

GROUNDWORK IMPACT REPORT 2010



GROUNDWORK

CHANGING PLACES
CHANGING LIVES

**“GROUNDWORK
HAS BEEN AN
INVALUABLE,
ENDURING PARTNER
FOR MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL.
I PERSONALLY
KNOW AND VALUE
THE WORK THEY
UNDERTAKE IN MY
WARD AND
THROUGHOUT
MANCHESTER’S
DEPRIVED
NEIGHBOURHOODS,
WHERE THEY ARE
SUPPORTING OUR
MOST VULNERABLE
RESIDENTS TO
DEVELOP THEIR
SKILLS AND WORK
TOGETHER TO
IMPROVE AND LOOK
AFTER THEIR LOCAL
ENVIRONMENT.”**

Cllr Sir Richard Leese
Leader
Manchester City Council

Impact

Provided 51,000 weeks of training

Created 3,600 jobs

Enabled 8,000 qualifications to be gained

Achieved 5,000 personal progressions into training, employment or volunteering

Enabled 295,000 days of active community involvement by adults

Improved 14.3 million m² of land

Maintained 37.7 million m² of land

Involved 4,000 schools in environmental and sustainable programmes

Trained 1,780 teachers in environmental and sustainable activities for pupils

Enabled 285,500 days of active community involvement by young people

Actively supported 6,500 businesses in adopting greener behaviours

Avoided or saved 84,500 tonnes of CO₂ emissions

Diverted 227,500 tonnes of waste from landfill

FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Our outreach around the country over the past year has been framed by our response to rising unemployment in the communities we exist to serve. As the number of people out of work soared to nearly 2.5 million, Groundwork aligned a large proportion of its operations to addressing this need, and created 3,600 jobs.

Groundwork's approach has always been characterised by our ability to bring a range of financial resources together in order to achieve change. When a business partner puts forward some cash, we can match that investment with money we have identified from another funding stream.

It makes for some unusual yet powerful marriages, and our brokering ability means that Groundwork successfully brings private, public and voluntary sector partners together to affect change in their local area. That's why, even when operating through a recession, we were able to multiply by nine the investment we received from the Department of Communities and Local Government between April 2009 and April 2010.

The motivation for our staff is seeing just how far that funding can go. What might start off as an opportunity to improve a piece of wasteland on a housing estate will invariably turn into a project which involves the local community and creates the chance for them to make decisions about how that piece of land is changed. In turn, Groundwork may be able to use the project as a way to offer skills, training or employment. By working alongside the local residents, Groundwork will also pick up on other needs that we can address, such as youth work or offering advice on ways people can use less energy in their homes, schools and workplaces.

Nationally, Groundwork receives financial backing from the Department for Communities and Local Government and runs large-scale national programmes with the Big Lottery Fund, Marks & Spencer, Cadbury, United Utilities, the National Housing Federation, WREN, and the Department for Work and Pensions. We are immensely grateful to all our partners at national, regional and local level who make our work possible.

**TO QUOTE
DOUGLAS ADAMS,
IT'S THE
"INTERCONNECTEDNESS
OF EVERYTHING"
THAT INFORMS OUR
WORK. IT'S OUR
PARTNERS WHO
ENABLE US TO BE
INNOVATIVE AND IT'S
OUR STAFF'S SKILLS,
EXPERIENCE,
IMAGINATION AND
PRACTICAL
APPLICATION THAT
MAKES THE IMPACT.**

Tony Hawkhead
Chief Executive, Groundwork UK



Impact

Raised £123 million turnover

Completed 6400 projects

Served in 98% of the most
deprived areas

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Groundwork helps people and organisations make changes in order to create better neighbourhoods, to build skills and job prospects and to live and work in a greener way. We operate across England, Wales and Ireland and our charities work on thousands of local projects each year. We focus our activity on disadvantaged communities where we can make most difference.

During the past year, Groundwork sought to change places and change lives by working in **98%** of the most deprived areas of the country and delivering almost **6,400** community projects.

This report is divided into five areas of focus:

- Skills, Training and Employment
- Community Work
- Improving Open Spaces
- Young People's Development
- Greener Living and Working

These headings cover the vast majority of our work, but Groundwork's strength is being able to adapt in order to meet specific local needs and so our expertise, supported by both private and public sector partners, is directly relevant to the communities we work with.



