage with communities. Only 28% of projects have done any work to engage under-represented groups, although 60% plan to.

Activity	Have done	Plan to do
Access improvements	42.1%	50.0%
Increasing / raising the quality of the park	44.7%	53.9%
Adding new visitor facilities	36.8%	52.6%
Providing better info about the park and its heritage	35.5%	63.2%
Improved marketing and promotions	38.2%	56.6%
Employing new staff to engage with communities	56.6%	35.5%
Delivering a range of events and activities	44.7%	53.9%
Targeted outreach work with under-represented communities	27.6%	60.5%
Other	9.2%	17.1%

4.1.2 Visitor numbers

101 projects submitted an original base line figure for the number of annual person visits to their site. Within this the range quoted was 112 to 100,000,000. Excluding outliers and inaccurate baselines following discussions with project managers the actual total baseline of annual person visits across all sites was 47,520,863. This is an average of 470,000 annual person visits per park.

Of the 101 projects that submitted a baseline figure 88 submitted a target figure. These projects aim to increase their visitors by 19% or 7m annual person visits.

No. projects	Total base line	Total target	Increase
88	37,504,195	44,672,646	7,168,451

67 projects have submitted both a baseline and at least one actual figure for annual person visits. Using the latest actual figure submitted it can be seen that for these projects actual visitor numbers have already increased by 3.7m annual person visits. There are many reasons why visitor numbers may decrease during the life of a

project; some parks see a decrease whilst the capital works are in progress, due to disruption or partial/full closure of the park. For others, the decrease could be due to an inaccurate baseline, or different methods being used to estimate the number of visits.

	No projects	Total baseline	Total actual	Increase/ decrease	Average
All	67	28,234,697	30,251,417	3,771,773	57,148
Visitor numbers increasing	42	10,189,501	18,176,320	9,741,872	231,949
Visitor numbers decreasing	16	15,958,610	9,988,511	-5,970,099	-373,131
No change in visitor numbers	8	2,086,586	2.086,586	0	N/A

Of the 63 projects have submitted a target and at least one year of actual data, 29 (46%) have either achieved or exceeded their target, with 34 (54%) yet to achieve their target.

Only 13 projects have submitted a baseline, target and three full years of actual data.

60% of park managers completing the survey have seen an increase in visitor numbers, based on visitor surveys, counts and staff/user observation. And 84% of visitors completing our survey agree that more people now visit the park, with 75% agreeing that they now visit more often.

> *"I work in the park so I can see the massive change in the numbers and types of people using the park. Just today 2 separate people (over 65s) stopped me and said how great the park is now, back to how it used to be and how people feel safe coming here again"*

4.1.3   Visitor profile

The profile of visitors using parks before the start of projects can be seen as:

- 46% male and 54% female

- 10% are from black and minority ethnic (BAME) communities

- 7% are disabled

The table below compares the baseline and targets for these groups.

		All projects average	Lowest	Highest
Male	Baseline	46%	24%	73%
	Target	47%	30%	85%
Female	Baseline	54%	27%	76%
	Target	52%	15%	70%
BAME	Baseline	10%	0%	89%
	Target	13%	<1%	82%
Disabled	Baseline	7%	0%	40%
	Target	9%	1%	24%

Over the 3 years the gender split has not changed significantly; on average the proportion of male visitors was 42% in 2010/11 and 45% in both 2011/12 and 2012/13. Of the 78 projects with both baseline and targets for gender, 30 did not aim to change the gender split. Of the 22 projects aiming to reduce the proportion of male visitors, 7 have achieved this, 4 have seen no change and 2 have seen an increase (9 have not submitted any actual data). And of the 27 projects aiming to increase the proportion of male visitors, 8 have achieved this, 2 have seen no change and 6 have seen a decrease (11 have not submitted any actual data).

There has also not been a significant change in the proportion of BAME communities using parks although the percentage has increased. Using the actual data submitted by projects on average the proportion of BAME visitors was 11% in 2010/11, 13% in 2011/12 and 12% in 2012/13. A total of 28 projects have increased the proportion of BAME visitors, which is 45% of the total number of projects submitting actual and baseline data. This is backed up by this 2013 project survey, of which 25% of projects completing it state that they have increased the proportion of BAME visitors.

Currently there is no change to the proportion of disabled visitors using parks, with on average 6% or 7% disabled visitors recorded between 2010/11 and 2012/13. However, 19 of 62 (30%) projects which have submitted both baseline and actual data have increased the proportion of disabled visitors. And 34% of the 2013 survey respondents agree that they have increased the proportion of disabled visitors.

> *"As a result of the investment we are seeing greater use of the sports facilities, however this is very early days as the capital work is only just nearing completion. Young Asian and black people feel confident to use the park even though the demographic of the estate is nearly all white"*

A number of projects have also attempted to engage a greater proportion of younger people in the parks, through schools engagement work, improving facilities for young people and developing programmes of activities specifically for younger people. As a result 49% of projects believe that they have increased the proportion of young people who visit the park.

Despite the monitoring data suggesting that the profile of visitors has not changed significantly, projects believe that they are attracting a greater range of audiences. 59% of projects completing the survey believe that their parks is now attracting a more diverse audience as a result of the restoration project, and 71% of visitors also agree.

4.1.4   Reasons for visiting

The table below shows the changes in the top 10 most popular reasons for visiting parks – comparing the baseline to the actual data received in 2012/13.

Reason	Baseline (%)	2012/13 actuals (%)
Go for a walk	31%	39%
Get some fresh air	15%	12%
To play	15%	9%
Dog walking	9%	3%
Enjoy surroundings	4%	9%

Reason	Baseline (%)	2012/13 actuals (%)
Shortcut	4%	9%
Attend events	4%	6%
To relax	3%	0%
Visit animals	2%	0%
Day trip	2%	6%

4.1.5   Lessons learnt

This section summarises what projects have learnt when implementing activities relating to increasing audiences.

The project survey identified a number of key activities which projects have found work well when engaging and increasing audiences. These include:

Management and planning	• Promotional work – dedicated website, Facebook etc. • Recruiting dedicated staff
Capital improvements	• Range of leisure and visitor facilities for different groups of people • Improving access – signage, improved paths, parking, removing overgrown planting • Improved security • Building specific areas to attract specific groups e.g. a teenage activity area
Events/activities	• A range of events and activities through the year for a range of targeted audiences • Taster sessions • The creation of local interest groups, such as heritage and wildlife.

Partnership working	• Engaging schools
	• Working in partnership with local community organisations to develop projects with their audiences.
	• Education programmes in partnership with museums
	• Supporting local and national businesses who wish to use the park for marketing purposes, in return for sponsorship or projects.
	• Attending community fairs and inviting specific groups into the park for talks/tours

Projects were also able to identify activities/interventions that haven't worked as well:

Management and planning	• Generalised invitations to local people to set up groups and activities in the park
	• Lack of clarity of long term outcomes and objectives, and issues of perception about roles and responsibilities.
	• Some activities and events had very low numbers over the winter months, this caused problems in terms of investment and value for money.
	• Not having a marketing strategy until year 3 of the project
Events/activities	• Limiting activities to one audience group
	• Doing the same thing – lack of variety of events
	• Activities arranged by some of the more specialist groups
	• Engaging some under-represented groups – in particular BAME and migrant communities
Partnership working	• Sustaining contact with local schools
	• Trying to encourage locals groups to use the park for outdoor meetings/activities rather than staying in their regular 'club houses'/meeting places

Case study – Isabella Plantation

We have done a considerable amount of engagement with the wider community in an effort to expand and diversify the audience using the Plantation. Workshop based sessions around overcoming barriers to transport have worked well with both existing partners such as a disability and elderly charity as well as local accessible transport charities and transport trails have targeted the more deprived areas around the Park.

The project has already delivered a number of Arts based Workshop sessions with Children from local youth groups from deprived areas around the Park and have also worked with the project's public artist to create 2 dimensional art which will then feed into the designs from the brands that will be used on site to mark activity and tie into a range of downloadable resources. These workshops will also work with an elderly group and a BME group from the local community before they complete and will not only assist in the production of resources but also aim to attract and interest new users to the Plantation.

We have just delivered a fortnight of events within the Plantation to celebrate the 60th birthday of Isabella Plantation. Events have included teddy bears picnics, storytelling, garden walks, art activity and an exhibition. Free mini bus transport on certain days targeted Roehampton and the Alton Estate an under represented group within the Park. Advertising has also targeted this area. Final figure for attendance over the fortnight revealed a total of 1093 attendees.

Summary

• 99% of projects have or will be running a range of activities and events and 92% of projects have or plan to employ dedicated staff to engage with communities. Only 28% of projects have done any work to engage under-represented groups, although 60% plan to

• Baseline of annual person visits across all sites was 47,520,863. This is an average of 470,000 annual person visits per park.

• Projects aim to increase their visitors by 19% or 7m annual person visits.

• Projects with actual visitor numbers have increased by 3.7m annual person visits

- 60% of park managers have seen an increase in visitor numbers and 75% of visitors completing the survey visit their park more

- 28 projects have increased the proportion of BAME visitors and 25% of projects completing the survey state that they have increased the proportion of BAME visitors.

- No change to the proportion of disabled visitors using parks, with on average 6% or 7% disabled visitors recorded between 2010/11 and 2012/13.

- 30% projects which have submitted both baseline and actual data have increased the proportion of disabled visitors. 34% of the survey respondents agree that they have increased the proportion of disabled visitors.

- 59% of projects and 71% of visitors completing the surveys believe that their parks is now attracting a more diverse audience as a result of the restoration project

4.2 Outcome 2: Conserving and improving the heritage value

4.2.1 Outcome overview

A significant proportion of the HLF and Big Lottery funding is spent on capital improvements to the parks. These include work on historical features and buildings, landscaping and infrastructure improvements, removing inappropriate planting and improving legibility and access. Projects are also required to consider how they will increase visitors' understanding and appreciation of the heritage value of the site, through interpretation activities and projects aimed at raising awareness.

4.2.2 Built heritage

Through the capital investment the programme aims to achieve the following improvements to the built environment.

Measure	No. of projects	% of projects	Target
Repair/restoration of buildings	77	57%	156
Repair/restoration of features	93	69%	425
Buildings into active use	54	40%	81
Lost features recovered	73	54%	192
Buildings removed from at risk register	12	9%	29
Infrastructure improvements	96	71%	84% (average)

Of the 29 buildings to be removed from at risk registers, 13 are currently identified on English Heritage's at risk register, from 3 separate parks. These are:

- Cedars Park Chestnut (Theobalds Palace)

- Eastcote House Gardens (Dovecote and garden walls to Eastcote House, garden walls to former stables and former stables to Eastcote House)

- Gunnersbury Park (Gothic ruins, east lodge, west stable block, boundary wall, east stables, the large mansion, north lodge, west lodge, gothic boathouse)

Currently restoration works has yet to be completed on any of these buildings.

The remaining buildings are assumed to be on local at risk registers.

So far the following progress has been made for projects that are in the delivery stage or are complete:

Measure	Actual achieved	Percentage of target achieved	No. of projects achieving target	No. of projects not yet achieving target
Repair/restoration of buildings	87	56%	31	39
Repair/restoration of features	215	51%	66	17
Buildings into active use	39	48%	18	30
Lost features recovered	106	55%	31	31
Buildings removed from at risk register	13	48%	3	8
Landscaping improvements	54%	64%	40	40

As only 44% of projects have drawn down at least half their funding, the above table shows that overall good progress is being made.

59% of projects have or plan to use innovative methods as part of the restoration project. These include:

- At Burslem Park in Stoke on Trent they used new manufacturing techniques to restore the terracotta work throughout the park.

- At Stewart Park in Middlesbrough they used traditional tuck pointing methods to restore the old stables and estate buildings. They have also installed energy efficient heating and grey water systems in the new visitor and training centres

- A number of parks have also created new modern buildings, sympathetically designed alongside the historical features. The new visitor centre at Stewart Park mirrors the archways of the original building to which it is adjacent to. Lightwoods Park will see an extension of the stables building by means of a modern structural glass single storey building. It will clearly read as a modern intervention within the historic courtyard but will be concealed from general view by the reinstated courtyard boundary walls. The project will also see the installation of new heating and mechanical and electrical services to enable new uses and in line with a general green agenda e.g. a biomass boiler and rainwater harvesting

- Stevenage Town Centre gardens employed the original architects from the 1960s which resulted in accurate restoration of the park features. They have also constructed a new suspension bridge – the only one of its kind in the country

- At Cyfarthfa Park in Merthyr Tydfil they have repaved the pathways around the woodland walk in a striking red colour. This reflects the original ash materials used when the park was built, but has also resulted in a pleasing visual effect, as well as encouraging more people to use the walkways.

The images below illustrate the impact of the investment on the built heritage of parks.

Burslem Park

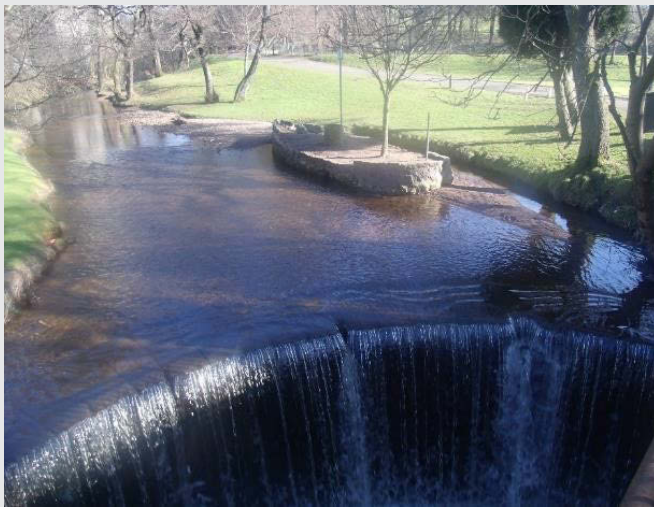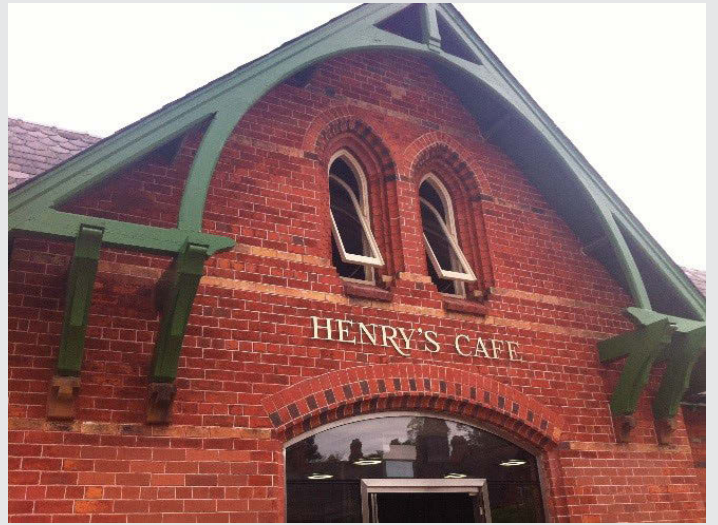Stevenage Town Centre Gardens

Marine Cove

Stewart Park

Dalmuir Park

Conservation Management Plans have also been used by a number of projects to inform the restoration works. These set out what is of significance and value, and therefore what they will conserve and restore. The CMP should demonstrate a holistic understanding of all heritage assets (but are only required on sites with Grade I and II* listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas, registered landscapes etc)

Although data hasn't been collected on the number of projects which have produced a CMP, results from the survey show that in some cases these have been useful in designing the restoration works. It would be useful for the programme to collect information about which projects produce CMPs, and to collect copies in order to create an archive.

"A thorough CMP produced by specialist heritage consultants during the project planning stage was excellent in informing the parks restoration and future conservation"

4.2.3   Natural heritage

A significant proportion of projects aim to improve the natural heritage of the parks, by improved landscaping, planting and schemes to increase the biodiversity of the sites.

Measure	No. of projects	% of projects	Target
Landscaping improvements	93	69%	83% (average)
Habitat improvements	82	61%	N/A
Species diversification activities	62	46%	N/A
Nature surveys	68	50%	N/A

Many projects are involving volunteers or schools in building bird and bat boxes, and many are including nature trails and surveys as part of their programme of activities and events. Other examples include:

- At Cyfarthfa Park the new Park Warden has attended a number of training courses on ecology, species protection and biodiversity. This has helped develop the activities and events programme, but has also informed the capital works. For example, the lakes have recently been dug out, however the Park Warden has asked the contractors to reduce the gradient of the slopes, to enable amphibians to use the pond and surrounding terrestrial habitat

- Wildflower meadows are being created at a number of parks

- At Dalmuir Park a newly established Nature Activity Group is encouraging people to appreciate the park's range of wildlife. The construction of duck and bird boxes by volunteers, coupled with clearing the pond should encourage greater biodiversity. The council will be commissioning ecological surveys over the next 12 months to test whether the improved habitats have led to a greater range of species. However, users have reported sightings of a kingfisher in the burn!

