



**Greener
Neighbourhoods:**
A good practice
guide to managing
green space

This guide makes the case for excellent quality green spaces within social housing and provides a practical resource for those aiming to achieve it



Contents

Foreword	01
Executive summary	02
Introduction to Neighbourhoods Green	03
Overview of housing green space	04
Literature review	06
10 principles for housing green space	
1 Commit to quality	10
2 Involve residents	12
3 Know the bigger picture	14
4 Make the best use of funding	16
5 Design for local people	18
6 Develop training and skills	20
7 Maintain high standards	22
8 Make places feel safe	24
9 Promote healthy living	26
10 Prepare for climate change	28
Conclusion	30
References	31

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the following people for their contributions:

Helen Woolley at the University of Sheffield for undertaking the literature review

Case studies and images:

Affinity Sutton, Bpha, Castle Vale Community Housing, Circle 33, City West Homes, Four Housing Group, Green Square Group, Groundwork, Hab Oakus, Helena Partnerships, London Wildlife Trust, Medina Housing, Places for People, Sanctuary Housing Group, Wakefield District Housing

Critical readers group:

Angela Godrich	Notting Hill Housing Group
Fiona Taylor	Groundwork
Jonathon Cartwright	DCLG
Liz Ackerley	Helena Partnerships
Nicola Mathers	Design Council Caba
Paul Lincoln	Landscape Institute
Raymond Kinsella	Great Places Housing Group
Richard Orpin	DEFRA

Written by Nicola Wheeler, National Housing Federation
November 2011

Foreword



Housing associations are committed to improving the lives of their residents and communities. Their activities, from building homes to providing community services, are driven by this social purpose.

Recognising and promoting the importance of the environment in which residents live is at the heart of housing associations' investment in neighbourhoods. The quality of open space near to where people live can impact significantly on how places are perceived and are valued locally.

Well designed and well managed green spaces are safe for people to access and enjoy. They can be used for play, recreation, socialising and relaxing. They can also provide environments which enhance biodiversity and support climate change adaptation. Positive uses of open space bring people together, build stronger communities and contribute to a healthier society.

The scale of housing associations' commitment is reflected in the £41.5 million invested annually in improving the shared spaces in neighbourhoods.¹ Housing associations, some of which are featured here, have been delivering this work as a key part of their

involvement in communities for a long time.

As the best resourced agencies in deprived neighbourhoods, our sector plays an important role in ensuring that good quality open and green spaces are accessible to all.

The work of the Neighbourhoods Green partnership is happening at a pivotal time. With budgets under pressure it is clear that partnership working is key to delivering this agenda. This publication sets out ideas for developing partnerships and improving green spaces to meet the needs and aspirations of communities now and in the future. It presents a number of ways in which housing green space can be used and managed to facilitate local involvement and increase resident satisfaction.

We hope it will inspire and support housing associations and their residents to take more action to plan for and improve their green space assets.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Orr".

David Orr
Chief executive
National Housing Federation

£41.5m

invested annually in
improving the shared
spaces in neighbourhoods

Executive summary

This publication has been developed as part of Neighbourhoods Green, a national partnership initiative to champion the importance of social housing green space and to help social landlords and communities raise the quality of their design, management and safe use.

There is increasing recognition that good quality landscapes provide important opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy their local environment.

These local open spaces are effective arenas for promoting healthy lifestyles, enhancing community cohesion and tackling inequality. They can provide volunteering and employment opportunities, encourage civic action and mitigate the effects of climate change.

This practical resource outlines the evidence base that will support managers to make the case for investment. It builds on the 10 principles of the *Decent homes need decent spaces* action plan

developed by the Neighbourhoods Green partnership in 2010 and provides illustrative case studies and links to further good practice, useful websites and publications.

Greener neighbourhoods makes a strong case for good quality housing green spaces. It demonstrates the social, environmental and economic benefits that can be achieved through investment in quality design and management of green space.



Introduction to Neighbourhoods Green

Neighbourhoods Green is a partnership initiative supported by the National Housing Federation. The project started in London in 2003 when Peabody and Notting Hill Housing Group came together to explore the challenges and opportunities for improving housing green space.

Now a national partnership, it is supported by Design Council Cabi, the Green Flag Plus Partnership, Groundwork, the Landscape Institute, Natural England, the National Housing Federation and the Wildlife Trusts. These organisations are collaborating on numerous projects and initiatives which promote well designed, managed and maintained green space across England.

The project promotes good practice in green space management in the housing sector and the Neighbourhoods Green website hosts a multitude of case studies. The project also organises regional events bringing together housing and green space practitioners to share learning and experience, and to develop partnership opportunities.

The National Housing Federation hosts the Neighbourhoods Green coordinator post, which provides guidance, support and tools for housing associations, local authority housing departments, arms-length management organisations (ALMOs), resident associations, community groups and their partners.

Visit

www.neighbourhoodsgreen.org.uk



Definitions

Green infrastructure: the network of green spaces and other natural elements such as rivers and lakes that are interspersed between and connect villages, towns and cities.

Green space: a vegetated land area maintained for recreation and community enjoyment. This may include (but is not limited to) parks, community gardens, informal recreational spaces, provision for children and teenagers, allotments and food growing sites, outdoor sports facilities, green corridors, woodlands, grasslands and wetlands and civic spaces.

Open space: all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a community amenity.



Overview of housing green space

In England, 17% of households housing 8.2 million people are tenants of social landlords.² Significant quantities of green space surround these homes.

66%

of all green space visits
are within 2 miles of home

37%

of surveyed landlords
reported food growing
areas across their managed
green spaces

In some areas, the landscape managed by social landlords is estimated to be equal to or greater than that which is managed by the local authority parks' services. The quality of these green spaces has a huge impact on the lives of social housing tenants and other people living in those neighbourhoods.

The importance of this is brought home by the latest Natural England survey, which found that 66% of all visits to green space are within two miles of home.³ Social landlords also work in some of the most disadvantaged communities, where CABE Space's research shows that people have access to only one-fifth of the number of parks as people in more affluent areas.⁴

Other evidence, such as Natural England's annual survey, found that levels of participation in the natural environment are lowest amongst the black and minority ethnic (BME) population and members of socio-economic groups D and E, which represent semi skilled and unskilled manual workers, retired people, and those dependent on the state or without a regular income.

Contact with nature was an underpinning philosophy for George Cadbury and Joseph Rowntree, who sought to advance social reform through model housing developments that integrated open space provision amongst dwellings. The garden villages of Bourneville in the West Midlands and New Earswick in Yorkshire are renowned for the consideration given to the overall layout and landscape where village greens, gardens and extensive communal green space featured heavily. This philosophy is also prevalent in Ebenezer Howard's garden city movement of the twentieth century which sought to integrate the benefits of town and countryside.



84%

of social landlords reported using external contractors to deliver grounds maintenance

20%

also reported using volunteers in green space maintenance

The typology of green spaces managed by social landlords is varied. In a recent survey undertaken by Neighbourhoods Green, general amenity grassland and communal gardens were reported as the most prevalent types of green space. Play areas for under-fives and spaces for young people also feature heavily across housing stock. A third of all surveyed landlords reported responsibility for nature areas and woodlands and 37% reported food growing areas across green space they managed.

Once developed, the maintenance of housing green space is paid for through service charges to tenants and leaseholders. 84% of social landlords reported using external

contractors to deliver all or part of their grounds maintenance service and 46% use a direct labour force. 20% also reported involving volunteers in green space maintenance.

For millions of residents of social housing, these doorstep green spaces have the potential to provide many of the personal and social benefits that parks have offered throughout history. For landlords, consideration of the external environments in relation to the homes that they surround is integral to creating places where people want to live.



Involving the minority communities

Other evidence, such as Natural England's annual survey, found that levels of participation in the natural environment are lowest amongst the black and minority ethnic (BME) population and members of socio-economic groups D and E, which represent semi skilled and unskilled manual workers, retired people, and those dependent on the state or without a regular income.



Literature review

This section presents a summary of a literature review of the current evidence on the benefits of green space in housing settings.