**“GROUNDWORK
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TO THE ENVIRONMENT
AT A GRASSROOTS
LEVEL, IN A WAY
THAT ENGAGES
AND EMPOWERS
THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.”**

Mike Barry
Head of Sustainable Business
Marks & Spencer

SKILLS TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Impact

Provided 51,000 weeks of training

Created 3,600 jobs

Enabled 8,000 qualifications to be gained

Achieved 5000 personal progressions into training, employment or volunteering

The single most useful thing we can do to give people a route out of poverty is to help them find a job. We run hundreds of employment, skills and training programmes throughout the country. Many of those we work with may have given up all hope of being able to get a job. Once someone has stopped believing they have any skills to offer, their confidence plummets, making the prospect of a job interview, or even filling out an application form seem impossibly distant.

During the past year, Groundwork's employment programmes were given a boost following our successful bid to the Future Jobs Fund, administered by the Department of Work and Pensions. Together with the National Housing Federation, Groundwork undertook to provide 6,000 temporary jobs by March 2011. Alongside this, Groundwork achieved prime contractor status for the first time in South West Wales and the South Wales Valleys for the Community Task Force, which aimed to reach out to young people who were the very furthest from the jobs market and give them volunteering opportunities which would increase their chances of getting a job.

Working with partners and prime contractors to support the previous government's Flexible New Deal, Groundwork undertook numerous work and training programmes all over the country. Many of our staff were involved with running programmes paid for by the Working Neighbourhood Fund - since this was put in place to directly tackle worklessness in areas of deprivation Groundwork was well positioned to help in this effort.

With an eye on opportunities for social enterprise, we run 'Green Teams' across the country - giving unemployed young people the chance to gain skills in horticulture and landscaping. In addition, Blue Sky - our enterprise designed to find environmental work for ex-offenders is now well established in London, the south east and the south west and has begun work in the north west and Yorkshire.

Successive governments have tried different approaches to find solutions to the problems faced by communities or individuals for whom finding work is more difficult. Groundwork has a great deal of experience in this arena and looks forward to playing its part in the coalition government's Work Programme.



COMMUNITY WORK

Groundwork aims to be a beacon in a local community through its work with residents groups, schools, local authorities and voluntary organisations. Nothing brings a community together more effectively than a common cause – a safe place for children to play and get exercise or sharing a common desire to tackle a serious problem such as anti social behaviour or crime. Groundwork's community workers empower local people to bring about change on their doorstep.

In many cases Groundwork has undertaken programmes aimed at improving people's health. For example, in the north east, Groundwork targeted 100 young people unlikely to otherwise take part in outdoor environmental activities and ran a programme called Greenways to Health with Natural England. On a much larger scale, Target Wellbeing, funded by the Big Lottery, is made up of over 90 projects across the north west of England. Run by Groundwork with a range of partners, Target Wellbeing involved nearly 8,000 people over the past year with an emphasis on increasing physical activity, encouraging healthy eating and improving mental wellbeing.

Impact


Enabled 295,000 days of active community involvement by adults

Of those people we worked with:

73% feel their neighbourhood is getting better

64% feel more able to influence decisions affecting their locality





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GROUNDWORK
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BEACON.'**

A powerful example of working to change attitudes for the wider community's benefit is the Bonfire Management Programme in Belfast, which Groundwork has run for the City Council over the past five years. The programme seeks to transform these important cultural celebrations from potential flashpoints for sectarian conflict to family friendly gatherings.

At the centre of the programme is Groundwork's safe and environmentally friendly beacon structure designed to replace the precarious, locally constructed bonfires.

With a subject matter dominated by local political and cultural sensitivities, this was never going to be a straightforward piece of community work. Groundwork needed to have both the confidence and the credibility to tackle this problem in partnership with local people – and the success is down to Groundwork's standing with both council and community, which gave the neighbourhoods good reason to take action. 40 communities are now involved in the Bonfire Management Programme across the city.