- At Isabella Plantations all three of the Plantations ponds have been de-silted. As well making a range of ecological enhancements to streams this will ensure that the quality of the water bodies in terms of biodiversity is maintained and enhanced into the future

- Volunteer students have been developing a biodiversity action plan for Haddo. This will input to the long term maintenance and to developing a more diverse environment at Haddo

So far the following progress has been made:

"Educating the council's grass cutting team (as well as the public) that not all grass should be short, we are leaving sections long as these provide a good ecosystem for invertebrates. This is increasing the biodiversity of the park as well as letting the visitors interact more closely with nature"

Measure	Actual achieved	Percentage of target achieved	No. of projects achieving target	No. of projects not achieving target
Landscaping improvements	53%	64%	43	36
Habitat improvements	40	48%	40	42
Species diversification activities	33	53%	33	29
Nature surveys	29	43%	29	39

4.2.4 Increasing appreciation and understanding of heritage

Most projects are using a range of methods to increase appreciation and understanding of heritage. 97% of projects will use on site interpretation panels and 95% will develop guided walks and tours. The full range of methods are shown below:

Methods	Have done	Plan to do
On site interpretation panels	38.2%	59.2%
Exhibitions and display materials (internal/ inside)	34.2%	55.3%
Leaflets and other printed materials	38.2%	50.0%
Education packs	19.7%	71.1%
Guided walks and talks	50.0%	44.7%
Other	17.1%	21.1%

Projects are also using a range of innovative methods to engage audiences in the heritage of the site. These include:

- Using QR codes to share online information.

- Using tablets as part of outdoor learning for things such as geocaching, orienteering etc.

- A heritage audio tour in the park or adding it into an existing audio tour of Dumfries

- Community play using local stories and local actors incorporating the history of the park

- pen framed interpretation boards showing the historic view and the same view today 'framed'.

- A heritage app for smart phones

- Memory books/boards and DVDs

- Archaeological digs for members of the community

- Oral History Project capturing people's memories of the park played back through listening post in interpretation centre

- Developing the Heritage Trail linking other local heritage assets that helps to attract visitors from a wider audience

> *"Through interpretation and education people's awareness of the heritage value has been raised. Increasing public knowledge of something that is valuable is the greatest way of conserving it. What was once seen as an old ruin can now be put in its historical context and acquires greater value"*

As a result of this activity 64% of projects agree that visitor understanding and appreciation of heritage has improved, 60% believe that the visitor experience has improved and 58% believe that the improvements have met the needs of the community. 80% of visitors completing our survey also agree that they are now more aware of their park's heritage. This is based on surveys, feedback, observation and an increase in the number of people and groups using the park.

> *"We have an increased number of schools using the park, activities organised by the Rangers are booked up in advance. Positive comments are made by participants on tours or talks"*

4.2.5 Lessons learnt

Projects have reported the following learning in terms of what works well in conserving the heritage value:

Capital investment	• Restoring lost heritage features. • The renovation of bandstands to modern standards that allow more flexibility in terms of performances that can be put on. • Restoring Listed Entrances and making the site far more welcoming. • Using heritage colours and appropriate designs for bins, benches etc
Interpretation and education	• Involving local schools in historical research for interpretation boards • Educational events • Archaeological digs

Promotion	• Using quality publications which promote the history of the park.
	• Promoting a few but interesting elements that people can relate to
Research	• Getting experts in to help research the heritage and advise on the best way forward.
	• Involvement of local experts to work with the Council to provide advice in areas where expertise was lacking
	• A thorough CMP produced by specialist heritage consultants

Challenges identified were:

Financial constraints	• Insecure revenue funding in future to continue interpretation activities
	• Lack of funding for additional car parking facilities reduces ability for some visitors to access the park
	• Lack of materials used to restore older structures/ buildings and high costs of using old materials techniques such as lime plaster versus other products available.
History vs current/future use	• Balancing the design and practicality of restoring heritage features
	• The balance of a heritage park and a public park in 2013
	• People still talk nostalgically about brass-bands, but re-introduction of regular band sessions on a bandstand have not been considered viable.
	• Using some of the original plants from that period which are pest and disease prone, also some perennials were short lived, which we felt could have better served by modern species, but planted in a period style
Skills and experience	• Education programmes taking much longer than anticipated to implement due to lack of skills and experience of staff.
Partnership working	• Some issues with engaging with local interest groups who are suspicion of handing over their information or giving their time when they feel they won't receive credit.
	• Trying to preserve and promote aspects/features that are on adjacent land but which are not owned by the Authority - difficulty working with private landowners.

Case study: Brinkburn Denes

Working on the history booklet we discovered that the 6 individual denes had a range of names for each dene e.g. sheddy, steppy, padley etc. Working through this process we developed the names for each of the denes based on what the public thought best represented them. Then each of the denes had their own artwork designed specifically for them e.g. Padley dene called this due to a pool that children went paddling in as well as ice skating in the winter months, the art work on the arches is mainly circles and waves to represent the ripples in a pool of water.

Working with local people has been the most rewarding in terms of conserving and improving the heritage.

We buried a time capsule which had all the history of the denes placed in it as well as the booklet, DVD and drawings done by the local schools. A time stone was placed on top of the capsule and has inscribed in it anecdotes from the local people as well as the date of the restoration works.

Summary

- 156 buildings and 425 historical features are to be restored as part of the programme, with 87 and 215 completed to date

- 29 buildings are to be removed from at risk registers; 13 of which from the English Heritage at risk register

- 48% of projects have carried out improvements to habitats and 53% have implemented species diversification methods

- Projects are implementing a range of methods to increase appreciation and understanding of heritage, with 97% including interpretation panels, 95%

carrying out guided walks or talks and 88% producing leaflets or printed materials

- 59% of projects plan to use innovative methods as part of the restoration works

- 64% of projects agree that visitor understanding and appreciation of heritage has improved, and 80% of visitors completing the survey agree

- 60% of projects believe that the visitor experience has improved and 58% believe that the improvements have met the needs of the community

4.3 Outcome 3 – Increasing the range of volunteers

4.3.1 Outcome overview

Parks provide fantastic opportunities for volunteers, and volunteering can add considerable value to the restoration project. All projects are advised to develop a plan to engage volunteers as part of their audience development or activity planning, identifying a range of activities for different groups or individuals to get involved in.

Friends and user groups are also important stakeholders in park restoration projects; projects often involve them in early consultation and design work, on a steering group and also as a communication channel between the Local Authority / grantee and wider community. Some Friends groups are also extremely active in the project delivery. Some projects are actually run by trusts where the level of community engagement is very high.

71% of projects started volunteering activities during the development stage of the project, and only a small number (7%) waited until after the capital works were complete. This is encouraging, as it shows that the majority of projects see the value of volunteering at all stages of the project lifecycle.

Projects are providing a range of volunteering activities, as shown in the table overleaf.

Activities	Have done	Plan to do
Management	68.4%	23.7%
Maintenance	59.2%	31.6%
Horticulture	40.8%	44.7%
Retail	21.1%	22.4%
Capital Works	32.9%	30.3%
Access	27.6%	44.7%
Marketing	40.8%	39.5%
One off events	63.2%	32.9%
Other	26.3%	13.2%

4.3.2   Volunteer numbers and hours

From the 93 projects that submitted data a total baseline number of volunteers of 3925 can be established. This is an average of 42 volunteers per park, and ranges from 0 to 471. The total volunteer hours baseline across all projects is 75,624.5. Using 7.5 hours as a working day and a basic £50 per volunteer day gives a baseline of £504,150.

When the targets for number of volunteers are examined, 92 submitted a target and this gives a total target number of volunteers of 9,684. This is an average of 105 volunteers per project, and ranges from 10 to 683. This is an increase of 5,759 volunteers; a 146% increase. 76 projects provided a target volunteer hours, which totalled 155,592 or £1,037,280.

The number of volunteers involved in projects has increased over the three years of collecting data; from 3,421 in 2010/11 to 6,518 in 2012/13. Using the 2012/13 data, there has been a net increase of volunteers of 2,593. The actual number of volunteer hours has also increased, from 58,604 in 2010/11 to 95,036 in 2012/13. This is a net increase of 19,411 hours which equates to £129,407 of additional volunteer time.

The results of the project survey support this increase, with 82% of projects reporting an increase in their volunteers.

> *"We now have our own Park Force volunteer group, which meets twice per week. The group has 20 members. Several companies have already participated work activities at the park - Conoco, Royal Bank of Scotland, Shell UK, Bank of Scotland and B&Q"*

> *"The number of members and volunteers within the Friends of group has grown from zero to over 250. The number of volunteering events and events run by volunteers has grown from zero to over 20"*

4.3.3 Volunteer profile

The table below shows where volunteers are from, according to the results of the project survey. 72% of projects have Friends groups, however a significant proportion also have volunteers from outside the Friends group; 62% of projects attract volunteers from the wider community, 54% from schools and 45% from voluntary organisations.

	No. of projects	% projects
Friends group members	72	96.0%
Local residents (not Friends group members)	62	82.7%
School groups	54	72.0%
Other voluntary organisations	45	60.0%
Local businesses	34	45.3%
Youth clubs	31	41.3%
Other	26	34.7%
TCV or equivalent	22	29.3%
Churches	17	22.7%

From the survey results, 69% of projects believe that they have a greater diversity of volunteers working in the park as a result of the project.

Based on the data submitted by projects, an average of 56% of volunteers were male and 44% female before project started. Using the 2012/13 data, this has not changed.

For the 53 projects with baseline and target then the average proportion of volunteers from a BAME community was 8%. Projects are looking to diversify the ethnicity of their volunteer base to attract 15% from BAME communities. The actual profile of BAME volunteers has not changed since 2010, with 9% on average being recorded. However, of the 17 projects that had a baseline, targets and more than 2 years data,

8 have so far reached their target of diversifying the ethnicity of their volunteers. This is backed up by the project survey, where only 14% of projects agreed that they have attracted a greater proportion of BAME volunteers.

Where data exists (n=61) then the majority of volunteers before the project started are over 50 (75%), expressed as the largest age group. And over 50% projects (34/66) are reporting that <25s are the smallest age group volunteering. The data suggests that, where projects have set a target (n=65), for one age group then the under 25s are the key audience for engaging in volunteering.

"We now have a number of young people delivering sports coaching many of whom are from BAME communities"

Where projects have submitted actual data there is little evidence to suggest any change in the age profile of volunteers, however 33% of projects completing the survey believe that they have attracted a larger proportion of young people in volunteering.

"As a result of the project we have engaged more people as volunteers who are younger people this is particularly true of our gardening volunteers who are made up of 5 young adults with special needs."

A number of projects are also supporting disabled volunteers. 30% of projects completing the project survey believe that they now have a greater proportion of disabled volunteers.

"The range of volunteers at events varies in age. There are a greater range of activities and opportunities for people to volunteer"

4.3.4   Volunteering activities

Projects are asked to categorise the type of volunteering activity and set a base line and targets for the number of volunteers carrying out this type of activity.

Category	Base line set (No projects)	Base line number of volunteers (total across all projects)	Target number of volunteers (total across all projects)	%age change
Management	58	1096	1498	45%
Maintenance	96	1012	2121	109%
Horticulture	96	1835	4451	142%
Retail	88	85	156	83%
Capital works (supporting the restoration programme)	91	24	838	3391%
Access	92	79	124	57%
Marketing	96	68	129	89%
One off events	98	514	752	46%
TOTALS		4,713	10,069	

The data shows that the top 3 target areas for increasing volunteer activities, expressed as the highest target numbers, are:

- Horticulture

- Maintenance

- One off events

Also the biggest amount of change planned in volunteering activities is in

- Capital works

- Horticulture

- Maintenance

The data in the table above chimes with the target increase in volunteer number earlier (5356 compared to 5759).

The table overleaf shows the proportion of volunteers involved in each activity for each year data has been collected.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Average
Management	14%	15%	11%	13%
Maintenance	21%	23%	32%	25%
Horticulture	17%	26%	24%	23%
Retail	2%	1%	2%	1%
Capital works	1%	0%	1%	1%
Access	6%	5%	3%	5%
Marketing	6%	5%	3%	4%
One off events	33%	25%	24%	27%

Overall there is a good spread of volunteering activities. The most popular activities have been maintenance, horticulture and one off events and least popular to date have been retail and involvement in the capital works programme. Although a large increase in volunteer involvement in supporting the capital works programme was planned, volunteers are yet to get involved. This discrepancy could be caused by a time lag within projects in that capital works may take up to a year to get started on site after a Round 2 award, or it may be that volunteer projects follow on form major infrastructure improvements in the phasing of capital works (e.g. contractors may restore all paths, hard landscape, create new beds etc and volunteers might subsequently undertake planting works).

4.3.5 Volunteering and deprivation

The table oveleaf shows the baseline, target and actual volunteering numbers, broken down by deprivation band, with band A being the most deprived and E the least deprived Local Authority area.

Deprivation band	Number of projects	Base line average (n)	Target average (n)	Actual 10/11 average (n)	Actual 11/12 average (n)	Actual 12/13 average (n)
A	50	57 (41)	153 (36)	89 (22)	149 (28)	179 (23)
B	34	17 (31)	75 (27)	103 (8)	134 (14)	129 (17)
C	23	28 (17)	56 (14)	42 (7)	26 (7)	40 (5)
D	17	26 (14)	104 (12)	42 (7)	125 (12)	89 (9)
E	10	27 (7)	110 (4)	10 (3)	39 (2)	58 (3)

The data appears to suggest that the base line level of volunteering is actually highest in the more deprived areas. The data also shows that the highest average number of volunteers per year is being recorded in the more deprived areas.

Looking at the total number of volunteers across all years by deprivation banding:

Deprivation band	Number of projects	Base line total all projects	Target total all projects	Actual 10/11 total	Actual 11/12 total	Actual 12/13 total
A	50	2359	5523	1958	4027	3945
B	34	527	2031	826	1886	2070
C	23	485	790	298	154	198
D	17	362	1249	299	1498	799
E	10	192	441	31	77	174

As would be expected with the biggest number of projects in the A and B bands they are showing the highest total number of volunteers across all measures.

The table below shows the same analysis for volunteer hours.

Deprivation band	Number of projects	Base line average (n)	Target average (n)	Actual 10/11 average (n)	Actual 11/12 average (n)	Actual 12/13 average (n)
A	50	871 (38)	2254 (3)	1428 (23)	1807 (28)	2308 (23)
B	34	1021 (25)	2435 (23)	1928 (9)	2100 (14)	1567 (15)
C	23	516 (14)	1053 (13)	694 (8)	620 (8)	1144 (4)
D	17	270 (10)	595 (9)	311 (7)	469 (11)	455 (9)
E	10	1005 (7)	4489 (4)	219 (3)	3704 (2)	3253 (3)

Interestingly the data suggests that whilst bands A and B are targeting the highest average number of volunteers the least deprived area (E) is targeting the highest average number of volunteer hours. This suggests that people in more deprived areas are volunteering less frequently. Unfortunately bands C and D do not follow this pattern.

Deprivation band	Number of projects	Base line total all projects	Base line value @ £50 per day	Target total all projects	Target value @ £50 per day
A	50	33,133	£1,656,650	67,630	£3,381,500
B	34	25,531	£1,276,550	56,010	£2,800,500
C	23	7,228	£361,400	13,692	£684,600
D	17	2,696	£134,800	5,355	£267,750
E	10	7,036	£351,800	17,955	£897,750

Again given the sheer number of projects in bands A and B the potential contribution of volunteering would be expected to be higher in these areas. All areas target approximately doubling their level of volunteering. What the data clearly shows is that volunteering in the more deprived areas (A and B) is worth over £6.1m.

4.3.6 Lessons learnt

Projects were able to identify what works when engaging volunteers.