10%

of land area in England is classified as urban with nearly

80%

of the English population living in urban areas

The detailed literature review, *Living Green: Evidence to support the provision of green space around social housing* was developed by Helen Woolley and Alison Somerset-Ward from the Department of Landscape at the University of Sheffield.

The studies reported here draw upon a range of research exploring benefits which include a range of social, environmental, health and economic attributes.^{5,6} Two overarching themes are discussed here: the benefits of green space for people and the ecological benefits of neighbourhood green spaces.

Nearly 10% of land area in England is classified as 'urban', with almost 80% of the English population living in urban areas.⁷ This means that the benefits of green spaces, especially in housing areas, are an important part of daily life. However, these benefits can often be hidden, ignored or taken for granted.

The benefits of access to green space for people

Neighbourhoods are the place where some people spend most of their daily lives and can be the main source of relationships.⁸ Access to, use of and engagement in green space in their neighbourhood can contribute to people's levels of satisfaction and sense of community.

The benefits of neighbourhood green spaces can start with a view from a house to a green space, which might contain shrubs, flowers, trees or woodlands. Such views have been shown to have a positive impact on neighbourhood satisfaction.⁹ Pleasant views have been found to have a positive influence on children's levels of self-discipline, in particular for girls.¹⁰ In addition views to nature have proved to reduce residents' concerns about density,¹¹ which can be experienced as noisy and overcrowded, negatively influencing resident satisfaction.¹²

Several pieces of research identify that having a green space within a 5-10 minute walk from home increases the possibility that people,¹³ including children and older people,¹⁴ will use it. Some residents with more green space within a kilometre of their home have reported better self-perceived health.¹⁵ Other studies have shown that the frequency of visits to a green space relates to its proximity to home and that the length of time spent there can support a reduction in stress levels.¹³ And it has been shown that older people live longer when they have walkable green streets and greenery-filled public spaces which they can walk to easily.¹⁶

Accessible and safe green spaces may be important to people's sense of well being and mental health and be a positive influence on levels of physical activity.¹⁷ People's perceptions of safety can be influenced by various factors, one of which is suggested to be the presence of a green neighbourhood, with high tree canopies and grass preserving visibility across spaces.¹⁸ Other research has shown that people who took responsibility for green spaces close to home and looked after them, perceived the neighbourhood as safer than those who did not. In other research people who spent more time outside perceived the neighbourhood as safer than people who spent less time outside.¹⁹

Children who move to housing with greener views have been shown to have improved attention capacity compared to children who move to housing with less green views.²⁰ Further research identified that the impact of stress-related

life events for children, such as moving home, being picked on or punished at school or experiencing peer pressure were ameliorated more for children with vegetation close to home than those without vegetation.²¹

Benefits of use and engagement in open space for people

The quality of these green spaces and individual elements within them can contribute to perceptions of satisfaction, safety and use. For example the existence of paths for walking and cycling within a housing area support children's play, including wheeled activities and social activities with other children.²² Paths which are easy to walk on, are enjoyable and have no obstacles, have been shown to be important for older people's use of neighbourhood spaces.¹⁴ A network of pathways and cycleways has been shown to support social connections in mixed-tenure housing areas, providing opportunities for people to move through estates. This was particularly the case for children



Improved attention spans for children in green spaces

Children who move to housing with greener views have been shown to have improved attention capacity compared to children who move to housing with less green views.²⁰ Further research identified that the impact of stress-related life events for children, such as moving home, being picked on or punished at school or experiencing peer pressure were ameliorated more for children with vegetation close to home than those without vegetation.²¹



10%

increase in green cover could have a beneficial effect on ameliorating predicted climate change in urban areas

who used a variety of spaces available to them – play spaces, woodlands and open spaces.²³

Children were also revealed to use a variety of different open spaces within a neighbourhood, often moving between designated play spaces, gardens and other open spaces where they found opportunities for play using the network of footpaths.²² Elsewhere, research revealed that important settings for children within their neighbourhood were close to home, school or other places the children liked. These spaces provided opportunities for social interaction where children could be free from outside controls.²⁴

The presence of trees and grass in a neighbourhood has been shown to support both the presence of people²⁵ and social interaction,²⁶ contributing to a sense of community and enabling people to form emotional connections with others.²⁷ Indeed, the density of trees and grass can be linked to the strength of neighbourhood ties.²⁸ Elsewhere, shared green

spaces in housing areas have been shown to contribute positively to neighbourhood satisfaction.²⁹

Beyond the shared experiences enjoyed and social interaction supported by neighbourhood green spaces, the activity of gardening is something that residents can engage in. Garden projects can provide opportunities for growing fruit and vegetables and contribute to people eating healthier food. Shared areas for gardening have been shown to have a series of social benefits including the development of improved intergenerational ties within the community.³⁰

Ecological benefits of neighbourhood green spaces

As well as the many benefits that neighbourhood green spaces provide for individuals or communities, these green spaces, if designed and managed appropriately, can contribute to the green infrastructure of a city and the ecosystem services it can support.



Eating healthier

Garden projects can provide opportunities for growing fruit and vegetables and contribute to people eating healthier food.



For instance one hectare of trees and shrubs can absorb one tonne of carbon dioxide, equivalent to 100 family cars,³¹ while a single tree can produce enough oxygen for ten people. Modelling has also revealed that a 10% increase in green cover could have a beneficial effect on ameliorating the predicted climate change in an urban residential area.³²

In some instances gardens in housing areas have been shown to support more wildlife, such as frogs³³ and bumblebees,³⁴,³⁵ than agricultural rural areas. In addition gardens can support trees, ponds and nesting boxes, providing habitats for a variety of wildlife including amphibians, invertebrates and birds.^{32, 36}

However, sometimes areas of vegetation which might be rich in wildlife habitats can be perceived as untidy or poorly maintained.³⁷ This is especially common if people have had little contact with nature or are not used to ecological approaches to planting.

Such perceptions can be addressed with 'cues to care',³⁸ and this might be appropriately done at a neighbourhood rather than individual level.³⁹ The neighbourhood environment that children experience is important because it can set the norm for their expectations in adult life.⁴⁰

Conclusion

People's daily experience of their neighbourhoods and local green spaces can affect their physical, mental and social health. These three facets of health can be influenced by complex issues including neighbourhood satisfaction, perceptions, use of and engagement in green spaces.

The research reported in this summary is drawn from different parts of the world owing to gaps in the research available from England. Each piece of research is set in its own cultural and social context, understanding of landscape and nature and uses different research methodologies. Despite these limitations the research yields evidence supporting the importance of green spaces in neighbourhoods.

The benefits for people include improved resident satisfaction, social interaction through being, walking or playing in the green spaces, mental health restoration and activity for physical health benefits. The environmental benefits of both individual elements within a green space and the combined neighbourhood green spaces can provide opportunities for wildlife habitats and support a variety of ecosystem services.



What neighbourhood green spaces can offer

The types of green spaces which can provide these benefits to neighbourhoods include gardens, communal areas, shared spaces and nearby woodlands. The quality and maintenance of these green spaces can also contribute to the levels of satisfaction, use and engagement in activities. In order to maximise these benefits and optimise the wildlife and ecosystem services potential, it may be necessary to manage people's understanding and perceptions of what neighbourhood green spaces might look like and can offer.



10 principles for housing green space

Make a commitment to good quality
green and open spaces at the highest
level possible within your organisation.



Publications:

**Making it Home: the power of
landscape to create good housing**
Landscape Institute (2010)

**Delivering great places to live:
Building for life**
CABE Space (2008)

Decent parks? Decent behaviour?
CABE Space (2005)

Useful links:

Design Council CabE brings
together business decision-
makers, policy-makers, educators,
designers and architects to engage
with the latest thinking and insight
into design and innovation.
www.designcouncil.org.uk

The Landscape Institute
is the professional body for
landscape architects. It is an
educational charity and chartered
body responsible for protecting,
conserving and enhancing the
natural and built environment
for the benefit of the public.
www.landscapeinstitute.org

People value good quality green
space. Better designed and
managed spaces lead individuals
and neighbourhoods to value and
use their outdoor spaces more.