One of the over-riding messages Groundwork was able to get across was the environmental and health benefits of burning a specially designed community beacon rather than a randomly assembled pile of rubbish, which encouraged fly tipping and was likely to contain dangerous pollutants. Groundwork found that safety was another aspect that local people responded to – especially when in certain traditional spots for bonfires, space had become restricted. Now, communities are requesting their own purpose-built beacons – and call outs for the police and fire services are significantly reduced.

IMPROVING OPEN SPACES

Making the most of the outdoors has long been Groundwork's speciality. Whether converting a strip of wasteland or a back alley into a community garden, or improving a park or local woodland, we are passionate about giving everyone the opportunity to enjoy quality green space, wherever they live. More and more, we are asked by people to help them improve or create allotment spaces in their neighbourhoods. Other community groups come forward to ask us to help them get access to existing natural areas by creating pathways, clearing overgrown areas or planting trees.

Our Greener Living Spaces programme with Marks and Spencer has given a strong boost to this core area of our mission. And our unique opportunity to distribute funds to community groups in our grant management role for the Big Lottery Fund's Community Spaces initiative has enabled us to be part of a national impetus to improve and create new parks, nature reserves, woodlands and outdoor recreational areas up and down the country.



“NOT ONLY HAS THE PROJECT IMPROVED THE AREA, BUT WE’VE IMPROVED OUR MANAGEMENT SKILLS ALONG THE WAY. WE’VE GIVEN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY SOMETHING THEY HAVE WANTED AND NEEDED FOR A LONG TIME.”

The Friends of Bennion Pools in Leicester pulled together to develop a former wasteland into a massive nature area the size of nearly four football pitches. Situated next to the Walkers Crisp Factory, there were already two lakes in the area but access was difficult for anyone other than the most determined of anglers. The Friends of Bennion Pools applied for money from the Big Lottery’s Community Spaces grant scheme, which is managed by Groundwork.

With the grant they received, they were able to clear large spaces, create boardwalks and pathways, steps and a nature trail. Extra plants, bird and bat boxes and information boards were put in along with benches and fencing. The whole area is now open to the general public to enjoy and is also very well used for field trips by local schools. Bennion Pools has been awarded a Green Flag as well as a Green Pennant Award.

“The best thing about the project is that we were able to join in with local people like councillors and local officials, which has helped us to forge links that can be used in the future. Not only has the project improved the area, but we’ve improved our management skills along the way. We’ve given the local community something they have wanted and needed for a long time, and have been able to involve them in Bennion Pools which has given them a great feeling of ownership and pride.”

John Greasley
Friends of Bennion Pools

Allotments

Groundwork continues in its tradition of creating brand new allotments and community gardens on disused plots, alleyways or on patches of grass found in and around housing estates. Food growing and gardening continue to capture the imagination of the people we work with, and local schemes are both an economical and educational means to convey information about healthy and environmentally beneficial food choices.

This year Groundwork has been closely involved in many allotment schemes, such as Manchester's Kersal Vale Community Allotment which renovated a derelict area to create an orchard, apiary, recycled greenhouse and allotment, with special attention given to the importance of 'urban bees'. At St Ann's Allotments in Nottingham, Groundwork celebrated the completion of a two year restoration of the oldest and largest allotment site in the UK, which sits in one of the most deprived inner city communities in the country.

The creation of the Hendon Community Allotments in Tyne and Wear on what had been a scrubby old piece of overgrown land, strewn with fly-tipped rubbish is another great example. Now the area boasts raised beds, a greenhouse, shed and polytunnel, new gardening equipment and a team of enthusiastic volunteers committed to maintaining this green heart for the neighbourhood. In addition, a number of derelict allotments have been brought back into use.

Recreation

Provision of outdoor sports areas or play spaces continues to form part of Groundwork's commitment to change places for the better. From multi-use games areas on city estates through to exciting cycling parks and tracks, Groundwork ensures it has the ability to develop high quality outdoor recreation areas for all ages.

On the Colshaw Farm estate in Cheshire, by listening carefully to young people and the wider community Groundwork was able to utilise lottery funding to transform a neglected and unsafe area of land. In 2010 Groundwork completed a BMX Track, sports area and dynamic playground alongside a woodland that is now managed, and which protects and enhances the natural biodiversity. It's part of over 15 years of collaborative work that Groundwork has undertaken to turn around perceptions in the area.