Management and planning	• Flexibility of timing. • Promotion. • Producing 'volunteer role descriptions'
Capacity and support	• Dedicated staff with experience of managing and supporting volunteers • Ensuring the volunteers receive recognition for their involvement. • Asking the volunteers what it is they would like to do
Partnership working	• Developing projects with local community groups and voluntary services organisations • Good working relationship with local college • Working in partnership with other service providers
Activities	• Offering a wider range and targeted events for involvement • Delivering the landscaping capital works through volunteers has enabled us to increase the range of volunteers substantially • Taster sessions

Challenges associated with engaging volunteers include:

Increasing diversity of volunteers	• Specialist interest groups generally do not increase the range of volunteers. • Attracting new and different (younger, BAME, disabled) members to the Friends group. • Targeting a wider range of people i.e. lack of younger people. • Trying to attract a greater range of ethnic minority groups
Over-reliance on volunteers	• It is difficult to recruit committed volunteers to help with garden tasks and setting up at events. People are very busy, they might only come once or don't turn up. It's awkward chasing people when they are giving up their own time to help. • Volunteers who have many volunteering

	opportunities locally and therefore competition for their time/input.
Management and planning	• Not being proactive. i.e.: waiting for them to contact us. • General advertising of volunteer opportunities to the local community has drawn little interest. • General posters notices pinned up do not seem to attract/ are easily overlooked. • Engaging the volunteers over a five year period is difficult especially has there has been staff changes within the project. • One off volunteer days in the park haven't been as successful as work with organised groups/school • Public & friends meeting provided very few volunteers • Too rigorous safeguarding procedures preventing volunteering
Lack of resources	• Cuts in park staff due to budget reductions and negative feelings about the concept of 'The Big Society'

Case study: Priory Park, Dudley

We have advertised the volunteering programme very widely and we have had some very good referrals from Salvation Army and Dudley CVS.

We have also had people come to us who used to be on the Future jobs programmes delivered by Dudley Council. This has brought more elderly volunteers and people with mental health issues. Partnering with Dudley Lions and Tesco has also brought in a new range of volunteers which we can call upon when a large job such as the pond planting needs to be delivered quickly.

Summary

• 71% of projects started volunteering activities during the development stage of the project, 7% waited until after the capital works were complete

• Baseline number of volunteers of 3,925 –an average of 42 volunteers per park

• The total volunteer hours baseline across all projects is 75,624.5. Using 7.5 hours as a working day and a basic £50 per volunteer day gives a baseline of £504,150.

• Total target number of volunteers of 9,684. This is an average of 105 volunteers per project. This is an increase of 5,759 volunteers; a 146% increase

• Target volunteer hours total 155,592 or £1,037,280

• The number of volunteers involved in projects has increased over the three years of collecting data; from 3,421 in 2010/11 to 6,518 in 2012/13.

• Using the 2012/13 data, there has been a net increase of volunteers of 2,593.

• The actual number of volunteer hours has also increased, from 58,604 in 2010/11 to 95,036 in 2012/13. This is a net increase of 19,411 hours which equates to £129,407 of additional volunteer time.

• 82% of projects report an increase in their volunteers.

• 72% of projects have Friends groups, however a significant proportion also have volunteers from outside the Friends group; 62% of projects attract volunteers from the wider community, 54% from schools and 45% from voluntary organisations.

• 69% of projects believe that they have a greater diversity of volunteers working in the park as a result of the project

• Based on data submitted there has been no change to gender split, no change in ethnicity (9%), no overall change in age structure, although 33% of projects believe they have attracted a greater proportion of younger volunteers

• 30% of projects completing the project survey believe that they now have a greater proportion of disabled volunteers

• Overall there is a good spread of volunteering activities. The most popular activities are maintenance, horticulture and one off events and least popular are retail and involvement in the capital works programme

• the highest average number of volunteers per year is being recorded in the more deprived areas

4.4 Outcome 4 – Improving skills and knowledge through training

4.4.1 Outcome overview

Projects are expected to produce a training plan, to engage both staff and volunteers in training activities.

The table below shows what training opportunities project have done or plan to offer. The most popular are practical horticultural skills, leading guided walks and tours and events management.

	Have done	Plan to do
Marketing	34.2%	42.1%
Events management	42.1%	43.4%
Project management	38.2%	23.7%
Managing a community group	40.8%	30.3%
Practical horticultural skills	42.1%	48.7%
Practical conservation skills	38.2%	40.8%
Fundraising	31.6%	39.5%
Leading guided walks and talks	48.7%	39.5%
Historical research/ archiving	34.2%	39.5%
Interpretation	30.3%	48.7%
Health and safety	38.2%	39.5%
General Volunteer management	39.5%	42.1%
Other	7.9%	2.6%

4.4.2 Training and qualifications

The table below shows the baseline and targets for the number of staff and volunteers to be trained. It also shows the forecast number of qualifications to be achieved, work placements provided and third party organisations using the park for training purposes.

Criteria	Base line totals	Targets totals	Target increase (number)	Increase %
Number of staff trained (n=101)	464	1149	685	47%
Number of volunteers trained (n=103)	330	2991	2661	806%
Number of work placements (n=98)	148	534	386	260%
Number of qualifications (n=98)	123	776	653	530%
Third party use (n=97)	1434	3976	2542	177%

For staff training, in times when local authorities are cutting revenue budgets the fact that almost 700 staff will be trained is a significant investment in the sector work force.

In terms of volunteers the analysis under outcome 3 earlier showed that an additional 5,759 volunteers would be engaged. Combining this with the data above shows that around 46% of these will be trained through the projects. Given that volunteer numbers were increasing by 146% for training to increase by over 800% shows that this is a huge investment in capacity building. The above figures are matched by significant increases in the number of work placements, qualifications and use by third parties.

Over the three years of data collection, 369 staff and 2,117 volunteers have benefited from training. Overall good progress is being made, in particular with training volunteers and providing work placements. The target for third party organisations using the park as a training venue has already been exceeded, with nearly 4,500 organisations using the parks. The table below shows what has been achieved to date.

Indicator	Total achieved	% achieved
Staff trained	369	32%
Volunteers trained	2,117	70%

Indicator	Total achieved	% achieved
Qualifications achieved	530	68%
Work placements provided	442	83%
Third parties using the park as training venues	4,466	112%

50% of projects have achieved their targets for training staff and 71% have achieved their target for training volunteers, as shown in the table below. It is likely that these targets will be exceeded, indicating that original targets were not ambitious enough.

Criteria	Targets met - all projects	Targets met - completed projects	Targets met -approved projects
Number of staff trained	50 (50%)	5 (63%)	45 (51%)
Number of volunteers trained	71 (69%)	4 (50%)	33 (46%)
Number of work placements	52 (53%)	3 (38%)	45 (51%)
Number of qualifications	20 (28%)	2 (50%)	18 (28%)
Third party use	46 (47%)	6 (86%)	23 (27%)

4.4.3   Progress

As a result of delivering training programmes, 79% of projects believe that their staff are more skilled, and 71% agree that the volunteers are more skilled. Staff and volunteers are able to carry out a wider range of tasks and the quality of the work has improved.

The table below shows the range of skills being developed by staff and volunteers, based on the results of the project survey. 76% have developed a greater knowledge of heritage and conservation work and 73% have greater skills around running events and activities.

	No. of projects	%
Knowledge of heritage / conservation	35	76.1%
Running events / activities	34	73.9%
Biodiversity	32	69.6%
Practical heritage / conservation work	31	67.4%
Project management	24	52.2%
Park management	22	47.8%
Marketing / PR	22	47.8%
Other	4	8.7%

"The staff on site now know about Green Flag they have a greater understanding of management principals. The Rangers are skilled in Forest Schools, educational work, working with difficult people. The volunteers have trained in sports coaching and have delivered regular programmes of events. They have also delivered large scale events such as the May day and Aug Bank holiday events, understanding event management and risk assessments"

"On a personal level the project has taught me an incredible amount in terms of skilling me in fundraising, project management, marketing, volunteer management. By my role as a lead on the project I have had to learn and expand my own skills set" (Project Manager)

4.4.4 Training and deprivation

The table below shows the baseline, targets and actuals for staff training, broken down by deprivation band, where A is the most and E is the least deprived Local Authority area.

Deprivation band	Number of projects	Base line average (n)	Target average (n)	Actual 10/11 average (n)	Actual 11/12 average (n)	Actual 12/13 average (n)
A	50	5.5 (41)	18.6 (41)	4.5 (22)	6.9 (29)	33 (21)
B	34	3.7 (27)	6.6 (29)	2.8 (10)	4.9 (13)	11 (16)
C	23	6 (19)	7.9 (17)	9 (7)	4.3 (7)	4 (4)
D	17	1.8 (14)	3.8 (12)	3.2 (5)	8.5 (11)	3.4 (9)
E	10	0.7 (7)	3.4 (5)	0	2.5 (2)	3.3 (3)

The data clearly shows that those projects in the most deprived areas have the biggest focus on staff training. The 3 projects with the highest targets for staff training are all band A projects (Stewart Park, Middlesborough; Horniman Gardens, Lewisham; Lordship Recreation Ground, Haringey)

The analysis has been repeated for volunteer training as shown in the table below.

Deprivation band	Number of projects	Base line average (n)	Target average (n)	Actual 10/11 average (n)	Actual 11/12 average (n)	Actual 12/13 average (n)
A	50	2.5 (42)	36.9 (42)	3 (19)	8.8 (29)	21.8 (22)
B	34	2.6 (28)	26 (28)	12.2 (9)	18.6 (11)	18.5 (16)
C	23	3.9 (19)	18.6 (17)	2.9 (7)	8.8 (5)	17.8 (4)
D	17	6.4 (14)	19.5 (13)	0	9.8 (12)	3.2 (9)
E	10	3 (7)	58.2 (5)	0	13.5 (2)	36 (3)

The data under this measure is far less conclusive than for staff training. The top three projects in terms of targets for number of volunteers trained are all band A projects (Cyfarthfa Park, East Park, Wigan, Mesnes Park). We can safely say that

the projects who have the greatest ambition for staff and volunteer training are all in the top 20% most deprived areas in the UK.

4.4.5 Lessons learnt

Projects have identified the following key elements that work when increasing skills and knowledge:

Partnership working	• A partnership approach to delivering training
'Hands on' experience	• Hands on activities, giving the staff and volunteers access to a wider range of duties and responsibility • Having knowledgeable and experienced staff to provide day to day training to volunteers and trainees. • Field trips and visits to other parks and projects
Specialist expertise	• Having access to a number of individuals who are willing to provide training and education in relation to horticultural and environmental skills on a voluntary and professional basis. • The Project Board allows staff direct access to experienced consultants, who have delivered a range of similar projects. This has allowed staff to learn from their experience
Training activities	• Training the Ranger in Green Flag. • Taster sessions in heritage construction skills during the construction
Links to other trainees	• Having long term trainees or apprenticeships linked into other training programmes. • Getting trainees to pass on their skills and training to others to help build their confidence and increase capacity amongst others.

The following challenges have also been identified:

Management	• There are restrictions as to the type of tasks the volunteers can experience imposed by the council H&S and insurance policies and there are some contracted skilled operations that contractually have to be carried out by the council's term contractor. • Not having clear responsibility for planning and monitoring it. • Keeping the training consistent has been difficult due to staff changes. • Anything too formal.
Lack of buy-in	• Friends have been reluctant to go on some training courses that we've offered to arrange and pay for them (e.g. organising an event, food safety/hygiene). • Some volunteer see opportunities to gain qualifications and then do not offer time to volunteer to pay back for the qualification. • Some of the training by and working with parks maintenance team has had limited value due to lack of buy in by staff

"Linking the capital works to local training hub has provided over 100 training placements during the construction phase of our project"

Case study: Stewart Park, Middlesbrough

The vocational training centre created as part of the project is one of the key successes of the park's restoration. The centre provides training in heritage skills and horticulture, resulting in accredited qualifications. The centre is managed by Askham Bryant College, one of the key partners involved in Stewart Park.

The training centre provides training for adults with disabilities as well as the wider community. The centre also receives referrals from probation services and Job Centres, enabling people who are unemployed to gain qualifications and work experience. Since the centre opened two years ago 160 students have achieved a qualification. There are 30 trainees on site at any one time, and the centre is now operating at full capacity. Due to high levels of demand the college are now

discussing with the council the potential to expand their facilities into other buildings in the park.

The training has also expanded beyond horticulture and landbased studies; they offer community learning courses such as independent living, health and wellbeing and confidence building and have applied for community learning funds for non-accredited courses.

There are considerable benefits to the park as a result of the training centre. Maintenance of the park is being supported by the large number of trainees and volunteers. Park staff and apprentices also benefit from the training provided at the centre, helping to raise skill levels amongst everyone working in the park. The park is also an ideal environment for people with learning difficulties; a number of trainees have autism and are unable to access mainstream education. The park offers the perfect environment as an outdoor classroom.

Summary

• The most popular training activities are practical horticultural skills, leading guided walks and tours and events management.

• For staff training, in times when local authorities are cutting revenue budgets the fact that almost 700 staff will be trained is a significant investment in the sector work force.

• In terms of volunteers the analysis under outcome 3 earlier showed that an additional 5759 volunteers would be engaged. Combining this with the data above shows that around 46% of these will be trained through the projects. Given that volunteer numbers were increasing by 146% for training to increase by over 800% shows that this is a huge investment in capacity building.

• Over the three years of data collection, 369 staff and 2,117 volunteers have benefited from training

• 50% of projects have achieved their targets for training staff and 71% have achieved their target for training volunteers

• 79% of projects believe that their staff are more skilled, and 71% agree that the volunteers are more skilled

• 76% have developed a greater knowledge of heritage and conservation work and 73% have greater skills around running events and activities.

4.5 Outcome 5 – Improved management and maintenance

4.5.1 Outcome overview

To achieve this outcome projects should develop a 10 year Management and Maintenance Plan which identifies how they will ensure that the investment will be protected. Projects are also required to achieve Green Flag status within a year of completing the capital works and retain it for a further 5 years under SP2, or for 7 years for projects funded under SP3.

The Green Flag Award is the benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom. The scheme was set up in 1996 to recognise and reward green spaces in England and Wales that met the standards. It is also seen as a way of encouraging others to achieve the same high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in green areas.

The table below shows what projects have done or plan to do to improve management and maintenance in individual parks. 67% of projects will employ more staff, 97% will increase the skills and knowledge of staff and volunteers and 75% will be seeking to secure additional funding. It is interesting that 83% of parks did not have a management plan before the HLF and Big Lottery Fund investment.

96% of projects will be engaging more volunteers to support ongoing maintenance and this is becoming more necessary as council budgets are reduced and austerity measures implemented. For example, at Marine Cove Gardens the parks and leisure department has reduced from 20 to 1 member of staff. As a result the Friends group have taken over most of the day to day maintenance of the park and this is likely to continue.

	Have done	Plan to do
Employ more staff	36.8%	30.3%
Engaging more volunteers	47.4%	48.7%
Project has led to production of first management plan	64.5%	18.4%
Working to achieve Green Flag Award	42.1%	51.3%
Working to achieve Green Heritage Award	2.6%	19.7%
Securing additional funding	39.5%	35.5%
Develop new partnerships	47.4%	40.8%
Increased skills and knowledge of volunteers / staff	52.6%	44.7%
Other	2.6%	5.3%

4.5.2   Green Flag

Only 45 approved projects (33%) of projects have submitted a baseline score for Green Flag, indicating that the majority have not carried out an assessment against the criteria. This will make it extremely difficult to develop a management plan which ensures that the criteria are met. Of the 45 projects submitting a baseline score, 82% are below the pass mark of 66, and 18% have already achieved the pass mark.

Baseline score	Number	%
0-30	2	5%
31-66	34	77%
67-80	7	16%
80+	1	2%

The pass mark for achieving Green Flag status is 66. 30 projects have submitted a target which is greater than the pass mark and of these only 8 had a baseline score of 66 or greater. This shows that a small proportion of projects have aspirations of improving their management and maintenance to well above the Green Flag pass mark, which is encouraging.

"With the introduction of an additional staff member, we are able to continue to undertake work to a higher level than was previously done. The frequencies and management input has also increased with regular management meetings with the community now taking place"

Using actual data submitted from projects, the table below shows the number of projects achieving a pass mark Green Flag, and the average score across the programme.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Projects submitting an actual score 66 or more	10	20	25
Average score across all projects	65	65	67

Overall 32 projects have submitted an actual score of 66 or above, with 7 projects achieving a pass mark that had a baseline of less than 66.

57% of projects completing the survey agree that the quality of the maintenance work has improved, and 54% agree that the frequency of maintenance work has increased.

Looking at the data held by Green Flag Partnership Plus we can see that 50 sites have already secured with Green Flag Award or Green Heritage Award. Of the 50 not all received a full judging assessment in 2013.

Type of assessment	Number of sites
Full (incl. 'HLF full', 'new 13 full', 'full')	23
Group	4
Mystery shop	23

The judging process for 'group' and mystery shop does not give a full desk, field and total scores so no further analysis can be carried out.