Investing in quality from the outset
can help to save resources in
the longer term. Well designed,
managed and maintained green
space can reduce anti-social
behaviour and save money on
repairs.

Good design is about creating
places that function now and can
adapt in the future.

Green spaces should offer
something for everyone, be robust
and give people a sense of place.

A well designed place has the
following qualities:

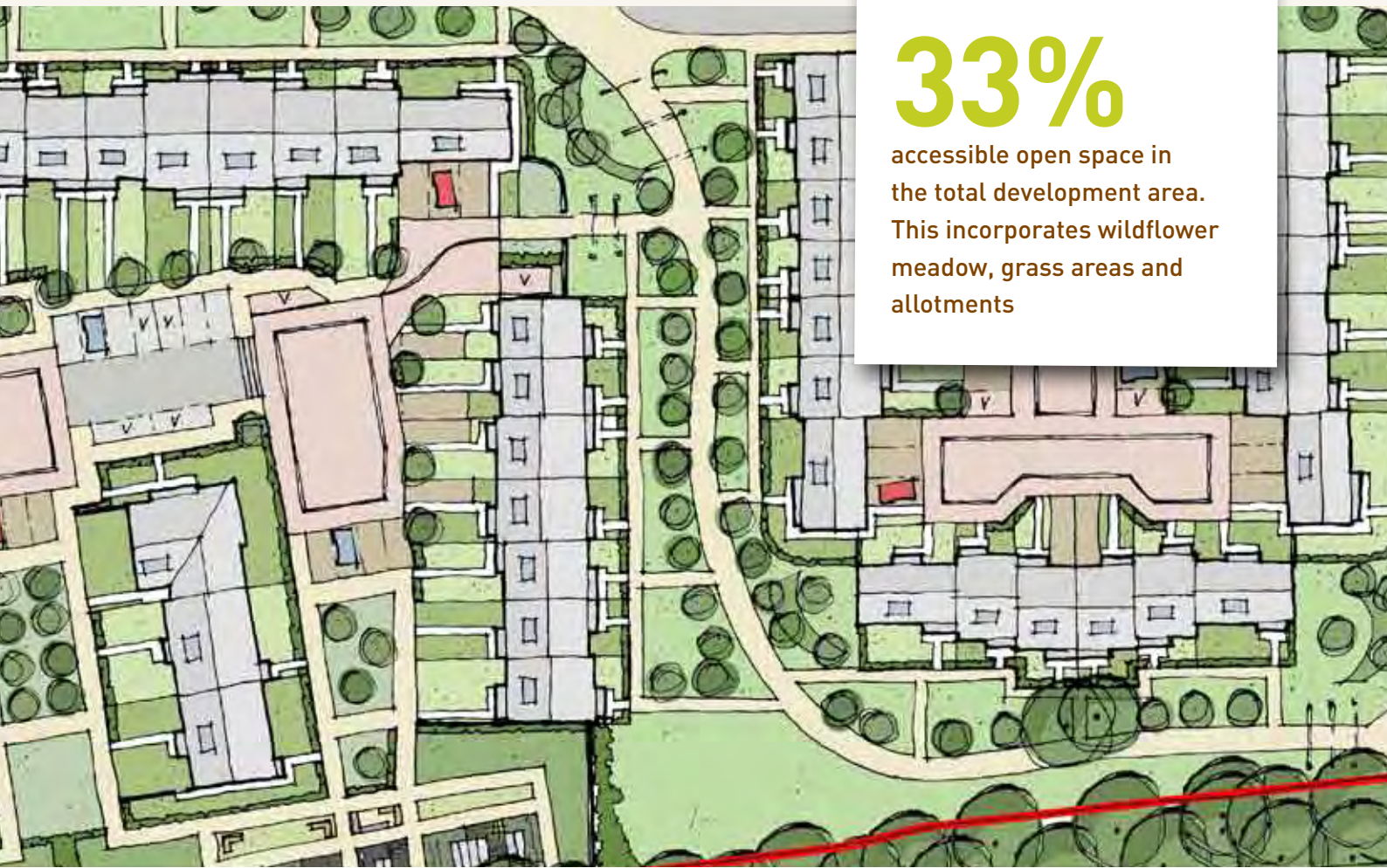
- Sustainability
- Character and distinctiveness
- Definition and enclosure
- Connectivity and accessibility
- Adaptability and robustness
- Inclusiveness
- Biodiversity.

'Address the big issues and
troublesome details at the
earliest stage of a project.
Solving potential problems at
the start can save a lot of wasted
effort, time and money later in
the process.'

Angela Godrich, Design
manager, Notting Hill
Housing Group

1 Commit to quality

Focus on: Hebburn Housing Development, Four Housing Group



IMPACT

33%

accessible open space in the total development area. This incorporates wildflower meadow, grass areas and allotments

Three Rivers Housing Association and Four Housing Group have established a partnership with South Tyneside to develop a 71-unit scheme in Hebburn.

The proposed development was selected on the basis of strong urban design incorporating green gateways to turn the former brownfield site into an area with quality new homes and a wide range of open spaces that serve as a catalyst for a vibrant community.

The design evolved from an in-depth review taking into account the local social, economic and physical context. It had input from residents, who expressed a strong desire for a 'greener' environment with local food-growing provision

through allotments. The development will meet Code 4 for Sustainable Homes with all homes benefiting from increased insulation levels and the use of solar panel technology to reduce energy demands and costs.

A green zone along one edge of the development has been retained and enhanced as a buffer with native fruit and flower bearing plants and a wildflower meadow to encourage insect and bird life. A 'green link' is being created along existing desire lines (informal routes) to provide a safe and interesting walk to local shops and the school. The route is well overlooked, green and has several 'event' spaces that accommodate public art,

seating and other focal items of interest. A palette of materials was used to emphasise pedestrian priority, incorporating 'home zone' principles to encourage alternative use of the spaces.

The site is well connected with good transport services, the local school and health services. A comprehensive landscape framework fully supports biodiversity aims, and the layout is designed so existing residents' amenity space is well protected. This is achieved by maintaining strong privacy using buffer planting and decorative boundary treatments.

10 principles for housing green space

Encourage local residents of all ages to play an active role in deciding what their open spaces should be like, how they should be used and how they should be looked after.

Publications:

Community led spaces
CABE Space (2010)



Start with the park
CABE Space (2005)

Useful links:

Groundwork is an environmental regeneration charity that works with housing providers and residents to change places and lives. The organisation engages communities in environmental improvement projects and delivers employment and training programmes. www.groundwork.org.uk

It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) is a campaign run by the Royal Horticultural Society to support local community groups in greening their local environment. Groups are supported with advice and guidance, and receive annual feedback from expert IYN assessors. www.rhs.org.uk

My Community Starter is a free, online information resource for people who want to get involved in organising community activities. Residents can get guidance on how to set up and plan their activities and receive a free, personalised My Community Starter Pack to help get started. www.mycommunitystarter.co.uk

The Tree Council's Tree Warden scheme is a national initiative enabling people to play an active role in conserving and enhancing their local trees and woods. Tree Wardens are volunteers who support practical community projects, gather information about local trees and contribute to national data-gathering. www.treecouncil.org.uk

There are **47 Wildlife Trusts** working to transform the environment. They restore, recreate and reconnect wildlife-rich spaces in rural and urban areas by working in partnership with local communities, landowners, schools and businesses. www.wildlifetrusts.org

Improvements should be led by residents' needs and aspirations and it is important that they are involved at each stage of the process. Working with third sector partners can support local involvement in environmental volunteering and provide access to specialist skills and expertise.

'Resident involvement is key to delivering green space improvement projects. Engaging residents from the outset means projects are tailored to local needs and residents have a sense of ownership over their open space in the long term.'
Victoria Young, Chair of the Midlands Network for Resident Involvement, Friendship Care and Housing

Involve residents

2

Focus on: People Transforming Places, Castle Vale Community Housing Association (CVCHA)

'The Renfrew Square project has supported residents to get involved in decision-making at board and grass roots level, to identify new ways to work together to achieve the outcomes they want.'