Shanaze Reade, twice BMX World Champion, at the Colshaw Farm BMX Track which she opened in April 2010.

Impact

Improved 14.3 million m² metres of land

Maintained 37.7 million m² metres of land

Of those people we worked with:

78% feel the quality of public space in their area has improved

‘PROVISION OF OUTDOOR SPORTS AREAS OR PLAY SPACES CONTINUES TO FORM PART OF GROUNDWORK’S DESIRE TO CHANGE PLACES FOR THE BETTER.’

YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEVELOPMENT



In many of our communities, young people are getting left behind. Those teenagers coming up to working age are competing against older, more experienced adults for jobs. Many don't believe further education or training is for them.

Our aim is to work with young people to improve their prospects and give them the chance to take part in positive activities, which will benefit them and their wider neighbourhood. Very often our work takes place with a small group of youngsters on one street or in one estate, but the ripple effect of this can lead to much wider participation.

‘THE YOUNGSTERS SECURED OVER 100 QUALIFICATIONS AND ACCREDITATIONS BETWEEN THEM, WHICH WILL ASSIST THEM ON THEIR ONWARD JOURNEYS TO COLLEGE OR A JOB.’

Over 80 young people took part in the Young Londoners Challenge Programme – setting out to make their neighbourhoods better places to live. Those who took part were at risk of dropping out of either employment, education or training. Groundwork involved the young Londoners in a range of environmental volunteering activities and local community projects. The teenagers took part in training, learning and team building exercises. This enabled them to develop the skills and confidence to then lead on the implementation of projects that benefited their local communities, such as seed and vegetable planting, tree pruning, building of bird boxes, concept planning for a new park and the creation of a mural.

The youngsters secured over 100 qualifications and accreditations between them, which will assist them on their onward journeys to college or a job. To celebrate, Groundwork was able to treat them to a flight on the London Eye, the staff of which have chosen Groundwork to be one of their charity-of-the-year partners – and the Eye was turned Groundwork green for the evening to mark the young Londoners’ achievements.

“I think on the whole, the group has overcome so much with Groundwork – whether it was learning to control anger or getting self-esteem. I used to be very impatient, aggressive and ignorant but as I’ve worked these last few months with Groundwork it’s helped me to develop the life-skills that will help me develop throughout life. I think I’ve learned to be independent and open minded to different things.”

Grace-Lorrell Needham

Kingsdale Foundation School in Southwark

Impact

Enabled 285,500 days of active community involvement by young people

Of those people we worked with:

75% felt they were more likely to (re) engage in education or training

Working with schools

Our outreach in schools involves working with pupils and staff to encourage a greater understanding of the natural world, together with an increasing need to emphasise energy reduction and waste recycling.

We create school gardens and outdoor classrooms to teach about food growing and composting and we conduct school assemblies and term time activities around the topics of energy reduction and recycling programmes. In addition, we encourage local pupils to connect with their surroundings by offering workshops on local social and natural history.


Working with Hillingdon Borough's Council Waste Division, Groundwork is running a Zero Waste programme for schools in the area, with the aim of establishing eight hub schools, each of which would commit to sending no general waste to landfill. The idea is to reduce consumption, re-use waste materials, recycle and compost food leftovers. Hub schools are responsible for promoting Zero Waste with neighbouring schools and within the wider community that the schools reach. Groundwork provides a lead co-ordinator that can offer a tailor made service to enable the school to deliver a successful Zero Waste programme within the curriculum, on campus and out in the community.

Usually championed by an enthusiastic group of students, Zero Waste encourages a series of practical actions such as using long lasting drinks bottles or plastic boxes to hold sandwiches instead of throw away cartons or cling film. All food waste goes into the wormeries or compost bins; all packaging waste is recycled. Pupils are instructed to turn lights off and use power down devices on the school computers. The list goes on and the young people share their new knowledge with their families, thereby encouraging positive environmental behaviour both at home and school.