For the 23 sites with 'full' assessments only 21 have a full set of scores for further analysis. Of these 4 sites are completed and 17 are in the delivery stage. Since the January 2013 data supplied by projects refers to their scores in 2012 and the GFPP data refers to 2013 scores no direct comparison can be made. What is comforting though is the fact the 50 sites that have passed the award include 37 projects that have failed to submit any actual data, so the annual output data gives a picture that is much worse than reality.

The overall score given by judges to those sites securing the award is in the range of 67-86 with an average of 74.8 which shows that sites securing HLF funding are scoring on average well above the pass mark. Comparing this to the wider data set (n=478) the average is 73.3, so the Parks for People projects are only scoring slightly higher than the other winners.

Desk assessment scores average 22/30 (all winners average is 21) and are for the site management plan, policy, procedures and other related documentation. The higher average score here shows that the Parks for People requirement to produce a management plan is leading to more comprehensive information. The lowest score here is from a new applicant which was a marginal pass overall and as such their score should increase now they have a clearer idea of what is required for the award.

Field assessment scores average 53/70 (all winners average 52) which again shows that Parks for People investment is raising standards.

When reading the data it is important to recognise that whilst Parks for People projects may only be slightly higher than average it is the amount of change resulting

from the investment that is important. There have always been well managed sites that have secured Green Flag Awards and have consistently driven up their overall scores. What the Parks for People investment is achieving is bringing up sites that in the most part would have failed the award and also helping sites that hold the award, but need investment in infrastructure or activity planning to move forwards.

4.5.3   Visitor satisfaction

81 projects submitted a baseline score for visitor satisfaction, normally established by carrying out a visitor survey. The table below shows the distribution of scores; the average across all projects was 66%. It shows that in a significant number of parks, the baseline satisfaction scores were actually quite positive.

% satisfied	No of projects	% of projects
0-25%	4	5%
26-50%	17	21%
51-75%	30	37%
76%+	30	37%

75 projects have a target for satisfaction levels, with the average across the programme of 81%. Targets range from a relatively low 50%, to an ambitious 100% and 76% of projects with a target want to achieve at least 75% satisfaction levels. On average, projects want to increase their satisfaction levels by 14%, with 32 projects aiming to increase satisfaction levels by at least 10%. Only 7 projects want to either keep satisfaction levels the same, or reduce them, and in all these cases the baseline was already high (at least 70%).

For projects submitting actual data, average satisfaction levels have increased overall. In 2010/11 the average satisfaction was 79%, in 2011/12 it was 78% and in 2012/13 it was 82%. So far 24 projects have achieved or exceeded their target. This is backed up by the survey, where 64% of projects agree that visitor satisfaction has improved.

"Visitor surveys were carried out throughout the development stage of the project. The mean average overall satisfaction with the Park was rated as 7.42 out of 10 (where 10 is exceptional) and the House was regarded as the most important heritage feature. Previous to this project the park was managed by Birmingham City Council and now it is managed by Sandwell Council. The maintenance regime has improved as Sandwell are putting more resources into the park to ensure a good level of maintenance. We also run volunteering maintenance days in which the volunteers assist with site maintenance thus increasing the frequency of maintenance than was seen in the park previously."

If those projects with a base line, target and 3 years actuals are selected (n = 13) then satisfaction against the base line and targets can be tracked as shown in the table below:

Project name	Original Baseline	Original target	Actual 10/11	Actual 11/12	Actual 12/13	Actual v base line	Actual v target
Lichfield: Beacon Park, Minster Pool and Gardens of Remembrance	94%	95%	93%	98%	96%	2%	1%
West Park	68%	90%	76%	78%	81%	13%	-9%
Hale Park, Hale Village	42%	60%	70%	69%	80%	38%	20%
Brinkburn Dene's, Darlington	40%	60%	45%	50%	68%	28%	8%
Bushey, The Rose Garden	34%	80%	80%	95%	100%	66%	20%
War Memorial Park	70%	68%	70%	58%	49%	-21%	-19%
Burslem Park	61%	73%	70%	61%	81%	20%	8%
Newark - Sconce and Devon Park	72%	80%	87%	88%	100%	28%	20%
Queens Park, Bolton	51%	75%	76%	73%	76%	25%	1%

Project name	Original Baseline	Original target	Actual 10/11	Actual 11/12	Actual 12/13	Actual v base line	Actual v target
Stevenage Town Centre Gardens	37%	70%	54%	69%	71%	34%	1%
Spinney Hill Park, Leicester	77%	85%	94%	95%	91%	14%	6%
Nottingham Forest, Recreation Ground	70%	84%	86%	75%	88%	18%	4%
Wigan, Mesnes Park	85%	90%	93%	96%	98%	13%	8%

What the data shows is that most projects with longitudinal data can show a significant increase in satisfaction against their base line and that they have exceeded their targets.

If the sample is extended to those with base line, target and 2 or more year's data (n=21) then all but one have exceeded their base line and 17 (80%) have already exceeded their targets.

Finally when those projects with base line, target and more than 1 year's actual returns are looked at (n=37) then 4 projects have reported satisfaction lower than when they started the project but 33 (89%) have reported an increase ranging from 1% to 66%. When their performance against their targets is examined then the picture worsens with 17 projects (45%) showing a decrease in satisfaction.

The issue that this raises is the accuracy of the target setting and people's estimation of how much satisfaction would increase as a result of the investment.

4.5.4 Visitor satisfaction and deprivation

The table below shows the baseline, target and actual visitor satisfaction levels broken down by deprivation bands (with A being most and E being least deprived Local Authorities in the country).

Deprivation	Number	Base	Target	Actual	Actual	Actual

band	of projects	line average (n)	average (n)	10/11 average (n)	11/12 average (n)	12/13 average (n)
A	50	59% (33)	80% (30)	78% (10)	76% (16)	84% (11)
B	34	63% (22)	78% (22)	66% (6)	78% (9)	76% (11)
C	23	65% (11)	80% (11)	85% (5)	71% (4)	65% (4)
D	17	73% (9)	90% (8)	85% (6)	88% (6)	83% (8)
E	10	89% (3)	93% (3)	89% (2)	0	99% (2)

What the average base line figures suggest is that (pre restoration) visitor satisfaction is lowest in the more deprived areas. The annual returns show an overall picture that satisfaction is increasing in all areas with the highest gains in the most deprived areas.

For projects with 3 years satisfaction data in band A (6 projects) then the average increase is 27%. The projects struggling to hit their targets are in bands C and D.

4.5.5   Sustainability

When responding to the project survey, 58% of projects expect that their annual maintenance budget will increase following the restoration project, 33% expect it to stay the same, and 10% expect it to decrease.

Projects are considering ways to achieve savings, or do things differently whilst also maintaining standards:

Reducing costs	- More efficient buildings - Energy efficient facilities within pavilion buildings - planting schemes designed for lower maintenance - On-site compost for mulch - Hedges around the bowling and putting greens have been removed and will be replaced by new fencing – cutting down on maintenance time and costs. - Increase composting and recycling of green waste for re-use in the park - The park has been designed to include high quality / low maintenance equipment - Discontinuing summer and winter bedding.

In-kind contributions	• Counting the volunteer efforts of the Friends • Partnership with training organisations/providers to support maintenance through use of trainees • Annual bedding areas have been removed from routine maintenance and bulb planting etc. is now placed on the Activity Plan.
Income generation	• Running the park as a business • Voluntary parking scheme • More concessions • Charging for events
Increasing efficiency/quality	• More effective ways of team working, re-assessment of priorities • The introduction of 7 day working to reduce the need to pay expensive overtime during the weekend and bank holidays as well as increasing staff presence to reduce vandalism and damage and result in cost savings • Reducing reactive and unplanned maintenance through development of a suitable management and maintenance plan, whereby management activity can be delivered with far greater impact • more efficient mowing regimes

"From the start of this project the aim has been to make the many different elements of the project as self-sustaining as possible. From our transport strategy to the volunteer programme we have aimed to get partners and external groups and voluntary sector organisations responsible for ownership of different elements of this project. The majority of resources for on-site activity will available in downloadable format from the website and relate to self-guided trails marked with activity branded keys on site on site. Our Partnership and Community Engagement Officer (PACE) will work on an exit strategy for the Project to help to sustain these elements into the future and external funding will be sought to continue the PACE officer post beyond the life of this project"

4.5.6 Lessons learnt

Projects were able to identify key things that worked in improving management and maintenance:

Increase in use	• Greater activity in the park has helped to limit vandalism
Additional resources/capacity	• Budget uplift from the project has supported increased park maintenance • Site-based staff and dedicated maintenance team. • Using experienced staff who have a stake in the park and are committed to doing a good job. • Partnership with Friends groups
Management planning	• Increased management emphasis due to raising of profile of park. • Production of a management and maintenance plan has allowed the identification of additional resources which can be fed into the budget planning process. • Working towards Green Flag attainment in a much more co-ordinated fashion, with regular management meetings.
Effective design	• Robustness was a key factor in the design work for restoration. • Good strong connection between design Team/Project Management and ongoing management team

Challenges associated with improving management and maintenance were identified as:

Increase in use	• Increased visitor numbers has greatly increased litter in the park. • The popularity of new facilities has put significant pressure on these facilities
Financial constraints	• Financial climate in local government led to severe delays in filling the new maintenance posts. • Being able to dedicate enough resources to the park at all times. • Cuts in Park keepers due to budget reductions
Increase in maintenance burden	• Adding features to the park which require additional maintenance. • The high quality of the refurbishment has set a new benchmark for the management and maintenance of the park but the challenge to raise maintenance standards is being met with positive improvements almost every step of the way.
Resources/skills	• Not enough dedicated staff to work in the park • The skills of park maintenance staff to manage volunteer gardeners needs to be improved. • Finding suitably qualified gardeners • Finding appropriate jobs for appropriate skill sets within the groups and also having enough volunteers to complete a particular task.

Summary

• 67% of projects will employ more staff, 97% will increase the skills and knowledge of staff and volunteers and 75% will be seeking to secure additional funding.

• 83% of parks did not have a management plan before the HLF investment

• Only 41 approved projects (39%) of projects have submitted a baseline score for Green Flag, indicating that most have not carried out an assessment against the criteria

- Of the 44 projects submitting a baseline score, 82% are below the pass mark of 66, and 18% have already achieved the standard

- 30 projects have submitted a target which is greater than the pass mark and of these only 8 had a baseline score of 66 or greater

- 32 projects have submitted an actual score of 66 or above, with 7 projects achieving a pass mark that had a baseline of less than 66.

- 57% of projects completing the survey agree that the quality of the maintenance work has improved, and 54% agree that the frequency of maintenance work has increased.

- Baseline visitor satisfaction average across all projects was 66% and aim to increase this to 81%.

- Average satisfaction levels have increased. In 2010/11 the average satisfaction was 79%, in 2011/12 it was 78% and in 2012/13 it was 82%.

- 58% of projects expect that their annual maintenance budget will increase following the restoration project, 33% expect it to stay the same, and 10% expect it to decrease.

- Pre restoration visitor satisfaction is lowest in the more deprived areas. The annual returns show an overall picture that satisfaction is increasing in all areas with the highest gains in the most deprived areas

5 Wider impact

There is a considerable amount of evidence that indicates that investment in parks and green space can have a considerable wider impact; both economic, social and environmental. This chapter considers this evidence and the findings from the evaluation of the Parks for People programme to determine if the programme is making a difference to the people who use the parks, the organisations who manage them and the wider communities in which they are located.

Based on the results of the survey, 76% of projects plan to carry out some research into the wider impact of their project. This will include user surveys, wider market research and surveys with the community. Some projects also plan to carry out research with local businesses, the local tourist information centres and with specific interest or under-represented groups.

> *"It has exceeded expectations, surpassing all targets set and, more importantly creating a lasting connection between people and place. It's not just more people coming to the park, its more people having a better time, meeting new friends and giving their support. More volunteers have been engaged than predicted, learnt new skills and made a lasting difference to people's lives. The park is the catalyst for that and a safe common ground"*

5.1 Economic impact

5.1.1 Existing evidence base

There is considerable evidence that investing in parks and green space has an important economic impact, in terms of inward investment, tourism, local businesses and house prices.

Defra (2011) research shows improving and expanding green infrastructure would see an economic benefit of £134 billion, whereas doing nothing could cost the public purse £55 billion.

Green space is also seen as important to cities in terms of their ability to attract tourists, businesses and it can make a crucial difference when people are choosing where to locate their business or where to live (Greenlinks 2010).

For small businesses attractive parks and recreation areas were rated as the highest priority when choosing where to relocate to (Crompton 1997)

Parks are also a major asset to local authorities, CABE (2009) estimated the value of a major public park as £108million, in contrast most councils value parks at £1.

Maintaining parks is also hugely important, one study from the USA, showed that while green space is rarely a primary attraction for tourists, any decline in quality will have a detrimental effect on any visitor numbers (The Trust for Public Land 2010).

Research also shows the positive impact of parks on house prices with one study in the North West showing proximity to parks led to an increase in property prices of 20% for a detached property (Dunse 2007)

There is also a considerable economic impact of volunteering, in terms of the in-kind contribution to the projects as well as volunteering improving their employability skills and being able to enter the job market:

- Taking part in volunteering may help to build confidence, communication skills and experience of the world of work, and strengthen work-related abilities such as time-keeping, punctuality and dealing with other people (SPRU 2004).

- A survey carried out by TimeBank through Reed Executive showed that among 200 of the UK's leading businesses:

- 73% of employers would recruit a candidate with volunteering experience over one without.

- 94% of employers believe that volunteering can add to skills.

- 94% of employees who volunteered to learn new skills had benefited either by getting their first job, improving their salary, or being promoted.

5.1.2 Evaluation findings

5.1.2.1 House prices

> *"Improvements to entrances and boundaries have enhanced the park surrounds and along with wider improvements will have added value to local streets and properties"*

Although there is no conclusive evidence that the Parks for People programme has had a direct impact on house prices, there is some anecdotal feedback from projects that suggest the investment has made a difference. In Stoke on Trent, an estate agent located close to Burslem Park felt that properties in close proximity to a good quality park would hold a premium of around 5% on their value, which could increase to 10% if they have a view directly over the park. Housing developers in Middlesbrough are also promoting Stewart Park in their promotional materials for a new build development near the park, and a new development in Merthyr Tydfil has been named 'Cyfarthfa View' after its location near the park and Castle.

5.1.2.2 Business and tourism

Projects are also reporting an increase in trade for local businesses. Victoria Gardens in Neath has received reports from local businesses saying that sales are increasing on days when events take place in the park and visitors to Stevenage Town Centre gardens have noticed more people visiting the town centre.

> *"I think a lot more people visit especially with the warm weather which means they visit the town centre too"*

Parks are also important tourist attractions. The table below a comparison between the top 10 parks with the highest number of baseline annual person visits against other national tourist attractions.

Attraction	Visits pa
Natural History Museum	4,873,275
Southport King's Gardens	4,700,000
Snowdonia National Park	4,270,000
Alton Towers Theme Park	2,700,000
Bishops Park and Fulham Palace Grounds	2,520,000
The Level	2,315,200
Clissold Park	2,090,000
Newcastle upon Tyne, Ouseburn Parks	2,000,000
Westminster Abbey	1,899,956
Leeds, Middleton Park	1,837,026
Wigan, Mesnes Park	1,320,000
Lordship Recreation Ground	1,250,000
Wales Millennium Centre	1,046,958
Walpole Park	1,000,000
Gunnersbury Park	1,000,000

Even smaller parks can have a significant impact on tourism. For example, the investment in Marine Cove gardens has resulted in improved access to the north end of the Esplanade to visitors. This has been particularly welcomed by the B&B that is adjacent to the park and the flats which overlook it. It has turned a closed off space into something that is now an attraction for the town. The events attract people from the wider area and it is now promoted as part of the tourist offer in the town.

5.1.2.3   Volunteers gaining employment

Case study: Volunteering as a route to employment

Jamie Price, 20 from Merthyr Tydfil was referred to the Heritage Lottery Fund volunteer programme in Cyfarthfa Park by Tydfil Training. He realised the importance of gaining new skills through volunteering and quickly engaged with the project, working on practical projects around the park. After a week on placement Jamie was getting positive feedback from the volunteer coordinator on

Volunteering is also having an economic impact. Using the targets submitted by some projects we can estimate that volunteering across the programme will be worth approximately £8m in in-kind support. There are also examples of volunteers and trainees gaining employment as a result of engaging in the project. For example, as a result of volunteering for a whole day once a week for six months, one of the horticultural volunteers at Walpole Park, who was also studying horticulture at Capel Manor college, successfully interviewed for a gardening job at Chiswick House and was able to use Walpole's park manager as a reference.