Jenny Calderbank
Housing manager
CVCHA

'Since the gardens began to have improvements made, people have been made more aware of what can be achieved in the area and surrounding areas.'

Sam Lowe
Chair, Renfrew Residents
Association

Castle Vale Community Housing Association's People Transforming Places programme is in its third year. In partnership with Groundwork West Midlands it delivers a range of landscape improvement projects initiated and led by residents.

An environmental panel of tenant and resident board members visit and appraise the sites and decide how the money is spent. The capacity of the panel has enabled other residents to get involved in decision-making at CVCHA. For example, four residents are members of the Scrutiny Panel, and several tenants now write bids for their own areas. This approach has led to more sustainable

landscape solutions with some residents taking on responsibility for maintenance of their spaces.

The Renfrew Square site consisted of two communal spaces serving three residential blocks. These spaces were flat expanses of grass with occasional benches and two fenced-off drying areas. Residents had concerns about young people trespassing and causing a nuisance. They also felt the spaces were underused as they were devoid of interest. The initial application proposed raising the boundary wall and railings.

Housing officers and resident inclusion staff worked with Groundwork to organise a

garden party and residents were subsequently supported through a design process. A solutions-based approach was adopted and residents found ways to adapt the space to encourage more positive use. The final design featured low maintenance planting with year round interest and colour, ornamental tree species to create structure and shelter in the garden, timber pergolas, permeable footpaths, decorative metalwork trellises and community art work.

Groundwork secured £25,000 from the Marks and Spencer Greener Living fund to match the £25,000 that CVCHA allocated to the project.

10 principles for housing green space

Publications:

**Local Green Infrastructure:
helping communities make the
most of their landscape**

Landscape Institute (2011)

Green Infrastructure Guidance

Natural England (2009)

**Open Space Strategies,
best practice guidance**

CABE Space (2009)

Useful links:

Natural England works for people, places and nature to conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas. They conserve and enhance the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people, and the economic prosperity it brings.

www.naturalengland.org.uk

Take a strategic approach when planning and improving open spaces.

With a better understanding of who owns what and who is responsible for maintaining specific spaces,

it can be easier to prioritise investment and integrate changes into the wider neighbourhood.

Stages in preparing a green space strategy include:

1. Prepare the brief

Define the scope and purpose

Determine resources for preparation, implementation and monitoring

2. Review the context

Review national, regional and local context

Identify key characteristics of the area

Review current ownership, management and funding of green space

3. Understand the asset

Identify all green space

Categorise by function and size

Carry out an on-site Geographic Information System (GIS) audit

4. Understand demand and need

Consider existing demographics of neighbourhood

Take account of current use of the space and local perceptions

Consult with residents to understand needs and aspirations

5. Analyse and identify objectives

Analyse supply and demand

Identify priority areas for improvement

6. Prepare the strategy and action plan

Consult on both

Complete and adopt strategy.

3

Know the bigger picture

Focus on: Green Space Strategy, Places for People



'We believe that inspirational green spaces are at the heart of wider social, economic and environmental regeneration, and we want our customers to support this approach. It is important that customers have access to, and influence the management of, good quality, welcoming, safe and sustainable managed green spaces.'

Dave Cowans
Chief executive
Places for People

IMPACT

85

acres of redundant land regenerated

44%

drop in repairs expenditure



Places for People manage over 62,000 homes nationally and estimate that 40% of the land they own is open, accessible community space.

The Group's vision is to provide aspirational homes and inspirational places, and this means not only building and managing homes but also investing in the green spaces that surround local neighbourhoods. To support delivery of this vision, the Group established a national partnership with fellow housing providers, The Riverside Group and Peabody, to deliver the award winning Big Lottery funded Green Spaces for People Portfolio which has achieved the following:

- Nearly 500 local community engagement events held
- Over 41,000 people involved in consultation and community activities
- 85 acres of redundant open space regenerated with community facilities and improved biodiversity.

The Lottery funded programme gave rise to a strong business case for a comprehensive strategy for all of the Group's green spaces. In certain neighbourhoods which benefited from both green space investment and other social and economic interventions, the Group identified that repairs expenditure fell by 44%, property re-let times improved significantly and

customer satisfaction with the neighbourhood increased.

The Green Space Strategy is supported by an action plan outlining what needs to be done to sustain Places for People's green assets. This includes:

- Development of management information systems to audit and map green assets.
- Delivery of bespoke maintenance services based on detailed management plans.
- Working with stakeholders to capitalise on green space income generation opportunities.

10 principles for housing green space

Secure and coordinate different sources of funding by making the most of partnerships.



Useful links:

The Big Lottery Fund (BLF) gives grants ranging from £300 to over £500,000. Grants are available to organisations ranging from local groups to national charities. www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) gives grants to sustain and transform our heritage including parks and green spaces. www.hlf.org.uk

Entrust regulates the Landfill Communities Fund, a tax credit scheme that enables operators of landfill sites to contribute funding for environmental projects. www.entrust.org.uk

Approaches to financing high quality open spaces include public and private investment, income generation, grants, endowments and voluntary sector involvement.

Significant budgets are allocated for the maintenance of housing green space to ensure grass is cut frequently and shrubs are pruned. An assessment of how this money is currently spent may reveal opportunities to achieve a variety of additional outcomes and better value for money.

'We have developed our own in-house workforce to provide better value for money through savings on profit and VAT that would have been paid to an outside contractor. These

savings are being used to deliver environmental improvements. We are able to provide a holistic and responsive approach to landscape maintenance that saves money and better targets our resources.'

Liz Ackerley, Green space manager, Helena Partnerships

Effective partnerships with local authorities and other housing providers can facilitate whole-area approaches to green space management. Focusing the service on the recipient rather than the delivering body can improve standards, prevent duplication, generate savings and promote joint working.⁴¹

4

Make the best use of funding

Focus on: Natural Estates, London Wildlife Trust



'Our partnership with London Wildlife Trust at Churchill Gardens means that we have experts working with our gardeners to develop sustainable green areas to encourage planting and biodiversity on the estate, which in turn benefits the wider community. It will also give our residents the opportunity to help make a positive impact on their environment and community for the future.'

Mark Hoyland
Chief executive
City West Homes

IMPACT

140

primary school pupils joined
the planting session

400

wildflowers planted

Natural Estates is a partnership project involving eight social landlords in London.

The project is led by the London Wildlife Trust, which developed the project in partnership with Affinity Sutton, Circle 33 Housing Trust, City West Homes, Gallions Housing Association, Homes for Haringey, Peabody, Places for People and, Southern Housing, and Groundwork London.

The partners secured £288,000 from Access to Nature, a £25 million grant programme from the Big Lottery Fund. The partners will match this with 10% of the total project budget.

Over three years, London Wildlife Trust staff are working with residents to facilitate community engagement and ownership of their estate green spaces. The project utilises estate-based interventions that engage people in activities to improve the green spaces as well as encourage wildlife and increase biodiversity. Activities include creating designated wildlife areas, making and installing bird boxes and feeders and holding wildlife talks and walks.

The project was launched with a wildflower planting session at Churchill Gardens in Westminster. Estate residents were joined by 140 pupils from local primary

schools to plant and care for a new hedgerow and 400 wildflowers.

Groundwork London's role is to deliver a training and capacity building programme for landlords' staff so that improvements become embedded in their day-to-day operations, and are sustained beyond the lifetime of the project.

10 principles for housing green space

Publications:

Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces
Play England (2008)

It's our space
CABE Space (2007)

Useful links:

Planning for Real is a community planning model used to shape neighbourhoods and communities.
www.planningforreal.org.uk

Spaceshaper is a practical toolkit to measure the quality of a public space before investing time and money in improving it. Spaceshaper captures the views of the professionals who run the space and the views of the people who use it.
www.landscapeinstitute.org/Spaceshaper

Make neighbourhoods greener, improve the layout of streets and provide facilities through better design procurement and project delivery.

This requires well-prepared project briefs, good delivery teams and creative designs that are informed by local opinion.