Impact

Involved 4,000 schools in environmental and sustainable education programmes

Trained 1,780 teachers in environmental and sustainable education activities for pupils



Community Youth Work

Our youth workers encourage young people to take part in local activities and also run traditional youth groups. In some places Groundwork has been involved in creating a specific place for young people to go. For example, this year a dedicated centre for youth work was opened in St Austell, Cornwall after 15 years of no provision. The House comprises a social meeting space, a kitchen, an internet suite, a multi-function hall, office space and an interview room. Local young people themselves have raised over £60,000 – putting them firmly at the core of this, their project. Young people take part in how The House is developed, in its management, its staff recruitment and in deciding what activities and services are offered – they have plans for a music studio and to develop the grounds of the building. Teams of young people are responsible for running events and enterprises such as music nights and a tuck shop. During the past year over 300 young people have taken part in activities as diverse as a skate event and the production of a film about teenage pregnancy.

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GREENER LIVING AND WORKING

Encouraging people in their homes, communities and places of work to put the environment first is a recurring theme for Groundwork. We offer a service called Green Doctor where energy advisers visit homes to 'prescribe' the right treatments, such as water-saving devices, radiator panels and simple insulation measures to reduce both energy bills and carbon emissions.

Together with local authorities and housing providers we run initiatives where groups of people will work together to reduce the community's power useage. It is our firm belief that those living in areas of deprivation will suffer the effects of climate change the most. This year Groundwork entered the debate about bringing old housing stock up to date to ensure it can withstand extreme temperatures and we continue to highlight the importance of quality green spaces in our most densely populated areas in order to assist with cooling down our cities.

Groundwork is also at the forefront of showing local, regional and national enterprises how to reduce the environmental impact of their offices, their delivery networks and their supply chains.

'IT IS OUR FIRM BELIEF THAT THOSE LIVING IN AREAS OF DEPRIVATION WILL SUFFER THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE THE MOST.'

Impact

Actively supported 6500 businesses in adopting greener behaviours

Through our activities we enabled: 84,500 tonnes of CO₂ emissions to be avoided or saved

227,500 tonnes of waste to be diverted from landfill

Of those people we worked with: 69% feel they have positively changed their attitudes or behaviour with regard to the environment



Greener Living

Pedal power is on the increase, and one example is in Derby where Bikes4All, a community bike enterprise, is providing a wide range of cycle related activities. The project encourages cycling as a safe and pollution free means of transport, fitness and enjoyment.

Originally Bikes4All was conceived as a way to reduce the number of bikes needlessly abandoned and sent to landfill by repairing and refurbishing old bikes in order to donate or sell them to low-income families. Now Bikes4All is providing products and services such as bicycle maintenance and repair training, national standard 'Bikeability' training for schools and the general community, a mobile workshop, cycle reuse, refurbishment and recycling.

Greener Working

Whilst larger organisations are finding ways and gaining profile for aligning their businesses to greener principles, Groundwork has found that very little support and advice is on offer to help smaller businesses and community enterprises become more environmentally sustainable.

To meet this need, Groundwork offers environmental business services all over the country. In Suffolk and Colchester, Groundwork has been working with over 100 small and medium sized businesses conducting energy audits and advising on how to bring down costs and emissions. From guesthouses and restaurants to offices, shops, residential homes and village halls, Groundwork has identified cost savings of over £420K and carbon savings of 1,765 tonnes just by working with some of the smaller enterprises across the region.

CHANGING LIVES

“I’M BACK INTO WORK, PROVING MYSELF. FOR MY CHILDREN, IT’S THE FACT THAT I’M A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL FOR THEM, AND FOR ME, I’VE GOT A REASON TO GET UP AND OUT OF BED EVERY MORNING.”

Following a mail-out about a course to ease the transition back into work sent by her landlord, Stockport Homes, Louise rang the number to see if she could find out more. Louise attended a course run by Groundwork and Stockport Homes which was aimed to help people overcome multiple barriers to employment.

In Louise’s case, a back injury sustained more than 5 years ago had precluded her from working and when she regained her health she felt that she had been out of the workplace for too long and was intimidated at the prospect of returning. During the course, Louise began to identify which of her skills were transferable and this led to an increase in confidence. After updating her CV and learning how to prepare for interviews, Louise secured an ideal part-time administrative job.

“Every time I tried to take that step into work, nobody was there to help. This scheme was just what I needed. You looked at your skills, how to fill out application forms, how to turn what you saw as weaknesses into positives and really assess yourself, but with a lot of help.”

Louise Evans
Clerical Assistant
Stockport Homes





Supported by



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