Volunteers are also moving into self-employment as a result of engaging in projects.

5.1.2.4   Wider regeneration

Projects in more deprived areas are also contributing to wider economic development initiatives. For example Southwater development in Telford has attracted approx. £1.5m to make the linkage between town centre and the town park and involved the creation of the new visitor centre and extensive landscaping works.

"People feel that the park has finally been invested in. The quality of the materials used in the restoration is very high and appreciated by most park visitors. The area the park is in is very deprived, this project clearly links with inward investment projects in the rest of the town centre, people feel a pride in their local environment"

In Stoke on Trent, the restoration of Burslem Park was part of a wider economic development strategy for Burslem, focusing on the industrial heritage of the area.

Alongside a Townscape Heritage Scheme in the town centre, projects have resulted in Burslem becoming more attractive to investors. As a result empty properties in the town have reduced from 40% to 20%, two key buildings are having business plans produced and the profile of the area has risen. 10 derelict buildings have been brought back into use, 13.5 jobs have been created and 16 safeguarded. It had created 13.5 jobs and safeguarded 16. It had created 3 new businesses and attracted 2 to the area. The evaluation also showed the investments made as part of the wider economic development strategy had resulted in an increase in businesses in the town from 135 in 2006 to 183 in 2012. This is against a backdrop of significant economic challenges.

A volunteer was helping 'hands on' with maintenance in the park for a year or so, when the opportunity arose to take forward a funding application to recreate a historic kitchen garden in the park. The volunteer was also enrolled at college at the time studying horticulture. She completed her course, whilst project managing the restoration of the garden and this has inspired her to start her own gardening business

5.1.2.5   Additional funding/leverage

Projects are also attracting additional funding, over and above the match funding originally agreed. The table below shows some examples of how projects have generated additional funding:

Friends group fundraising	• £5k grant to Friends group for fitness trail • Friends of Macrosty Park - £16k • Awards for All grant - £10k • £2k CSGN grant to Friends of Rouken Glen for garden design work
Additional capital funding	• £30k developer sum for additional car park resurfacing • £90k of develop sums for MUGA • Council funding for outdoor gym £35k • Additional council funding for pavilion with café, toilets, community facilities - £40k • £15k from Landfill Communities Fund – new trees • £30k WREN grant for new play area • Sports partnership funding – LTA, ECB, Sport

	England totalling £594k
	• Shortbreaks funding £250k to create sensory garden and inclusive play area
Additional revenue funding	• Additional HLF funding – sharing heritage project £8,900
	• YP work placement scheme – £2k
	• Landfill tax credits - £50k
Corporate/individual sponsorship:	• £23k from local companies
	• £200 from local guest house to provide tools for gardening for disabled project

5.1.2.6   Income generation

Projects are also looking to generate revenue to help sustain the park's maintenance beyond the life of the HLF funding. The table below shows the methods projects are considering:

Method	No of projects
Café/kiosk	30
Residential accommodation	1
Event permits	9
Friends group fundraising	3
Sales – plants, books etc.	2
Hire of community space, education centre, office space etc.	15
Business hire/corporate events	4
Event ticket sales	19
Parking	7
Shop/visitor centre	3
Children's parties	1
Pet sponsorship	1
Vending machines	1
Sponsorship	3
School events	1

Method	No of projects
Sport clubs	1
Recreation facilities (e.g. golf, bowling, donkey rides etc.)	9
Additional concessions	14

23% of projects also plan to facilitate the creation of a social enterprise. Examples include:

- Craft units

- micro brewery

- community bakery

- bike hire

- community fishery

- cafes

- The running of the lake adventure golf and Maid Marion boat

5.2 Social impact

5.2.1 Existing evidence base

Research shows the considerable social benefits of investing in parks and green space. There are considerable health, social and community benefits for people who use or work in parks:

- Health benefits:

    - Research around health has shown individuals with easy access to green space are three times more likely to participate in physical activity and 40% less likely to be obese (Defra 2011).
    - A Natural England (2009) study suggested the saving to the NHS on obesity, if everyone had access to green space would be around £2 billion.
    - It also suggested that by investing in green spaces it helped set people onto healthy life pathways. If 1% of people moved onto a

healthier pathway by making more use of green space it would save £1.44 billion per year.

- Contact with green space when young, particularly in urban areas and pre-school, helps increase the amount of play and correlates with visits to green spaces in adulthood (Ward 2008, Pretty 2009, Sallis 1995).

- Benefits also extend to older people with people likely to live longer with access to green space and places they can walk (Tanaka 1996) and be generally happier and needing less medication (Grahn 1989)

- Access to high quality green space is shown to improve stress levels and significantly reduce the experience of stress (Thrift 2005, Ulrich 1999). Bird (2004) suggests being more active and having more contact with the outdoors can help reduce stress and anxiety, current spend on mental illness by the NHS is £6.5 billion

- Benefits through volunteering:

  - Park volunteers are part of an England wide army that Greenlinks (2010) estimate contribute an economic value of their work of around £30million and a social return on investment of at least £120 million.

  - Once volunteers become active through volunteering in green space they then go onto wider community activity. A study by Ecorys (2012) showed 74% of volunteers became more involved in community activity after volunteering on green space.

  - Unlike many volunteering opportunities, parks tend to be open to all. It is estimated that 15% of volunteers in community managed green spaces have a disability (BTCV 2008).

- Wider community benefits

  - Keep Britain Tidy (2010) showed over 50% of the population visit a park once a week for recreation and to interact with communities.

  - Parks are viewed as a central part to family life allowing them to develop shared experiences and to reflect on experiences from their own youth.

- Cabe (2004, 2005, 2010) showed good parks and public spaces give a sense of community. They also helped show the importance of well managed space to communities.
- Where parks are well managed they create a better relationship with local councils and in general people take more pride in their local area. Surveys show that if space was well managed they were more likely to exercise and have improved mental wellbeing. Where space is clean, safe and attractive it will be appeal to a broad audience.

5.2.2   Evaluation findings

5.2.2.1 Community benefits

The results of the project survey and case study research shows that projects are having a significant impact on the wider community.

Increase in community pride	• *There is a definite buzz in the town about the pending improvements to the park.* • *The overall improvements to the Park have significantly enhanced the local community feel-good factor. There have also been many positive comments by park users along the lines of how lucky people feel to be living near the Park and what a special place Brockwell Park now is.* • *Great inspiration in the local community. A belief that their town is receiving much needed investment and increased pride in their community.* • *The main difference is the increased pride of the local community that they have a welcoming park of such quality, with regular events and activities which they can enjoy.*
Greater community involvement	• *More opportunities as individuals, families and community groups to input into the future of the park and to use its facilities.* • *There is a greater feeling of involvement from the wider community with more opportunities to get involved in a range of voluntary opportunities*

Increased awareness of leisure facilities	• The project has increased awareness of the importance of the park as a leisure facility and engendered more civic pride in the park.
Increased socialisation	• So far, there is very early evidence has shown that people have got to know more people in their area • It has made a huge difference. Before people were afraid to go due to the antisocial behaviour issues, intimidation and overgrown areas particularly the elderly and young families. Now people are happy to visit on their own, having lunch, reading, sun bathing, striking up a conversation with other visitors.
Increase in community cohesion	• Local people are coming to the park again! they are proud of this refurbished facility and it is helping bring other communities from slightly further afield into the park also, helping with social cohesion • There is anecdotal evidence that the capital works has generated interest among the park users and provided opportunities for people to talk to each other, sharing ideas and strengthening community ties. • Berwick Youth Project will be working with the Alzheimer's Society on a project to record memories as well as a film project to record the entire works on site.

"This project has boosted the morale and created a sense of ownership within the wider community and has undoubtedly encouraged more people to use and the park. Many different groups in areas other than Bearwood (e.g. Harborne, Birmingham, Quinton, Smethwick) have become a part of this project now and for the long term. The project will offer a venue for community groups and a facility for people to use which has been absent from the park for a number of years. There is a lot of excitement about the project and it is hoped that the benefits of this project will spread into the wider area e.g. Bearwood High Street"

"We started up an annual cream tea for over 60s and ensured that local care homes were notified and invited. We have had pupils from local schools serving teas and talking to the residents about their memories of the park. Since making those connections, we now invite the residents to other events to help integrate them with the wider community. For example, we allocate a space at a safe distance for them to watch our fireworks for free and allocate designated stewards to assist them, bring them hot drinks etc. They enjoy seeing the children enjoying the event"

5.2.2.2 Skills and confidence

The programme is also having a significant impact on volunteers. The table below shows the extent to which volunteers have benefited from engaging in projects. More than half of projects are seeing at least 50% of their volunteers improving their practical skills and confidence levels.

	A significant number (more than 75%)	A good number (50%-75%)	A fair number (25% - 50%)	A small number (less than 25%)	None	Don't know
Volunteers are improving their practical skills	25.0%	30.4%	12.5%	5.4%	-	26.8%
Volunteers are improving their team working skills	23.2%	26.8%	10.7%	7.1%	-	32.1%
Volunteers are improving their communication skills	17.9%	26.8%	14.3%	7.1%	-	33.9%
Volunteers are improving their confidence levels	21.4%	30.4%	8.9%	3.6%	-	35.7%

"If you are in a position to volunteer, it's such a valuable thing to do, to gain skills, meet people and have experiences you'd never otherwise get. I'd recommend it to anyone. - I re-gained confidence. I feel happier working with other people and interacting with them. I have a better appreciation for my local area. - I gained confidence, improved my knowledge of H&S, learnt how to work as part of a team, learnt how to communicate with a variety of people and enthused people about parks. - The best things about volunteering were: being involved with a very interesting, meaningful and local project; meeting local people, who you wouldn't normally get an opportunity to meet; learning more about the park; feeling part of a team; developing existing skills; having the responsibility of representing the Council; developing confidence – I didn't go out much before, volunteering has got me out of my shell and got me active again"

5.2.2.3   Supporting vulnerable/disabled people

Many projects are engaging disabled people through the volunteering programmes.

> *"We had a young lady turn up to volunteer, however she suffered from Asperger's syndrome, at first she would work alone and found it difficult to interact with other volunteers or staff. Eventually over a period of a few months she became more confident and gained the trust and confidence to interact with everyone. She now looks after the photo of the month competition, and contributes to the general discussions"*

> *"Andy is an adult with learning difficulties and has been coming to the park for over 12 months now. He has taken ownership of a number of tasks and has increased his hours as he has enjoyed it so much. It has improved his confidence and ability."*

> *"The current Chairman of the Friends of Devonport Park joined us in November 2005 and volunteered to assist the new Friends group. Mike has a limiting long term disability and was relatively shy and lacked confidence. Since then he has trained to NVQ Level 2 in Horticulture, trained himself in web design and newsletter design, been Chairman of the Friends for over 2 years, regularly does in excess of 2 days' work each week for the Friends and has received a Queen's Volunteer Award for Voluntary Service"*

5.2.2.4   Improved health and wellbeing

One area of limited evidence is the impact on health and wellbeing as a result of Parks for People projects. However, projects are implementing projects relating to improved health and wellbeing. For example in Middlesbrough the park has recently installed a Trim Trail, consisting of outdoor gym equipment and hosts the weekly Park Run. Projects would be advised to engage closely with their local authority's

health and wellbeing strategy, in particular in light of the changes to health commissioning, which has seen responsibility for public health taken into local authority control.

> *"The Youth work which has taken place over the summer months has created sports tournaments for Young people and the creation of a dedicated sports group called the Priory Allstars, some of whom will be training as tennis coaches over the coming months and delivering tennis coaching skills through our weekly tennis sessions. We have a trained Gym instructor who is now delivering x2 weekly fitness sessions on the park this has been a great success, and we will be training others to level 3 gym instructor".*

5.3 Environmental impact

5.3.1 Existing evidence base

There is considerable evidence demonstrating the link between parks and green space and biodiversity, pollution and air quality, flooding and sustainable transport.

Biodiversity	Within urban locations the most valuable habitats are invariably found within the diverse range of urban green space (World Forestry Congress 1997) Urban green space frequently includes remnants of old wildlife habitats and these are increasingly being acknowledged as a key resource for wildlife and some threatened species which no longer can depend upon farmland for respite (The Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management 2001)
Pollution	Vegetation – whether in public spaces or private gardens – can help to redress the imbalance of diversity. It brings many important environmental benefits to urban areas, including the cooling of air and the absorption of atmospheric pollutants (Littlefair, P. J., Santamouris, M., Alvarez, S.,Dupagne, A., Hall, D., Teller, J., Coronel, J. F. and Papanikolaou, N.2000)
Sustainable transport	Parks and green spaces already play a significant role in supporting more sustainable patterns of transport. Of the 2.5 billion annual visits, almost 10% are in order to take a short cut to another destination, this rises to 15% when visitors who either walk

	or cycle to the park are examined in isolation. Over 70% of all journeys to parks are made either on foot (68%) or by bicycle (4%). (Blue Sky Green Space)
Reduce flooding	Urban green spaces also provide a way to reduce the risk of flash flooding due to the permeable nature of the surface. They are able to drain water away and store it rather than it running into drains and sewers. The rate of run off for surfaces with trees and grass is estimated to be 10-20%, compared to 60-70% for hard landscaped urban areas(1) Additionally, a 10% increase in green cover could reduce the volume of surface runoff in extreme rainfall events by 14%(2). (Green Spaces, Better Places: Final report of The Urban Green Space Task Force 2002)
Air quality	The canopies of trees act as a physical filter for pollution. The fine particles known as PM10s are trapped on the surface of the leaves. When carried into the lungs, PM10s make chronic diseases such as asthma and bronchitis worse. Trees have been shown to remove substantial quantities of PM10s on an average summer's day. Tree belts have been shown to be very effective at trapping toxic particles such as lead (Trees in the Urban Landscape : Principles and Practice 1995)
	Gases such as carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and sulphur dioxide (SO_2) are known to cause respiratory problems and can also increase sensitivity to allergens.Trees absorb these gases through their leaves. It has been estimated that woodland can reduce concentrations of SO_2 and NO_2 in the air by 4-5% (Broadmeadow, M,S,J. & Freer-Smith, P,H. 1996)
Air cooling	Moisture from woodlands and trees is emitted into the air, cooling it and helping to make towns and cities more comfortable places in which to live and work. Daytime temperatures have been found to be about 2-3oC lower in a large urban park than the surrounding streets (Green Spaces, Better Places: Final report of The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce 2002)

5.3.2 Evaluation findings

5.3.2.1 Increase in biodiversity

As a result of activities to conserve parks' natural heritage, many projects have seen an increase in biodiversity as a result. Projects are developing specific biodiversity plans and working with local Wildlife Groups to ensure that habitats are protected and enhanced. Some are carrying out regular surveys to build up a better picture of what species are present in the parks, and what impacts are being made as a result of the restoration works. And other projects are creating wildflower meadows and installing habitat boxes etc.

> *"We have changed the grass cutting regimes for the majority of parks and green spaces, improving these areas by sowing wildflowers. Creating a range of habitats where possible to increase biodiversity. Installing habitat boxes and planting bee friendly plants. Carrying out surveys on all parks and green spaces to get a better picture of the wildlife and plant life on our sites"*

5.3.2.2 Increase in environmental sustainability

Projects are also implementing a range of methods to reduce their carbon footprint. Examples include:

- Organic gardening methods

- Recycling bins for the public

- Energy efficient light units

- Hydro-power

- Rainwater harvesting

- Grey water systems

- Biomass boilers

- Composting

"Before the project it was probably fair to say that people undertaking regular management/maintenance works were completely unaware of the history and its significance. This is now not the case and just about everyone involved understands and appreciates the site's unique features"

5.3.2.3   Changing approaches to heritage management

As a result of engaging in the Parks for People programme, many Local Authorities (and other park owners) are changing the way they manage their heritage assets. The projects have:

- Increased skills relating to heritage management:

- Raised the profile of heritage assets within towns and cities.

- Increased awareness of the benefits to investing in heritage

- Councils are now taking a more proactive and planned approach

- Increased council's confidence in tacking a heritage project

- Resulted in additional heritage schemes being funded

"The project has opened our organisations eyes to the town's heritage and has increased interest towards identifying and preserving heritage especially in terms of parks"

For example, the Burslem Park project has also helped Stoke council develop a strategic approach to wider heritage management. The council has a considerable challenge in terms of the heritage needs and pressures on revenue budgets, and the project has encouraged wider thinking about their approach to heritage management. As a result of the project the council have committed to improve their approach to heritage management, through a Heritage Commission project. This has involved extensive consultation with local people and stakeholders on their views of local heritage and their priorities. A strategic plan is now being developed as a result of the work, which will be taken to cabinet in summer 2013, and if approved, a heritage summit will be held in Autumn 2013.