Local green spaces can accommodate children's play, sports provision, community gardens and food growing. A space that is good for children will often be good for adults too.

Process of designing for local people



5

Design for local people

Focus on: Design for Local People, Wakefield and District Housing (WDH)



'Our blueprint approach to green space improvements has enabled WDH to have a significant impact on our estates and neighbourhoods. We pride ourselves on working with the local community and delivering art-based projects which create confident communities by increasing pride and reducing anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime.'

Kevin Dodd
Chief executive
Wakefield and District Housing

IMPACT

4,000
residents involved



How residents feel about their neighbourhoods is central to Wakefield and District Housing's business strategy. The quality of external environments is a core part of its vision of confident communities that are strong and dynamic places where people are proud to live.

In 2002 a joint venture was established with Groundwork Wakefield which led to the development of 'blueprints' for each area. These blueprints provide a framework for identifying environmental improvements in each neighbourhood. Their development is led by local residents, in partnership with Groundwork and WDH. Through

building local consensus and developing a joint plan for action, the blueprints empower local people and lead to lasting improvements.

Projects have included the redesign of streetscapes and green spaces, creating spaces for play, recreation and community activity. Local history has been celebrated in art projects to create a sense of place and embed community spirit.

The long-term nature of the joint venture has led to significant added value being attributed to projects. Groundwork's employment and training initiatives, volunteering programmes, youth and inter-generational activities allow for ongoing engagement with residents.

The joint venture has involved over 4,000 residents on the 152 projects which have been completed to date. Whilst the funding commitment by WDH is significant with £15m invested so far, over £2.35m has also been attracted in grants to complement the programme. All schemes undertaken are evaluated on a price and quality matrix, where sustainable local training and employment are key factors.

Over 100 apprentice and training places have been created through the programme, all leading to excellent opportunities for sustainable employment.

10 principles for housing green space



Publications:

Skills to grow: seven priorities to improve green space skills
CABE Space (2009)

Useful links:

ASDAN is a curriculum development organisation and recognised award body offering programmes and qualifications that promote skills for life and skills for employment.
www.asdan.org.uk

Lantra is the Sector Skills Council for land-based and environmental industries, providing land-based training and helping people find environmental and agricultural jobs. www.lantra.co.uk

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is the UK's leading gardening charity dedicated to advancing horticulture. The RHS supports green space skills by awarding horticultural qualifications, delivering professional training programmes and providing guidance and advice. www.rhs.org.uk

Motivate residents and staff through open space training opportunities.

Creating high quality open spaces requires landscape architects, horticulturalists, project managers and confident leaders. Social landlords employ over 10% of staff in the green space sector, yet 25% report significant shortages of skilled gardeners and specialist staff.⁴²

Building the capacity of those responsible for green space will improve quality and ensure they are locally valued and appropriately rewarded.

The management of social housing green space provides training and skill development opportunities that can lead to permanent employment for local people. Gardening and wildlife projects can serve as a starting point for fostering interest in green space careers, while horticultural apprenticeships, formal and informal training improve entry routes and career paths into the sector.

Social enterprise models can enhance the value of landscape management by reinvesting resources in the local area and further creating training and employment opportunities.


10%

of staff in the green space sector are employed by social landlords

Develop training and skills

6

Focus on: The Green Base, Helena Partnerships



'We received some fantastic comments about the service during our first season from tenants. We have a 30-year plan and there's a huge amount to do in terms of managing and improving our land. Ongoing training and skill development, using the Green Base as a central hub, is fundamental to achieving that both for the teams that maintain the green space and for our customers who use and enjoy it.'

Liz Ackerley
Green space manager
Helena Partnerships

In 2008, Helena Partnerships brought its grounds maintenance service in house under the direction of a green space manager with a background in landscape architecture and landscape management.

The new Green Space Service aims to improve the quality of landscape management across the public realm and achieve better value for customers.

Training and skills development is embedded in the service. Four area-based teams carry out landscape maintenance, together with a tree team that covers the 49 estates. Trainee positions are incorporated at various levels, including operative and team

leader. On-the-job and external training is provided to ensure team members have up-to-date knowledge and skills in horticultural practice.

A two-year apprenticeship programme is being developed to support local young people to develop landscape skills and move into paid employment. Landscape training is achieved through a mix of external and in-house programmes including an NVQ that combines aspects of amenity horticulture and environmental conservation.

The Green Base, a 'PassiveHaus' eco-building, is at the heart of the service delivery. It is not only the headquarters of the Green Space

Service but also acts as a valuable community resource. It provides opportunities for residents to learn about growing plants and manage their own gardens, and will become a centre for volunteering and training.

Both the Green Base and the surrounding landscape provide an illustration of best practice in landscape design and management.

10 principles for housing green space

Ensure that maintenance and long-term care for gardens and open spaces are treated as essential.

This means having a management plan for each estate and regularly reviewing the performance of maintenance contracts.

The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK. The Award scheme began in 1996 as a means of recognising and rewarding parks and green spaces

that are managed appropriately, meeting recognised standards and the needs of the community. It provides a useful framework to encourage housing providers to improve the quality of their green spaces by considering their current condition, how they should be managed, and what the community wants. This is achieved by developing and implementing a management plan to drive improvements.

The scheme also has a Community Award which encourages residents to take responsibility for the management of green spaces for the benefit of their community.

Awards are given annually and winners must apply each year to renew their Green Flag Award status. The award recognises

that all green spaces are different, and each site is judged on its own merits and suitability to the community it serves. Sites are judged against the following criteria:

- A welcoming place
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Clean and well maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing
- Management.

Sites are assessed by industry professionals who provide advice and guidance to applicants on areas for improvement as well as a comprehensive written feedback report. Successful sites are able to fly a green flag indicating they are meeting the standard.



Publications:

Managing green spaces: Seven ingredients for success
CABE Space (2010)

Useful links:

The Green Flag Plus Partnership manages the Green Flag Award® scheme. Partners include Keep Britain Tidy, BTCV, GreenSpace
www.greenflagaward.org.uk

Housemark's Estates Services Club supports good practice and benchmarking in grounds maintenance. The club meets three times a year in London and Manchester and has developed an Estates Services Value for Money Toolkit and benchmarking project.
www.housemark.co.uk

Maintain high standards



Focus on: Lillington & Longmoore Gardens, City West Homes



'The gardening club take great pride in the garden. The team have done so much to stimulate interest in gardening on the estate. Everyone has some kind of green space here.'

Sue Clive
Resident and garden club member

The Lillington and Longmoore Gardens Estate in the heart of Pimlico has had Green Flag status for five years. City West Homes' green space management plan and commitment to delivering high quality green space has resulted in a valuable amenity for residents and has created a sense of pride for the local area.

The estate office staff are responsible for green space management and maintenance and for making sure that cleaning and gardening services are carried out to the highest standards.

A direct labour force is employed to carry out the grounds maintenance service across the estate.

The management plan covers the maintenance of equipment, buildings and the landscape and includes good cleaning practices as well as plans for continual improvement. It also includes opportunities for community involvement and reflects the involvement of dedicated residents who volunteer their time and skills.

The gardens include wildflower areas, a good selection of permanent plants and seasonal planting, a variety of trees and a pond which all provide habitat for wildlife and enhance biodiversity.

Green materials are collected and recycled on site. There is minimal use of pesticides and no peat use. Rainwater is collected from the glass house roof and hanging baskets are self-watering, which helps to ensure sustainability.

Clear signage has been used to manage residents' expectations. For example, for sustainability purposes some flowers are allowed to run to seed. This is communicated to residents so that they know this is part of the maintenance plan.

10 principles for housing green space

Investing in the creation and care of high quality public spaces is effective in helping reduce crime and deter anti-social behaviour. Good quality open space brings people together, which increases informal social activity and surveillance and discourages nuisance behaviour.

Involving communities in the design of green spaces allows for stakeholder debate that explores potential risks and issues.



Publications:

Secured by Design New Homes
Secured by Design (2010)

**Living with Risk: Promoting
better public space design**
CABE Space (2007)

Improve the character and design of places to change user behaviour and improve personal safety.