74% of projects have also contributed to wider heritage activities in their area. These include:

- Forming part of existing or new Heritage Trails in the area

- Forming links with other heritage centres such as local museums

- Greater liaison with heritage groups and societies

- Sharing information with archivists and researchers

- Links to other heritage events and activities

- Archaeological investigations

"The park is increasingly becoming the hub for a range of activities that encompass the wider area. These activities include both heritage, community and commercial projects"

"Last year an exhibition on Dock Park was displayed in the local Dumfries Museum. Members of Friends of Dock Park helped to pull this together. As a spin off from this, three browse books have been written and collected by two historical researchers. These books are based on 3 aspects of Dock Park and come under the main title 'Down the Dock'. The content for these books is being developed by the Print and Graphics Team at Dumfries and Galloway Council for future use by Dumfries Museum. They will hopefully be available in time to use as promotion for Dock Park itself"

5.3.2.4 Improvements to the way the organisation manages green space

Projects are also resulting in changes to the way Local Authorities manage their green space. These include:

- Development of new partnerships with community groups

- Increasing the profile of parks and green space as a result of the success of the project

- Use of volunteers

- Running a park as a business and reducing reliance on public monies

- Creation of management and maintenance plans for all parks

- Increased aspirations for other parks

- Consideration of alternative ownership models, e.g. Community Interest Companies or Trusts.

"This project is our first and only HLF P4P Park and the exacting stipulations of the HLF project have provided a bench mark for which our other parks hope to aspire to. The project has raised awareness corporately of the complexities of parks restoration and management and has raised parks a rung higher up the corporate agenda"

"It's changed because we've tried to think about involving the community especially the formation of the Telford green space partnership and the demands from local communities to improve their open spaces"

6   Conclusions and recommendations

Overall the Parks for People programme is making good progress towards achieving its outcomes, and there is some evidence of wider impact being collected by projects.

6.1   Outcome 1: Increasing the range of audiences

Our research shows that during the life of a Parks for People restoration project visitor numbers will increase significantly. If the data available is extrapolated to all parks funded under this programme the annual increase could be almost 11m visitors. This would equate to an uplifted total of around 68m annual person visits across the 134 projects. Whilst acknowledging that not all green spaces perform the role of a tourist attraction this level of use must have an impact on the local economy.

In comparison, earlier work (English Heritage, Heritage Counts 2004) estimated that "over 10 million visits are made to historic parks". Whilst not all of the 134 parks are on the Register of Historic Parks held by English Heritage the current data shows that calculations of the impact of heritage tourism using this data will have under estimated the value to the economy of historic parks and landscapes.

This increase in visitor numbers is a great story in itself but the programme outcome is actually about the range of audiences rather than just potentially more of the same. The research shows that, where projects make a targeted effort to diversify the range of audiences, there are some demonstrable changes. Whilst acknowledging the divergence between the actual reported data and the views of project staff, there is evidence to show that more BAME visitors, more disabled visitors and more young people are making use of public parks.

The above two measures also need to be aligned to visitor satisfaction. As well as more people visiting and a more diverse audience, whether people are happy with the park and their experience is vitally important. We know form the research that satisfaction is lowest in the more deprived areas of the UK and that, whilst consequently there is here the greatest room for improvement, massive increases have been realised. This chimes with the findings of other research (CABE Urban Green Nation 2010) which showed that people living in the more deprived

communities were also experiencing green space deprivation in terms of physical quantity of provision.

Our programme level evaluation has shown that 50% of the Parks for People funding has gone into the top 20% most deprived local authority areas in the UK. There is also evidence that the combination of increased visitor numbers, greater diversity of use and increased satisfaction is having positive social and economic effects. It is encouraging to discover that many projects are looking wider than just gathering the basic output data and are trying to understand the wider impacts that the restoration projects have at a variety of levels.

6.2   Outcome 2: Conserving and improving the heritage value

The restoration of historic parks, gardens and landscapes is more difficult to reduce down to quantitative measures of success. For many success of a restoration would include more qualitative and subjective measures. That said the programme monitoring includes some quantifiable measures of success and good progress is being made against these.

In England, English Heritage operate the register of Historic Parks and Gardens and the Heritage At Risk register and both lists will be affected in a positive way by the Parks for People funding. The register of Historic Parks and Gardens was reviewed in 2013 with 30 parks being upgraded, of these 7 parks have received funding under Parks for People (24 have received funding across all HLF / Big Lottery parks programmes). For 'at risk' items 13 buildings are targeted for restoration.

For natural heritage significant numbers of projects are aiming to improve biodiversity through targeted habitat improvements or better management, raised awareness, staff and volunteer training and more regular wildlife recording work.

Not only will the built and natural heritage be restored, improved and better managed it will also be better explained to visitors through a range of interpretive methods and activities. Whilst there is no output measure about change in awareness of heritage value, surveys carried out as part of this research show that both staff and visitors alike agree that people have a greater understanding and appreciation of heritage as a result of the investment.

The change in SF4 guidance so that all projects must complete a Conservation Plan, and that this should be an early task in the development stage, will further enhance the conservation impacts of the grant programme.

6.3   Outcome 3: Increasing the range of volunteers

Public parks present the one of the most accessible forms of heritage attraction and this combined with the knowledge that so much Parks for People funding is going into the more deprived areas of the UK must mean that the parks restoration projects present the opportunity to engage a different range of volunteer to other heritage venues such as museum. Given also the high footfall of so many parks moving people from visitors to volunteers is an opportunity not to be missed.

The active engagement of people beyond just being a park user or an event participant is a challenge for many local authorities and the Parks for People programme presents an opportunity for resources and a planned approach to change this.

The additional challenge for those involved in managing the projects is to develop a range of volunteer opportunities for a wide range of different people to take part in, rather than rely on the involvement of an existing friends or user group. Whilst friends and user groups play an extremely important part in our public parks with literally hundreds of groups contributing thousands of hours of activity across the UK, as with audiences the outcome is about the range of volunteers.

It is hoped that around 10,000 people will volunteer and, whilst the majority will be through a friends group, most projects are claiming that they will engage a greater diversity of volunteers.

Whilst our research has shown is that even using the very basic (unskilled) day rate of £50 per volunteer day the increase in volunteering through PFP investment is in excess of £0.5m.

Linked to earlier conclusions around deprivation and outputs our research has shown that volunteering levels in the more deprived areas are high even before the investment takes place. Also aggregating the project targets and using the £50 per

day multiplier gives a staggering potential contribution of over £3.3m in the top 20% most deprived local authority areas.

Our research has shown that the majority of projects are now looking to volunteers to support maintenance; this is becoming increasingly important as Local Authority budgets are reduced.

Volunteering and community engagement are likely to become even higher on a Local Authority parks service agenda in the near future as some try to replace current council service delivery with more community led activity. Within such an approach there is very likely to be a disconnect between the community's capacity and willingness to take on such a role and the council's aspirations for what the community can deliver. What the research has shown is that, with appropriate levels of resource, training, equipment and support, then very significant volunteer contributions can be realised.

Also taking volunteering to a higher level of engagement it will be interesting to see if, in the future, more applications are made by trusts, third sector and community based organisations to the Parks for People programme.

6.4   Outcome 4: Improving skills and knowledge through training

With rapidly decreasing training budgets in most local authorities the Parks for People funding presents a fantastic opportunity to build the capacity of both staff and volunteers. Almost half of the projects have included for horticulture training and around 40% are looking to build capacity in key areas such as fundraising, volunteer management, leading guided walks etc. This should create a significant legacy that can hopefully continue a level of delivery beyond the life of the HLF restoration projects.

There is again a very significant focus on staff and volunteer training in those projects in the more deprived areas. Two of the case studies (Cyfarthfa Park and Stewart Park) show just what can be achieved even in some of the more deprived areas of the UK by creative approaches, dedicated skilled resources and HLF funding to provide the catalyst.

Some projects have also looked at how the capital works themselves can provide training opportunities and how the increased management and maintenance aspects can be used to create apprenticeships.

6.5   Outcome 5: Improved management and maintenance

The attainment of the Green Flag Award is the only absolute measure in the monitoring and evaluation framework and it is also a contractual obligation for all grantees. An overriding conclusion however is that currently many projects appear not to be carrying out Green Flag Award assessment to establish their baseline figure to enable them to develop a clear action plan to achieve the award.

For many applicant organisations and for the majority of projects the requirement to produce a management plan is the first time they have had to undertake such an exercise including having to fundamentally review all operations, resources, budgets, skills, working practices etc as well as think through how they will gear up to ensure that the Parks for People investment is looked after beyond the life of the project.

A key area for Parks for People in the future is whether applicants (especially local authorities) will be able to sustain the level of revenue funding required not only to maintain the physical landscape and built features but also to sustain the activities, interpretation, volunteer engagement etc. Our research shows that one third of projects expect the level of revenue funding to stay the same but 10% are already predicting a decrease. As many applicants use the increased level of management and maintenance resource as match funding this clearly needs very close monitoring in the future.

Visitor satisfaction has been mentioned earlier but, where projects have submitted regular returns, satisfaction is increasing at an average of over 20% leading to overall average satisfaction rates around 83%.

Overall this report shows that the Parks for People investment is making a positive contribution across all outcomes. It is changing not only the country's heritage assets and ensuring they are in better condition, better managed and interpreted for current and future generations but it is also fundamentally changing people's lives through events, activities, volunteering and employment opportunities.

The challenge ahead lies on two levels, firstly getting more projects to supply more information both about outputs and also wider impacts so that future evaluations can be more robust, colourful and influential. Secondly how to ensure that projects do not start to lose match funding previously committed not only during the life of the project but also following completion. Historic parks are vital to the well-being and vibrancy of urban communities. They simply cannot be allowed to go backwards.

6.6 Recommendations

The key recommendations arising as a result of this report are:

- Embed evaluation in the day to day monitoring processes within HLF
- Encourage projects to consider the real costs of evaluation work at the pre-application stage, and ensure that projects with moderate to large evaluation budgets are effectively using this resource to consider the impact of the investment
- Use projects with larger evaluation budgets to showcase the impact of the programme; focused research with a smaller number of projects over their lifetime may result in more intelligence about the wider impact of the programme
- Consider the reasons for the regional distribution of grants, in particular areas such as the South East which are under-represented. Consider what could be done to support/encourage greater take up of applications in under-represented areas
- Provide greater support to projects in how to engage under-represented groups
- Collect Conservation Management Plans and collate in a central resource/archive
- Encourage projects to undertake baseline Green Flag award assessment and build the results into the management and maintenance plans
- Encourage projects to be more ambitious with achieving the Green Flag award – scores higher than the pass mark to be encouraged
- Encourage projects to consider the wider impact of their investment, over and above the five programme outcomes. In particular, encourage greater research into the impact of investment in parks on environmental sustainability and health and wellbeing
- Support projects in developing clear business or income generation plans to support future sustainability

Appendix 1: Case studies

Shown below are short summaries of the 8 case study projects researched as part of this evaluation. Detailed reports are available on request.

Stewart Park, Middlesbrough

Background:

The largest public park in Middlesbrough, on a site which formally housed the Marton Hall Estate, and birthplace of Captain Cook.

Summary:

The project was awarded £4.6m of Parks for People funding in 2008. The capital works started in 2010 and completed in May 2012. Revenue activities continued throughout 2013, with these completing later in 2013.

Impact:

The vastly improved facilities within the park have resulted in a large increase in visitor numbers. From a baseline of 240,000 annual person visits to over 700,000 visits in 2012/13, an increase of 191%.

As well as the improved facilities, the project has developed range of events and activities. These see large turnouts, with the opening event in May 2012 being host to 15,000 people and the annual horticultural show seeing 10,000-12,000 visitors each year. Due to the large demand for events, all are ticketed and booked in advance. Some events are free, but the council has started to charge for some events as a way of generating revenue.

As well as targeting young people, the park has a strong focus on engaging disabled visitors. There is a park mobility scheme, the children's play area has a wheelchair swing, and the toilets and café were designed for disabled access. As a result they have seen a large increase in disabled visitors; the results of the visitor surveys shows that 15% of visitors are disabled, which is representative of the wider area.

The project has involved extensive restoration work to the estate buildings, which were previously used as the council works depot. These have been transformed into a visitor centre, café and educational facilities, and are now the heart of the park. As part of the restoration work research was carried out into appropriate methods of conservation; original tuck pointing and lime rendering methods were used.

The new visitor centre has also been designed with the historical buildings in mind; although modern the centre reflects the design of the older buildings.

As a result of the project a new Friends of Stewart Park group has been established. This consists of a core group of 30-35 people, plus a further 90-100 people on the mailing list. Unlike some Friends groups, the volunteers are very active in the park, carrying out gardening work, supporting the events and fundraising for new projects. The Memories of Stewart Park book led by the Friends group has sold in excess of 1,000 copies and was top of Middlesbrough's Waterstones Best Seller list for a week!

The vocational training centre created as part of the project is one of the key successes of the park's restoration. The centre provides training in heritage skills and horticulture, resulting in accredited qualifications. The centre is managed by Askham Bryant College, one of the key partners involved in Stewart Park.

Since the centre opened two years ago 160 students have achieved a qualification. There are 30 trainees on site at any one time, and the centre is now operating at full capacity. Due to high levels of demand the college are now discussing with the council the potential to expand their facilities into other buildings in the park.

As a result of the training 2 people have set up their own businesses as gardeners. 4 others are contracted by the council to maintain facilities and many others have stayed working in the park in a voluntary capacity. One young man with autism achieved an NVQ level 2 and has stayed as a volunteer working to look after the animals. He is in the park nearly every day and is providing invaluable support to the park team.

Since completion of the capital works the park has been reinstated with the Green Flag Award and has retained the award for two years. The Park Manager has also trained to become a Green Flag judge which has helped ensure the park meets the criteria.

Four new posts were created as a result of the HLF funding; these new posts have made a significant difference to the quality of the park's management and maintenance, however the council is now concerned about how the staff will be retained following the end of the HLF funding in 2013.

The council now has a high commitment to maintenance – any issues are sorted quickly as they recognise that the profile of the park means that they can't afford for things to go wrong. The quality of the park's maintenance has improved as a result of the restoration project. Staff take a greater level of pride in the park, and the dedicated Park Manager post has led to a focus on quality. The park has only received two complaints since it re-opened in 2012.

The HLF funded project has been a catalyst for additional projects and partnerships with external organisations. This has resulted in an additional £2.3 of investment in the park, alongside considerable in kind support.

The park has a strong approach to financial and environmental sustainability. The team had a target of generating £19k of income in 2012, they achieved £26k. This year they have a target of £25k and have already achieved £12k.

The project is also resulting in wider community benefits. It is the venue for Park Run, at which approximately 100 people participate each week, and a new Trim Trail has been installed as part of the council's health living strategy. As well as these health benefits, the park is recognized as providing a valuable free resource for families.

"It's even more family friendly, lots more for children to do, lovely walks and plenty of seating for the elderly, great activities centre and cafe, something for everyone"

Stevenage Town Centre Gardens

Background:

Stevenage Town Centre Gardens is a 3.85ha site of parkland bordered by community buildings and tower blocks in the centre of Stevenage, Britain's first post-war new town designed in 1949.

Summary:

The project was approved funding at stage 2 in 2007, the capital works started in 2010 and completed in 2012. The project received £2.7m of HLF funding.

Impact:

Prior to the funding there were no formal activities or events held in the park or any of the council's parks. The project now runs a full programme of events, either run by the council or in partnership with other organisations.

Most formal activities have worked well and many have gone on to be repeated or become annual events. An estimated 3,500 will attend events in the Town Centre Gardens during 2013. The biggest attractions this year have been the Dog Watch event, Extreme Adventure and the Family Fun Day, which each attracted around 500 people.

The informal use of the park has increased significantly since the restoration works completed. Observations from staff and volunteers have seen an increase in workers using the park to have their lunch, an increase in the use of the children's play area by an estimated 75% and the sensory gardens are well used by young people

after school or college who come to sit on grass in groups with their homework. There is generally more traffic through the park's redirected pathways and refurbished bridge

The project has also made efforts to engage young people, one of the groups originally under-represented in the park. An 'extreme activity event' was successful in attracting 500 8-14 year olds.

The HLF funding has enabled the council to refurbish or repair all of the heritage features within the park. The team identified that there are few 'formal' heritage features and the money was primarily used to create openness and space to encourage increased access.