An inclusive design that understands concerns from the perspective of different user groups will result in a greater sense of ownership and informal stewardship in the long-term.

Communal open space should be carefully located to suit its intended purposes and designed with due regard for natural surveillance, which can be enhanced through landscape features such as planting and ground contouring. Careful attention should be given to the size, height and scale of planting. Advice should be sought at the design stage to prevent problems when plants reach maturity.

All space should be clearly defined in terms of its use and ownership, as ambiguity results in inappropriate use.

Key considerations for open space development and improvements include:

- Seating
- Planting
- Access and movement
- Boundaries
- Lighting
- Materials
- Management and maintenance.

Adequate resourcing for long-term management and maintenance of open space should be considered from the outset to ensure that the benefits are sustained. Once schemes are complete, maintenance is an important factor in reducing risks to the safety of users.



Make places feel safe

Focus on: Golden Gardens, bpha



'We want to create and provide places where people want to live and can be proud of. By listening to resident concerns and working in partnership we can make changes and improvements that impact significantly on the quality of life of our residents.'

Marie Taylor
Head of housing management
and supported housing

'It's been amazing to see an ugly and derelict patch of ground transformed into a place where all sorts of people can be creative, grow plants and vegetables and learn new skills. It's good to stand back and take a look at what we've achieved by working together.'

Sylvia Peacock
Resident

Bedford Pilgrims Housing Association (bpha) have adopted a proactive approach to making places feel safe by working with residents to tackle disused areas and improve open spaces that benefit local communities.

Initiatives include supporting elderly residents to create gardens and courtyards that they can socialise and relax in, organising a community tree planting day for residents in a new neighbourhood to get to know each other, and working with young people to transform a rundown and neglected multi-use games area.

The Golden Gardens project has transformed a disused garage site into two community gardens. The sites had attracted negative behaviour and were a target for vandalism, graffiti and anti-social behaviour. Goldington residents worked with bpha and the Community Safety forum to develop a People's Millions Big Lottery funding application. The project went to a televised public vote and succeeded in securing a grant of £80,000.

These two sites have been transformed into valuable local spaces. The open access garden at Milburn Road includes rectangular beds, flower planting, trees and a central seating area. The site at Elliot Crescent includes a

green training area for residents to learn to grow food. A weekly gardening club and regular community activities and events have established positive uses of the space.

The space is now a thriving community hub where residents socialise and practise new skills

In 2009 the site was awarded a Neighbourhoods In Bloom award. The residents group has taken on responsibility for the management and maintenance of the garden, running their own accounts and holding events to generate income and attract additional volunteers.

10 principles for housing green space

Encourage people to be more active by providing attractive and well maintained open spaces.

£5.5bn

Estimated cost to economy
of lost productivity due to
physical inactivity

Green space closest to where people live brings the most health benefits. Physical inactivity costs the NHS between £1 billion and £1.8 billion each year, with lost productivity to the wider economy estimated to cost an additional £5.5 billion.⁴³

Green space plays an important role in the drive to increase levels of physical activity. It can facilitate walking, cycling and play. If people have easy access to an attractive network of local green space and pedestrian-friendly streets it becomes part of the everyday experience.

Furthermore, access to green space can help alleviate a range of mental health problems. For example, contact with nature reduces stress and improves children's concentration and self-discipline.

'It can be easy to undervalue the benefits of safe and well maintained green spaces that provide people with an oasis for recreation, relaxation, refreshment and relief. Places with these qualities are too often in short supply, but access to them is really important for promoting well-being and should be an essential element of all our place-making.'
Mathew Bush, sustainability manager, Metropolitan Housing Trust

Publications:

Nature Play: Simple and fun ideas for all Forestry Commission England (2008)

Community Green: using green space to tackle inequality and improve health CABE (2010)

Useful links:

Play England works to give children and young people in England regular access to free, inclusive, local play provision and play space.
www.playengland.org.uk

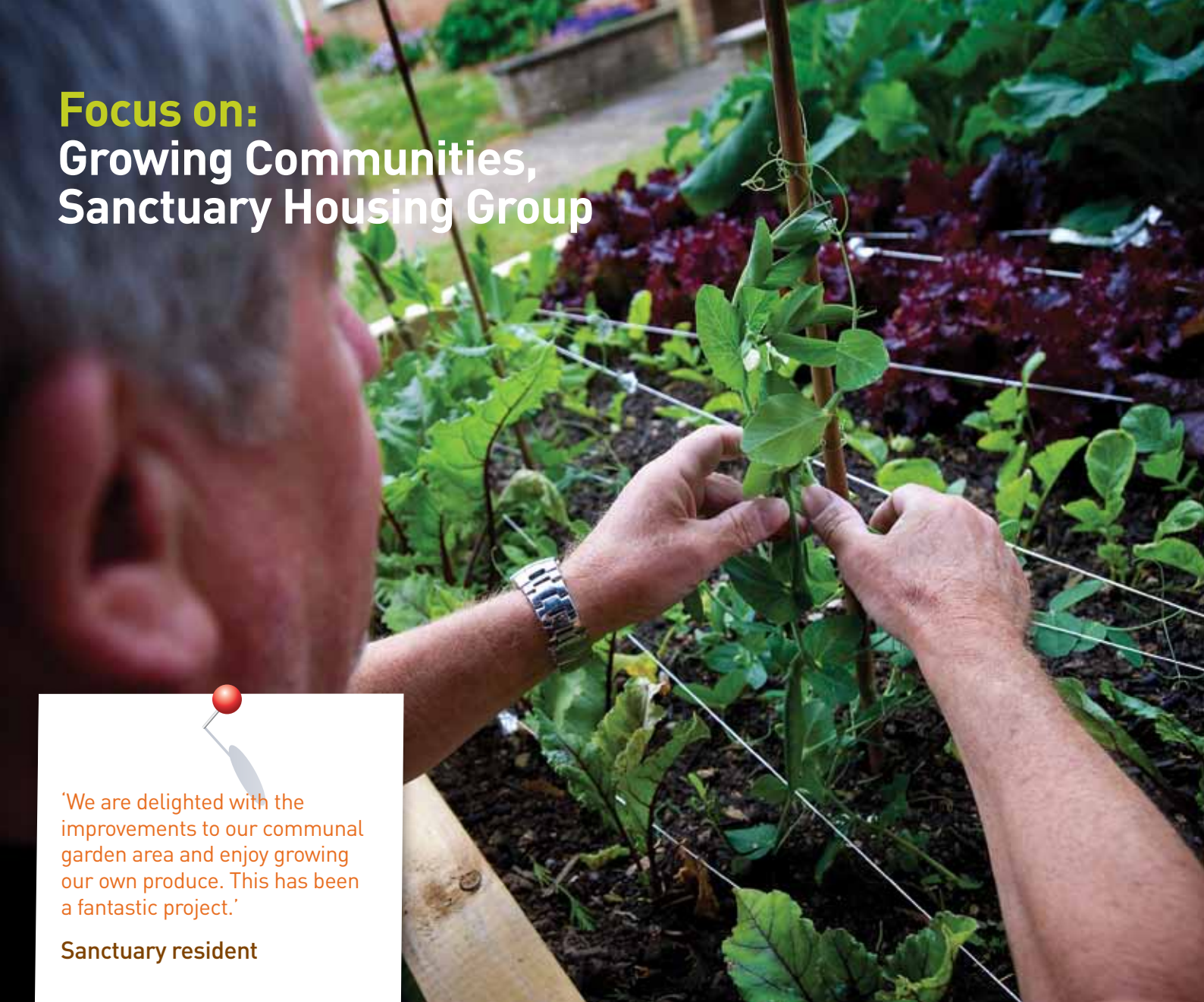
Sustrans is a leading UK charity enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys they make every day. www.sustrans.org.uk

The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens is a registered charity which supports, represents and promotes community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other green spaces, creating opportunities for local communities to grow.
www.farmgarden.org.uk

Promote healthy living

9

Focus on: Growing Communities, Sanctuary Housing Group



'We are delighted with the improvements to our communal garden area and enjoy growing our own produce. This has been a fantastic project.'