The project also incorporated some innovative approaches in the capital programme. The landscape architect engaged with the original architects who were able to provide information on the historic principles which underpinned the original design. This resulted in an accurate restoration of the park's features.

Increasing visitor understanding of the park's heritage is done through formal talks with a range of local organisations including; schools, college, Age Concern and through presentations to groups and other local authority departments. The park also has a heritage information board situated at the entrance to the sensory gardens. One of the most effective methods has been found to be through informal conversations with park users or between volunteers and users.

As a result of the capital works, the quality of experience for users has increased by providing a quality, safe, open, welcoming area.

Increasing volunteers started with the recruitment of the park officer in May 2010 and so far the project has successfully increased its volunteer base from 4 to 14 active volunteers (those who contribute weekly). In addition to active volunteers the park officer has a database of approximately 40 volunteers that have expressed an

interest in volunteering and have asked to be kept inform of opportunities and developments. In 2012/13 volunteers contributed 473 hours of volunteering.

Volunteering enables the park to provide a wider range of events and activities, to offer specialist events using the expertise of particular volunteers, and helps raise the profile of the park as volunteers become advocates.

Staff and volunteers have benefited from a range of training opportunities, including first aid, health and safety, risk assessment and project management. Volunteers have also received training in event management and promotion. Informal learning opportunities are made available through workshops and volunteer experience in events and activities in relation to horticulture and project management. In 2012/13 3 members of staff and 6 volunteers have received training.

The park has maintained the Green Flag Award for three years and recently been awarded one of the Stevenage Community Awards under the 'So Green' category.

Despite the austerity measures in place within the council the park's maintenance has improved in terms of both frequency and quality of the work undertaken. This has been possible through the additional capacity provided by the volunteers – for example litter picking is happening on a more regular basis.

The project has had a significant impact on the wider community; more people are now visiting this area of town and the improvements to the park have contributed to an increase in civic pride and ownership. The park is also providing a valuable green space resource to residents who don't have gardens.

The project has also had an impact on the way the council approach the management of heritage assets and maintenance of green space. The development of the management and maintenance plan and the process for quality control is now being replicated across all the parks in the borough. For the first time a park's heritage now forms part of the formal management plan which the council intends to replicate for all parks in the borough.

"I have become much more aware of the whole park environment, rather than it being a place to walk through to go to the shops. I have enjoyed every aspect of being a volunteer, from the work on the grounds to the work with the various play and entertainment events. I know the park as well as my own garden now, or even better. I have learnt about the trees and the wild flowers there, spotted various insects and taken the trouble to look them up so that I know what wild plants they have come to feed on. I talk to others about the park and have made new friends amongst the volunteers. In other words, it has made a big difference"

Burslem Park, Stoke on Trent

Background:

Burslem Park is a public park owned and managed by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and covers approximately 22 acres. It was designed by Thomas Mawson on colliery waste land, 400m east of Burslem town centre in Stoke-on-Trent. The park opened in 1894 and is considered to be one of the best and earliest examples of Mawson's work in public parks in the country.

Summary:

In 2010 the Council was successful in being granted £2,052,000 from HLF, towards a total project value of around £3million, for the comprehensive restoration of the park. The capital works started on site in May 2011 and completed in March 2012. The project runs for five years in total and is due to end in March 2015.

Impact:

Led by the Urban Park Ranger (UPR), the project has implemented a range of

activities and events to attract more and diverse visitors to the park. Alongside the events programme, the UPR has also worked with other local organisations, including Groundwork North Staffordshire, arts charities and schools.

As a result, the number of visitors to the park has increased from a baseline of 198,500 annual person visits in 2010 to 262,000 in 2013, an increase of 32% and exceeding the target of 238,000. Through activities designed to attract younger people to the park, the project has also succeeded in increasing the proportion of under 16's using the park from 1% in 2010 to 30% in 2012/13.

The project has resulted in the restoration of two historical buildings and 11 historical features. Approximately 50% of the park's infrastructure has been improved and 3 lost features have been restored all of which was informed by a detailed Conservation Management Plan. 94% of the visitors surveyed agreed that the park is now more attractive. Whereas previously it looked 'neglected', now it is attractive, clean and tidy.

78% of visitors surveyed agreed that as a result of the project people are more aware of the park's history. In particular visitors have commented on the improvements to the bandstand and pavilion buildings as being particular successes.

A total of 55 volunteers (against an original base line of 19) have been involved in the restoration project in various capacities, some becoming involved in multiple roles. For the regular gardeners the opportunity to volunteer in the park has resulted in many personal benefits, as well as the sense of pride of being involved in the restoration project. Volunteers have learnt new skills, increased confidence, have a renewed sense of purpose, are using existing skills to benefit the community, making new friends and benefited from team working and are being encouraged to volunteer elsewhere. Overall the volunteering programme appears to be successful in empowering local people, with a particular focus on supporting people with learning or physical disabilities. All the volunteers have found it to be a rewarding experience, and are keen to continue their work in the park.

As a result of the project 25 members of staff have received training, exceeding the target of 20. Alongside this volunteers also benefited from training opportunities, with 38 volunteers benefiting, vastly exceeding the target of 7. The project has also provided 29 work experience placements.

Overall visitor satisfaction has increased from 61% to 87% (exceeding the target of 73%). In 2013 visitors rated the maintenance of the park as 8.2 out of 10 (an increase from 6.7 in 2009).

The vast majority of visitors and stakeholders we have spoken to agree that the park is much better maintained than before the investment. The park has a dedicated staff team and the council has made a commitment to the long term management of the park, with the HLF funding helping to ring-fence and secure future resources.

As a result of the improved appearance of the park, visitors now feel safer, with 65% of visitors agreeing that the park is now safer as a result of the project. From being a 'no go' area 10 years ago, the improvements have opened up the park to people who would never have previously visited.

The Burslem Park project was part of a wider economic development strategy for Burslem, led by the Burslem Regeneration Company, focusing on the industrial heritage of the area. Alongside an HLF funded Townscape Heritage Scheme in the town centre, projects have resulted in Burslem becoming more attractive to investors. As a result empty properties in the town have reduced from 40% to 20%, two key buildings are having business plans produced and the profile of the area has risen. 10 derelict buildings have been brought back into use, 13.5 jobs have been created and 16 safeguarded. It had created 13.5 jobs and safeguarded 16. It had created 3 new businesses and attracted 2 to the area.

The evaluation also showed the investments made as part of the wider economic development strategy had resulted in an increase in businesses in the town from 135 in 2006 to 183 in 2012. This is against a backdrop of significant economic challenges.

The project has also helped Stoke council develop a strategic approach to wider heritage management. As a result of the project the council have committed to improve their approach to heritage management, through a Heritage Commission project. This has involved extensive consultation with local people and stakeholders on their views of local heritage and their priorities. A strategic plan is now being developed as a result of the work, which will be taken to cabinet in summer 2013, and if approved, a heritage summit will be held in Autumn 2013.

The project is also resulting in benefits to the people using the park. Visitors are noticing that as a result of the improvements, people are now socialising more. 64% of visitors agreed that people talk to each more as a result of the project, with the events and activities being a particular draw.

"The planting is stunningly beautiful – normally only seen at National Trust gardens, where you have to pay!"

Cyfarthfa Park, Merthyr Tydfil

Background:

Cyfarthfa Park and its castle are located in the heart of Merthyr Tydfil, South-East Wales. The castle and its grounds were commissioned in 1824 and overlooked the Cyfarthfa Ironworks, now a symbol of Merthyr Tydfil's international importance as the birthplace of the industrial revolution.

Summary:

The park received stage 2 approval from HLF in 2011 for £1.9m of capital and revenue funding, contributing to a £2.7m project. The capital works programme started in January 2013, with the first phase now complete. The project will complete in 2016.

Impact:

The Park Warden, one of the three HLF funded posts was appointed in 2012 and has since implemented a range of activities. The project has used a number of methods to promote the activities taking part in the park, including setting up a facebook page and other social networking methods, producing a joint activities brochure with the range of partners involved in the park, articles in the council's newsletter which is distributed to all households and various websites used to promote Merthyr Tydfil and the surrounding area as a tourism destination.

As a result of the programme of activities and promotional work, the park has seen over 100 bookings for the range of events over summer 2013, and a family open day saw 4,000 people attending.
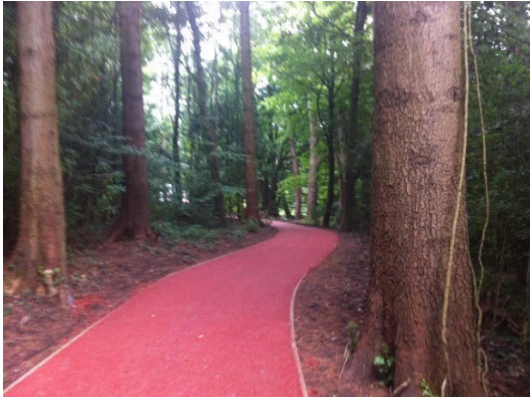
The first phase of the capital programme was to improve the pathways around the woodland walk, and to dig out the ponds. Previously, the park suffered from considerable drainage problems which caused access and ongoing maintenance problems, however the pathways have now been replaced with a durable material which won't need replacing for 20 years. The project also chose a striking red colour to resurface the pathways. This was chosen to reflect the historically important red ash material sourced from the local Ironworks originally used on the paths, but has had the unintended benefit of creating a visually appealing feature which has increased visitors' awareness of the woodland walks. The new paths have also improved access for disabled visitors; wheelchair users now have complete access to the walks.

The project has a strong emphasis on increasing biodiversity and natural heritage, and involving visitors in understanding and appreciating the heritage value of the park; both natural and physical. The capital works have also been guided by a strong focus on increasing biodiversity. For example, the ponds have recently been dug out, however the Park Warden has asked the contractors to reduce the gradient of the slopes, to enable amphibians to use the pond and surrounding terrestrial habitat.

The project runs weekly volunteering activities; every Tuesday volunteers work with the Park Warden on maintenance activities around the park and working in the greenhouses and community garden. The project has been extremely successful in engaging a large number of volunteers in a short space of time; to date they have 95 volunteers enrolled and 60% engage regularly. They have been successful in engaging a range of people into volunteering; retired people, people with disabilities and young unemployed people. They are now working at full capacity as demand for volunteering opportunities has been so high.

A strong element of the Cyfarthfa Park project is its commitment to training; both for staff, volunteers and people enrolled on accredited courses. The park is an accredited training centre for landbased studies and horticultural training, providing BTEC and OCN qualifications for 14-18 year olds at risk of exclusion, park staff and

volunteers. Formal training takes place every Thursday, led by the Heritage and Volunteer coordinator employed as part of the HLF funded project.

To date, 33 staff and 32 volunteers have benefited from accredited training or formal learning programmes

The council carried out a mock Green Flag assessment and have a baseline score of 60. They are intending to address the actions from the report and apply for Green Flag once the bulk of the capital works are complete. They also have plans to seek additional funding to train or employ specific expertise around horticulture to maintain the park following completion of the capital works.

The project has recruited three new members of staff; the project manager, Park Warden and Heritage and Volunteer Coordinator.

The project is a high priority for the council; the park and Castle is strategically important and is the main economic driver in terms of tourism for the town.

The council is keen to ensure that the Cyfarthfa Park project has a wider impact, and is embedded within the wider strategic development of Merthyr Tydfil. To that end, they have commissioned external support to develop a robust evaluation framework which addresses the HLF evaluation requirements, as well as considering wider economic, social and environmental impact.

Although the project is in the early stages of delivery, it is already having an impact in terms of increasing employability. So far, 5 volunteers have found employment as a result of engaging in the project.

The project has also resulted in benefits to the way the council works. As a result of the project they now have a steering group and communications sub group which ensures that all the major stakeholders work together. As a group they have developed a collective approach to branding the park; the 'Cyfarthfa Experience', and

a coordinated programme of activities. This has helped strengthen the identity of the park.

"It gets me out of the house and I've made new friends. I wish I could come every day"

Dalmuir Park, West Dunbartonshire

Background:

Dalmuir Park is a public park located in the Clydebank area of Glasgow. The park extends over approximately 7 hectares and was originally a designed landscape surrounding the privately owned Dalmuir House. The site was purchased as a public park in 1906 and the Opening Ceremony was held in September of that year.

Summary:

A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Parks for People programme was successful in securing £860,000, which was matched by cash and in kind contributions from the council and volunteers to total £1.7m of investment. The funding was secured in summer 2011, with the project due to complete in January 2015.

Impact:

The project involved the recruitment of a Community Engagement Ranger who would work with individuals and groups to develop a range of events and activities in the park.

Since the recruitment of the Community Engagement Ranger in spring 2012, a range of activities have taken place.

Despite the fact the capital works were underway during the last batch of visitor observation surveys, the number of annual person visits has increased from 51,000 to 78,600.

As well as restoring the physical environment, the project has involved a focus on cultural/social heritage, natural heritage and activities to raise awareness of the park's history. The Community Engagement Ranger has implemented a Memories of Dalmuir Park project. Through speaking to residents (including a local writer) a memory board depicting the park through the decades has been created.

Volunteers have also been involved in the construction of bird and duck boxes for the pond. The Nature Activity Group is also encouraging people to appreciate the park's range of wildlife. The construction of duck and bird boxes, coupled with clearing the pond should encourage greater biodiversity. The council will be commissioning ecological surveys over the next 12 months to test whether the improved habitats have led to a greater range of species. However, users have reported sightings of a kingfisher in the burn!

The Nature Activity Club is also encouraging more people to notice and learn about the wildlife in the park. School children have carried out nature surveys in the park and are developing a greater understanding of what the park has to offer.

Interpretation panels have also been installed and the Community Engagement Ranger has also started the development of inspirational heritage walks in the park, run by volunteers.

There is an existing Friends of Dalmuir park, with a core sub group of four volunteers who have been heavily involved in the design of the project. From this relatively low baseline the project aimed to increase the number of volunteers ten-fold, engaging 40 people in the redevelopment of the park. From a baseline of all male volunteers, they aimed to engage more females, and encourage a greater proportion of young volunteers.

In under 12 months, the number of volunteers working in the park increased from 4 to 40. There is also a greater range of volunteers, achieved by offering a range of different projects to get involved in.


The Community Engagement Ranger has worked hard to attract a wide range of people. The Community Garden project has engaged a number of unemployed young men, who are using or learning gardening and basic maintenance skills to enhance their CVs and gain useful work experience. Arts

and photography projects have attracted people with specific skills, and enabled them to either practice their hobbies or share their skills with others.

The park management team has recruited four apprentices to the on-site gardening team. They benefit from on the job learning as well as structured training courses through the park and college. At the end of their two year apprenticeship they will obtain an SVQ qualification. The apprentices have also found the training to be valuable. The structured training courses have been beneficial as they help to build their CVs. They also recognise the value of the 'on the job' training.

In addition to the apprenticeships the staff and volunteers have benefited from a number of structured training courses. Overall 6 members of staff and 35 volunteers have benefited from training. The staff and volunteers have found the training to be useful.
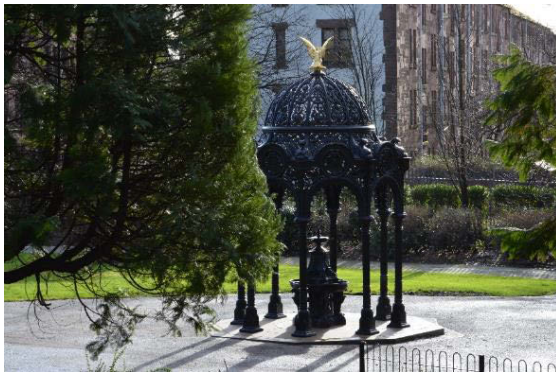
In 2012 the council commissioned a mock Green Flag assessment in order to generate a baseline score and set of recommendations relating to the management and maintenance plans for the park. This assessment was carried out as capital works were just starting in the park, so is a realistic assessment of the situation before the project started.

The majority of visitors are satisfied with what the park has to offer. Visitors are mostly satisfied with the range of plants and trees (72%), and how welcoming and accessible the park is (75%). Visitors are also satisfied with how well the park is managed, with 70% agreeing with the statement.

Overall satisfaction with the park has also increased from a baseline of 72% to 76%. Only 5% of visitors expressed dissatisfaction with the park overall.

"It is a lot busier in the park since the funding. I've always used the park weekly (daily on nice nights) and have noticed lots more families using it. Our ranger office always has something happening; be it gardening, archery and even weekly art classes!"

Avenham and Miller Parks, Preston

Background:

Avenham and Miller Parks were designed by Edward Milner in the 1860's and were built as public works when towns in the North West were suffering from a cotton famine due to the American Civil War. Miller Park is the more formal part of the park and used to be reserved for residents of the once grand Park Hotel. Avenham park was more informal.