Sanctuary resident

The Growing Communities project covers eight residential areas in Devon within the towns of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham.

It involved the creation of raised beds, planters and planting of fruit trees in communal garden areas of Sanctuary's sheltered housing schemes. This was to enable older people and those with mobility issues to get involved with food growing in locations close to their homes.

The project incorporates a number of sustainable features including composting and rainwater harvesting for use on-site.

The inclusion of footpaths and seating is designed to encourage social interaction and residents are supported by a part-time horticultural worker to encourage learning and engagement.

The project was funded through the Big Lottery Fund, which allocated £70,000 from its Local Food Programme funding, and Sanctuary, which allocated £26,000 as well as the staff time of one Sanctuary Community Development Officer.

In addition to attracting new Lottery funding and making the project sustainable in the long term, the Growing Communities project has resulted in the following benefits:

- Encouraging healthy living by making spaces accessible for the less mobile
- Bringing residents together
- Promoting physical activity
- Making good use of underused communal facilities
- Giving residents access to affordable, healthy produce
- Improving relations between staff and residents.

10 principles for housing green space

Green infrastructure can deliver a multitude of environmental benefits that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Reduced urban temperatures

Green infrastructure can play an important role in ameliorating the effects of extreme weather conditions brought on by climate change.³²

Provide increased protection for residents against flooding, heat waves and rising energy prices through urban greening programmes.

Increasing coverage by 10% in areas with little or no green cover would result in a cooling of the surface temperature by up to 2.5°C.⁴⁴ Trees and vegetated space reduce conductive heat loss in the winter and offer shade in the summer, cooling the air and minimising the need for costly air conditioning while reducing air pollution caused by burning fossil fuels.

Improved water management

By 2080, surface runoff is predicted to be 65% higher in high density residential areas than at present. Sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) are therefore a valuable climate change adaptation mechanism.

Other benefits of SuDS include improved water quality, and less likelihood of flash floods and consequent damage to property. Green roofs can be introduced as an additional measure to reduce rainwater run-off.

Improved air quality

Trees and vegetation are effective sinks for the absorption of pollutants in the atmosphere, leading to an improvement in health through fewer cases of respiratory disease and reduced hospital admissions.

Protected wildlife habitats

Biodiversity will be adversely affected as a result of changes in air and sea temperatures and water availability. Native trees, shrubs, flowers and woodlands provide great habitats for wildlife.



Publications:

**Benefits of green infrastructure:
Report to Defra and DCLG**
Forest Research (2010)

**The case for trees in
development and the
urban environment**
Forestry Commission (2010)

A Natural Estate
Natural England and
Neighbourhoods Green (2007)

10 Prepare for climate change

Focus on: The Triangle, Green Square Group



'It is easy to build an eco house. What is really hard is to convince people to change their lives and live more sustainably. If you want to get people to walk and cycle more and use cars less, if you want people to grow vegetables, stay in a place and get to know their neighbours then all of that happens outside the front door and outside the back door. It is dependent on your spatial strategy and your master planning and the way you deal with the landscape and public realm.'

Kevin McCloud
Director
Hab Housing

The Triangle is a high quality, sustainable 42-home development from Hab Oakus, a joint venture between the Green Square Group and Kevin McCloud's development company, Hab. The approach takes account of both the housing and surrounding landscape in creating a place that is ecologically and socially sustainable.

At the centre of the Triangle is a communal green space overlooked by every household. The green is central to the success of the project, providing a focal point for the community that encourages social interaction and recreation.

The selected planting is functional as well as aesthetic: edible hedgerows, fruit trees and two kitchen gardens provide fruit and vegetables for residents. It is intended that the edible landscape, cycling facilities, links to public transport and car club will promote sustainable lifestyles and limit CO² emissions.

Other features which have been incorporated to facilitate sustainable living include:

- Parking spaces with permeable surfaces
- Communal kitchen gardens
- An informal natural play space
- Community orchards
- Vegetated facades
- Gabion walls

- Composting facilities
- Rainwater harvesting
- Wet meadow for sustainable drainage
- Wildlife garden
- Existing trees supplemented with native trees and shrubs.

Inadequate drainage on the original site has been addressed by incorporating large storage attenuation tanks beneath the kitchen gardens. These tanks are linked to hand pumps so that residents can water the kitchen gardens. Water butts and rainwater harvesting tanks also minimise the requirement of water from the mains system.

Conclusion



This report illustrates the importance of social housing green space and demonstrates through practical case study examples 10 key principles which should form part of any approach to green space design and management. In summary these are:

1. Commit to quality

Make a commitment to good quality green and open spaces at the highest level possible within your organisation.

2. Involve residents

Encourage local residents of all ages to play an active role in deciding what their open spaces should be like, how they should be used and how they should be looked after.

3. Know the bigger picture

Take a strategic approach when planning and improving open spaces.

4. Make the best use of funding

Secure and coordinate different sources of funding by making the most of partnerships.

5. Design for local people

Make neighbourhoods greener, improve the layout of streets and provide facilities through better design procurement and project delivery.

6. Develop training and skills

Motivate residents and staff through open space training opportunities.

7. Maintain high standards

Ensure that maintenance and long-term care of gardens and open spaces are treated as essential.

8. Make places feel safe


Improve the character and design of places to change user behaviour and improve personal safety.

9. Promote healthy living

Encourage people to be more active by providing attractive and well maintained open spaces.

10. Prepare for climate change

Provide increased protection for residents against flooding and heat waves through urban greening programmes.



To support the Neighbourhoods Green project or to find out more please visit www.neighbourhoodsgreen.org.uk

References

- 1 National Housing Federation (2008), Neighbourhood Audit.
- 2 English Housing Survey, 2009/10.
- 3 Natural England (2011) Monitoring of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE).
- 4 CABE Space (2010) Community Green: using open spaces to tackle inequality and improve health.
- 5 Woolley, H. (2003) Urban Open Spaces, Spon Press: London.
- 6 CABE Space (2003) Value of Public Space, CABE: London
- 7 Living with Environmental Change (2011) The UK National Ecosystem Services Assessment.
- 8 Chanan, G. (2004) Community responses to social exclusion, in Percy-Smith, J. (ed.) Policy responses to social exclusion: Towards Inclusion?, 201–215. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- 9 Kaplan, R. (2001) The nature of the view from home: psychological benefits, *Environment and Behavior*, 33: 507–542.
- 10 Faber Taylor, A., Kuo, F. E. and Sullivan, W. C. (2002) Views of nature and self-discipline: evidence from inner city children, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 22: 49–63.
- 11 Kearney, A. R. (2006) Residential development patterns and neighbourhood satisfaction: Impacts of density and nearby nature, *Environment and Behavior*, 38: 112–139.
- 12 Bonnes M., Bonaiuto, M. and Ercolani, A. P. (1991) Crowding and residential satisfaction, *Environment and Behavior*, 23: 531–552.
- 13 Grahm, P. and Stigsdotter, U. A. (2003) Landscape planning and stress, *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*, 2: 001–018.
- 14 Sugiyama, T., Ward Thompson, C. and Alves, S. (2009) Associations between neighbourhood open space attributes and quality of life for older people in Britain, *Environment and Behavior*, 41: 3–21.
- 15 Maas, J., van Dillen, S. M. E., Verheij, R. A. and Groenewegen, P. P. (2009) Social contacts as a possible mechanism behind the relation between green space and health, *Health and Place*, 15: 586–595.
- 16 Takano, T., Nakamura, K. and Watanabe, M. (2002) Urban residential developments and senior citizens' longevity in megacity areas: the importance of walkable green spaces, *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 56: 913–918.
- 17 Croucher, K., Myers, L. and Bretherton, J. (2008) Greenspace Scotland Research Report: The links between greenspace and health: A critical literature review, Stirling: Greenspace Scotland.
- 18 Kuo, F. E. and Sullivan, W. C. (2001) Environmental crime in the inner city: does vegetation reduce crime? *Environment and Behavior*, 33: 343–367.
- 19 Brunson, L., Kuo, F. and Sullivan, W. C. (2001) Resident appropriation of defensible space in public housing: Implications for safety and community, *Environment and Behavior*, 33: 626–652.
- 20 Wells, N. (2000) At Home with Nature: Effects of 'greenness' on children's cognitive functioning, *Environment and Behavior*, 32: 775–795.
- 21 Wells, N. and Evans, G. W. (2003) Nearby Nature: A buffer of life stress among rural children, *Environment and Behavior*, 35: 311–330.
- 22 Wheway, R. and Millward, A. (1997) Child's Play: Facilitating Play on Housing Estates, Coventry: Chartered Institute of Housing with support from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- 23 Allen, C., Camina, M., Casey, R., Coward, S. and Wood, M. (2005) Mixed tenure twenty years on – nothing out of the ordinary. Coventry: Chartered Institute of Housing for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- 24 Min, B. and Lee, J. (2006) Children's neighbourhood place as a psychological and behavioural domain, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 26: 51–71.
- 25 Sullivan, W. C., Kuo, F. and Depooter, S. F. (2004) The Fruit of Urban Nature: Vital neighbourhood spaces, *Environment and Behavior*, 36: 678–700.
- 26 Coley, R. L., Sullivan, W. C. and Kuo, F. E. (1997) Where does community grow?: The social context created by nature in urban public housing, *Environment and Behavior*, 29: 468–494.
- 27 Plas, J. M. and Lewis, S. E. (1996) Environmental factors and sense of community in a planned town, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 24: 109–143.
- 28 Kuo, F. E., Sullivan, W. C., Coley, R. L. and Bunson, L. (1998) Fertile ground for community: Inner-city neighbourhood common spaces, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 26: 823–851.
- 29 Kearney, A. R. (2006) Residential Development Patterns and Neighbourhood Satisfaction: Impacts of Density and Nearby Nature, *Environment and Behavior*, 38: 112–139.
- 30 Blake, A. and Cloutier-Fisher, D. (2009) Backyard bounty: exploring the benefits and challenges of backyard garden sharing projects, *Local Environment*, 14 (9): 797–807.
- 31 Blue Sky Green Space: understanding the importance of retaining good quality parks and green spaces, and the contribution they make to improving people's lives. Green Link, 2011
- 32 Gill, S., Handley, J., Ennos, R. and Nolan, P. (2009) Planning for Green Infrastructure: Adapting to climate change, in Davoudi, S., Crawford, J. and Mehmood, A. Planning for Climate Change, London: Earthscan.
- 33 Goddard, M. A., Dougill, A. J. and Benton, T. G. (2009) Scaling up from gardens: biodiversity conservation in urban environments, *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, 25(2): 90–98.
- 34 Carrier, J.-A. and Beebee, T. J. C. (2003) Recent, substantial and unexplained declines in the common toad *Bufo bufo* in lowland England, *Biological Conservation*, 111: 395–399.
- 35 Osborne, J. L. et al. (2008) Quantifying and comparing bumblebee nest densities in gardens and countryside habitats, *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 45: 784–792.
- 36 Davies, Z. G., Fuller, R. A., Loram, A., Irvine, K. N., Sims, V. and Gaston, K. J. (2009) A national scale inventory of resource provision for biodiversity within domestic gardens, *Biological Conservation*, 142: 761–771.
- 37 Hands, D. E. and Brown, R. D. (2002) Enhancing visual preference of ecological rehabilitation sites, *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 58: 57–70.
- 38 Nassauer, J. I. (1997) Cultural sustainability: aligning aesthetics and ecology, in Nassauer J. I. (ed) (1997) *Placing Nature: Culture in Landscape Ecology*, 65–83. Washington: Island Press.
- 39 Nassauer, J. I., Wang, Z. and Dayrell, E. (2009) What will the neighbours think? Cultural norms and ecological design, *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 92: 282–292.
- 40 Kahn, P. and Kellert, S. (eds) (2002) *Children and Nature*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- 41 The Association for Public Service Excellence (2011) *Avoiding the road to nowhere: Transforming front line service delivery through efficiency and innovation*.
- 42 CABE Space (2009) *Green Space Skills; National employer survey findings*.
- 43 Department of Health (2009) *Be Active, Be Healthy: A Plan for getting the Nation moving*.
- 44 Gill, S. E., Handley, J. F., Ennos, A. R. and Pauliet, S. (2007) Adapting cities for climate change: the role of the green infrastructure, *Built Environment*, 33, 115–133.



My Community Starter

An initiative from  ZURICH®

Enabling community action introducing My Community Starter

What is it?

It's a **FREE** online resource to help individuals and small groups get started with their own straightforward community activities.

It aims to make volunteering simpler by providing information and guidance on legal, health and safety, planning and insurance considerations.

Who is it for?

The website can help both individuals and groups involved in smaller, more straightforward community activities. Groups can include up to 10 people organising any number of activities for up to 50 people involved overall (for each activity).

What type of community activities is My Community Starter useful for?

My Community Starter provides information and guidance for many types of activities. Some of the key themes are:

- befriending the elderly
- fundraising
- shopping and prescription collections
- gardening and grounds maintenance
- arts and creative community projects
- heritage and environmental projects
- community groups
- litter picking

Want to know more, then visit:
www.mycommunitystarter.co.uk

My Community Starter is brought to you by Zurich Insurance plc. Zurich Insurance plc. A public limited company incorporated in Ireland. Registration No. 13460. Registered Office: Zurich House, Ballsbridge Park, Dublin 4, Ireland. UK branch registered in England and Wales Registration No. BR7985. UK Branch Head Office: The Zurich Centre, 3000 Parkway, Whiteley, Fareham, Hampshire PO15 7JZ. Zurich Insurance plc is authorised by the Central Bank of Ireland and subject to limited regulation by the Financial Services Authority. Details about the extent of our regulation by the Financial Services Authority are available from us on request. FSA registration number 203093. These details can be checked on the FSA's register by visiting their website www.fsa.gov.uk/register or by contacting them on 0845 606 1234.



THE GREAT ESTATE

All across the country, Groundwork is working closely with social housing providers and local residents to raise the quality of housing stock; to clean up and green up densely populated areas and to involve people of all ages in projects that improve their health, their employment prospects and promote greater social cohesion.

CREATING URBAN OASES

Groundwork has been passionate about creating quality local green spaces for communities to enjoy for the past 30 years and is committed to championing their value. Our landscape architects are experienced in all manner of community green space projects - from pathways, verges and lighting right through to green roofs, skate parks and sports facilities.

GETTING YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED

Our work with children and young people acknowledges that they are citizens of where they live today as well as tenants of the future. By working closely with social housing providers Groundwork helps them to reconnect to the places they live by encouraging them to get involved in local projects, bridging generation gaps and by brokering effective relationships between local authorities, police and other service providers.

The community charity with a green heart:

- Community work and empowerment ✓
- Employment training ✓
- Youth involvement ✓
- Creating attractive green spaces ✓
- Landscaping services from consultation to completion ✓
- Community gardens and allotments ✓
- Reducing anti-social behaviour ✓
- Green roofs ✓
- Carbon reduction ✓

www.groundwork.org.uk



Greener Neighbourhoods: A good practice guide to managing green spaces

Well designed and well managed housing green space is fundamental to building sustainable communities. Investing in landscapes can provide safe and accessible parks, gardens and play areas which make an invaluable contribution to the quality of life for residents as well as providing attractive neighbourhoods, enhancing biodiversity and reducing the impact of climate change.

The Neighbourhoods Green Partnership is supported by the **National Housing Federation** and:



CABE is now part of the Design Council



The National Housing Federation represents 1,200 independent, not-for-profit housing associations in England and is the voice of affordable housing. Our members provide two and a half million affordable homes for five million people.

National Housing Federation,
Lion Court, 25 Procter Street, London, WC1V 6NY
Tel: 020 7067 1010 Email: info@housing.org.uk
www.housing.org.uk www.inbiz.org

Contact:
Nicola Wheeler
Tel: 020 7167 1079
Email: nicola.wheeler@housing.org.uk