Summary:

Restoration of the park has been a two stage process. Investment began in 2004, with the second phase of work completed in 2013. The project was awarded Parks for People funding in 2008 and received £1.8m.

Impact:

Led by the Park Manager, Avenham & Miller Park has been the site of a large number of events and activities, all designed to increase the range of audiences making use of the park. The events held annually at the park include Egg Rolling on Easter Monday and the Caribbean Carnival Mela. There is also an annual Picnic in the Park which happens during the national Love Parks week. At the 2013 event there was live music, birds of prey displays and a vintage market, with the event attracting 8,000 people. They were also successful in attracting locally popular bands with a strong following, helping to raise awareness of the park and bring more people into it.

The events and improvements to the park have led to a large increase in visitor numbers. In 2012/13 there were 1,014,832 annual person visits against a target of 600,000 and a baseline of 500,000. This represents an increase of 103%.

Over the two phases of the project there has been a total remodelling of the park's features and its landscape. During Phase 1, the new Pavilion was built to provide a meeting place and focal point to the park. The Pavilion is sensitively designed and has won round some of those initially sceptical about the design.

The park's heritage is linked closely to the fortunes of Preston and the history of the park is now much more clearly displayed. A simple display in the Pavilion provides detail on how the park was developed and at every entry point there is an information board showing basic information about the heritage of the park.

The Park Manager and his team have tried to keep the planting schemes as true as possible to the original planting design and have carried out substantial research, including use of old photographs, to stay true to the park's heritage.

As a result 90% of the park users feel they have an increased awareness of the park's heritage and visitor satisfaction has increased from a baseline of 72% to 98% in both 2011/2012 and 2012/2013.
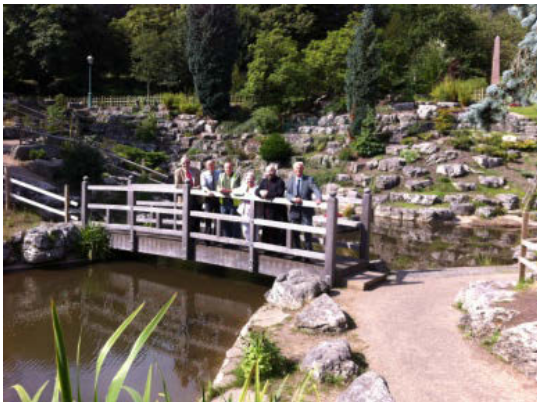
The parks team, led by the Parks Manager, manage three strands of volunteering. First is the Friends Group who act as a critical friend, helping the design and prioritisation of park related activities. They meet regularly and raise funds to help support the park's maintenance. The second strand is organised volunteering days people are invited to come along and help with organised activities in the park. These are open sessions for anyone to join in and take part. The third strand is more structured volunteering with people who want training or work experience. For example some of their volunteers are already involved in the local horticultural college.

In 2012/13 Avenham & Miller Park had 262 volunteers who delivered 4,963 volunteer hours, an average of 19 hours each. This is a large increase from a baseline of 112 volunteers delivering 1,886 hours.

Training for park staff and volunteers is delivered through a structured programme based on appraisals and identified training needs. Volunteers in the park receive training as needed for specific tasks or roles. In 2012/13, 150 volunteers received training to support their role and 9 staff received training specific to their role.

Avenham & Miller Park has a detailed 10 year management and maintenance plan. This is supported by a commitment from the local authority to manage the park but also continue with the audience development programme. To reflect this they have made a 10 year financial commitment to having a full time park manager and a supporting team of gardeners and nursery staff. This commitment has safeguarded nursery staff jobs and ensured existing staff could be placed on permanent, rather than temporary, contracts.

People perceive the improvements to Avenham & Miller Park as a boost to the area during difficult times. As a recently created City, Preston frequently compares itself to the other major city centres in the North West. Although residents may feel they compare unfavourably in some ways, people see the parks and the improvements as something that makes them stand out from other cities in the North West.

Although the park was used before, it has now become more of a focal point for health and wellbeing activities in the park. It is the site of local health walks and people from the Friends group lead healthy walks around the park. The park is also on the Guild Wheel cycling trail. This makes it a useful start and end point for people riding round the 21 mile circuit. People are also walking more through the park and although there is no data on whether improvements to the park have led to people being more active, it is now a recognised venue for outdoor physical activity.

"The park looks much better – it is better maintained and attracts a lot more people. I have been using the park all my life and I have noticed far more people using the park than in the past. The pavilion is a big attraction offering refreshments and the Guild Wheel also attracts a lot of cyclists to the park."

Horniman Gardens, London

Background:

Horniman Museum and Gardens were opened in 1901. It was designed by Charles Harrison Townsend in the Arts and Crafts style. The gardens cover approximately 16 acres. It is managed by Horniman Museum and Gardens Trust, a registered charity.

Summary:

Horniman Museum and Gardens were awarded £907,000 of Parks for People funding to undertake renovation of the gardens, including the restoration of existing features but also the addition of new areas including a display garden and a learning and community base.

Impact:

The building of the Pavilion has seen more people engaging with the garden and living collections. It has provided additional opportunities to work with community groups and connect more with the community. The museum lacks space and without this building they would be unable to do much of the engagement work in the gardens they now undertake. They have started running a free training programme for community group workers who want to use the redeveloped spaces to run projects with their service users, raising awareness of its availability and potential for learning and wellbeing.

As part of increasing the reach of the gardens they have also run a number of festivals and fairs, including Christmas and Easter markets. They have also been involved in the Chelsea Fringe, an alternative festival of participation, flowers and gardens associated with the Chelsea Flower Show. In order to attract the younger adult audience they have more recently started running evening events in the gardens and museum, including music, a gin garden, curator led talks and artist interventions. They also operate a comprehensive community engagement programme, strongly linked to the museum, which allows them to engage with schools, families and community groups.

Visitor numbers for 2012/13 have not been submitted, however the project has seen an increase in visitor numbers; from a baseline of 459,000 to 622,000 annual person visits recorded in 2011/12. This has already exceeded the target of 550,000 visits.

The main improvement to the heritage of the garden has been the restoration of the bandstand where new glazing, reconditioned timbers and the introduction of a more traditional gravel surface has lightened up the area and made a welcoming public space. Much of the investment has been spent on creating new features for the garden. This includes the Pavilion and a new outdoor music play area which makes direct links with the instrument collections inside the museum. They have also reconfigured the sunken garden to make it more accessible and create tangible connections with museum collections through themed interpretation covering food, dyes, fibres and medicines.

The project deliberately chose varieties of plants from across the world, in part to reflect the diversity found in the museum but also to appeal to the multicultural local community. Another key aim of the investment in the garden was to link the gardens more closely with the museum. This they achieved by adding interpretation into the garden and explaining the links between the museum and the gardens.

The project has a dedicated volunteer manager who has been able to increase the range and variety of volunteer opportunities for both young people and people with particular needs.

Volunteers are also an important part of the visitor engagement. Volunteers wear uniforms, which helps distinguish them and stand out against other people in the garden. They are also given training and support in engaging with visitors, child welfare and health and safety and other subjects as required to help them provide information to visitors.

As a result of this activity, the project has increased the number of people volunteering from a baseline of 5, to 183 volunteers in 2012/13, exceeding the target of 151. In 2012/13 the volunteers contributed 2,400 hours of in-kind support.

Improving skills and training is focused on the volunteers. Each volunteer has individualised support which provides on the job training as required and volunteers are trained alongside staff on the use of particular tools or given individual training as required.

Volunteers also receive an ongoing programme of general training including health and safety and heavy lifting. They have also had training in story telling techniques to build confidence in communicating the history of the garden to visitors.

A key outcome for the gardens has been creating stronger unity with the museum. The garden's management is integrated with the museum management plan and there are now dynamic links between the different parts of the site. The officer role funded to support audience development will continue for at least another 2.5 years.

The park is only open during daylight hours and this reduces the opportunity for anti-social behaviour and vandalism. Visitor satisfaction fell quite substantially during the capital work as access to the gardens was restricted but this has now improved now the work is complete.

The investment in the park and in particular the Pavilion has given Horniman the opportunity for the park to link to wider community groups.

Horniman Gardens has been able to generate income from a wide range of sources. This has included traditional grant giving bodies including the Monument Trust and Garfield Western Foundation. However, the investment in the garden has also been a catalyst for the garden to be used more in order to generate more income.

> *"Parks in London are particularly important as for many people it provides their back garden"*

Marine Cove Gardens, Burnham on Sea

Background:

Located on the Esplanade in Burnham on Sea, Marine Cove Gardens is a public park managed by Sedgemoor District Council. It is a small Edwardian park covering just 0.17ha with an art deco style inspired by the work of Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll, who pioneered the 'natural style' of garden, moving on from the more formal schemes favoured in the 1900's. The park was opened in 1927 and represents an example of a small neo classical park.

Summary:

In 2011 Sedgemoor District Council received £320,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, which along with additional funding from Burnham and Highbridge Town Council and environmental company Virador Credits led to capital works starting in March 2011. In September 2013 the park had been fully operational for 9 months, with the Community Gardener role set to last, for a minimum, until March 2016.

Impact:

A key aim for the Community Gardener has been to increase awareness of the park and to increase the groups making use of it. There have been three distinct strands of work to get more people into the park. The first has been a regular schedule of events. This has included craft activities, fetes, teas, jubilee parties and brass bands. The second has been a programme of work to link the park to local schools.

The third strand has been to raise awareness of the parks restoration among local people. This has meant developing a community website, promoting it through community newsletters and creating links with tourism manager.

The visitor experience has improved and as a result of the project the number of people visiting the park has increased significantly. Visitor numbers have more than doubled, from a baseline of 52,312 to 122,640 in 2012/13, a 140% increase in visitor numbers and more than double their original target of 60,000. Local people are now making more use of the park as it feels safer and is a nice place to go.

The park has been particularly successful in engaging older residents, with 65% of park users over 50. The improvements to the park have also led to greater access for disabled people with an increase in users from 3% to 10%.

The work has led to the refurbishment of large parts of the park. The pagoda and sunken gardens have been restored as have the shelters, seating areas, fountains and sundials. The vast majority of users are now satisfied with the park with 95% visitor satisfaction compared to baseline of 60%.

As part of the park's conservation programme the Community Gardener ran lime mortar workshops with the volunteers. Overall people in the park feel more connected to its heritage with 63% of park users saying they now feel more aware of the park's history.

An important element of success for this project has been the number of volunteer hours contributed. The project engaged 45 volunteers in 2012/13, which is slightly lower than their target of 60, however they have greatly exceeded their volunteer hour target with 823 volunteer hours on the park against a target of 200.

The volunteers have taken an active role in the management and maintenance of the park with The Friends of Marine Cove being formed as part of the bid process.

As part of the parks project 9 staff and 5 volunteers have received training. This has involved Botanical Heritage training, first aid beach safety. Many volunteers have chosen not to take part in formal training courses, despite them being offered. They come to socialise and learn 'on the job' rather than taking part in formal training.

Marine Cove Gardens applied a year early for the Green Flag Award and received an 'outstanding' score. They have a 10 year management and maintenance plan, and the Community Gardener and the volunteers play a key role in the day to day maintenance and management of the park.

A clear message from the consultation we have done as part of this case study is the importance of the park's improvements to opening up the end of the Esplanade. This has been particularly welcomed by the B&B that is adjacent to the park and the flats which overlook it. It has turned a closed off space into something that is now an attraction for the town. The events attract people from the wider area and the park is now promoted as part of the tourist offer in the town.

One of the successful parts of this project has been the ability of the Friends group to raise their own income. This has created a pot of money that is helping maintain the park, replacing plants or altering the planting scheme as required.

When Marine Cove received the funding from Parks for People, it was at a time when the Council was making substantial cuts. The investment was initially received negatively by sections of the community. Letters were written to the paper questioning why the investment was being made in parks when cuts were happening elsewhere.

The challenge for Marine Cove Gardens has been explaining the source of the money and why it was worth seeking the investment at a time when Council funding was constrained.

"It's opened up an end of the Esplanade, people used to walk to it very little, now it encourages people to it there for a quiet time in a safe and sheltered spot"

Appendix 2: Acknowledgements

The Parks for People programme currently includes the following projects. We would particularly like to thank those marked in bold, who have contributed towards this evaluation by submitting annual monitoring data, completing the survey or participating in our case study research.

Barnes Park	**Slough, Herschel Park**
Bedfordshire, Moggerhanger Park	South Hill Park - Bracknell
Bishops Park & Fulham Palace Grounds	**South Park Gardens**
Brockwell Park	**Spinney Hill Park, Leicester**
Burngreen Park, Kilsyth	**St James' Park - Southampton**
Burslem, Burslem Park	**Stevenage Town Centre Gardens**
Bushey, The Rose Garden	**Tameside: Stamford Park**
Carlisle: Chances Park	**Tredegar, Bedwellty House and Park**
Clissold Park	**Wallsend, Wallsend Parks**
Devizes, Hillworth Park	**Walsall Arboretum**
Devonport - The People's Park	**War Memorial Park**
Dudley, Priory Park	**West Bromwich, Dartmouth Park**
Falmouth, Gyllyngdune Gardens	**Wigan, Mesnes Park**
Hale Park, Hale Village	**Nottingham Forest, Recreation Ground**
Keswick, Derwentwater Foreshore	**Whaley Bridge Memorial Park**
Larne, Dixon Park	**Horniman Gardens, Lewisham**
Leeds, Middleton Park	**Victoria Park Project, Tower Hamlets**
Letchworth Garden City, Howard Park & Gardens	**Brinkburn Dene's, Darlington**
Lichfield: Beacon Park	**Silloth-on-Solway, The Green**
Lloyd and Aveling Park	**Southport King's Gardens**
Lordship Recreation Ground	**Maidstone, Mote Park**
MacRosty Park, Crieff	**Telford Town Park**
Middlesbrough, Stewart Park	**Cedars Park, Cheshunt**
Neath, Victoria Gardens	**Duthie Park, Aberdeen**
Newark - Sconce and Devon Park	**Cambuslang Park Redevelopment Project**
Newcastle upon Tyne, Ouseburn Parks	Brooke Park, Derry
Oldham, Dunwood Park	**Raphael Park**
Pannett Park, Whitby	**Exhibition and Brandling Park**
Preston, Avenham & Miller Parks	**Pittencrieff Park, Dunfermline**
Queens Park, Bolton	**Burnham on Sea, Marine Cove Gardens**
Rotherham, Clifton Park	Penllergare Valley Woods
Bentley Park	**Wharton Park**
Felixstowe Seafront Gardens	**Berwick Parks**

Forty Hall Park

Cyfarthfa Park

East Park

Haddo Country Park, Ellon

Grosvenor Park

Walpole Park

Victoria Park, St Helens

Dalmuir Park

Cwmdonkin Park

The Level

Worth Park

Alexandra Park

Harlow Town Park

Walker Park, Newcastle upon Tyne

Markeaton Park

Dock Park

Northumberland Park

Eureka Park

Wandle Park

Richmond Park

Wepre Park, Connah's Quay

Margam Country Park

Wilton Lodge Park

Runcorn Hill Park

Eastwood Park - Hasland

West Park

Rouken Glen Park

Cliffe Castle Park

Plymouth, Drake's Place Gardens

Mary Stevens Park

Belleisle Park

West Hackney Recreation Ground

Quorn, Stafford Orchard

Roberts Park, Saltaire

Boultham Park

Westgate Gardens, Canterbury

Moor Park

Lightwoods Park

Alexandra Road Park

The Phillips Memorial Park, Godalming

Hednesford Park, Hednesford

Holywells Park, Ipswich

Lesne Abbey Woods, Bexley

Eastcote House Gardens, Hillingdon

The Willows, Preston

Gunnersbury Park, Ealing

Langtons Gardens/Fielders Field, Havering

Memorial Park, Wyre

Grosvenor Hilbert Park, Tunbridge Wells

Cassiobury Park, Watford

Victoria Park – East Midlands

Amptill Great park – East of England

Hemel Water Gardens – East of England

Hanley Park – West Midlands

Dean Castle Country Park

Rivington Terraced Gardens

Page Park, Gloucestershire

Houghton Hall Park, Bedfordshire

Highfields Park, Nottingham

Avenue House Estate Restoration

Saughton Park, Edinburgh

Plashet Park

Gheluvelt Park, Worcester

The Mere at Ellesmere Heritage Project

Frodsham, Castle Park

Markfield Park

Whitstable, Whitstable Castle Park