



EUROPE & SCOTLAND
European Regional Development Fund
Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future

Blueprint for Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure Fund and
Green Infrastructure Community
Engagement Fund

January 2017



Disclaimer

Applicants should be aware that as the Green Infrastructure Fund and the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund are new, the guidance will be reviewed as the programme evolves and therefore may be subject to change. The European Union and Scottish Ministers reserve the right to amend the National Rules and SNH reserves the right to amend the published guidance during the period of the programme. Decisions to fund Projects will be based on the availability of funding, how well the project matches the Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention priorities and its contribution to outcomes as part of the whole Strategic Intervention. These priorities may change during the course of the Strategic Intervention to take into account gaps in meeting priorities in previously funded Projects and not to fund at all. The Scottish Government reserves the right not to award any support at all under this programme.

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Purpose

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is an outcomes and results-driven investment programme. It is designed to ensure that investment results in defined impacts for communities. The 2014-2020 ERDF strategy and programmes are designed around Strategic Interventions. These are large scale programmes of work which will be managed by Lead Partners – organisations who have a demonstrated capacity to manage Strategic Interventions and comply with the audit responsibilities for the funds. SNH is the lead partner for the Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention.

The purpose of this document is to set out the high level outcomes we are seeking to achieve through delivery of the Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention. It describes the vision we are trying to achieve. We have drawn on SNH's Strategic Intervention Lead Partner application to The Scottish Government, and have reviewed drivers and policy for each of the outcomes.

Background

Under the 2014-20 ERDF Programme, we intend to deliver a minimum of 15 substantial projects across Scotland that improve or create at least 140 hectares of urban green infrastructure. SNH has been approved as Lead Partner for the period up to 2018 (Phase 1), during which time we intend to deliver a minimum of eight Projects. During Phase 1, we also intend to deliver 10-15 smaller community engagement projects. A mid-term review in 2018 will take place before further approvals to 2020.

The Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention will be delivered through Challenge Funds – the Green Infrastructure Fund and the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund. A summary of how the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund will operate is provided in the [Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund Overview and Summary](#).

Summary

The Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention will create better places and enhance the quality of life of urban dwellers by improving the quality, accessibility and quantity of green infrastructure in our major towns and cities. Both the Green Infrastructure Fund and the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund target urban areas in Scotland that have a deficit of good quality greenspace, and suffer from multiple-deprivation and an excess of vacant and derelict land. Communities in these areas will benefit through the improvement and creation of green infrastructure that will help to deliver successful multi-functional places, address inequalities, provide opportunities for better health and support sustainable economic growth.

Our ambition is to raise people's satisfaction with the quality of their green infrastructure in urban areas, bringing it more into line with satisfaction levels at the national average. Green infrastructure includes the 'green' and 'blue' features of the built environment that can provide benefits and contribute to the quality of life in urban areas.

The objectives of the Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention are to:

- improve the quality, accessibility and quantity of green infrastructure in major towns and cities;
- provide increased and better opportunities for people to improve their health and well-being;
- address inequalities through the creation and improvement of greenspace for communities in areas of multiple deprivation and/or for communities living in proximity to vacant and derelict land;
- provide increased opportunities for people to experience and value nature and promote greater use of greenspace by local communities; and
- contribute to economic regeneration, providing benefits to people and businesses by investing in green infrastructure.

We have explored these objectives to create a “Blueprint” that describes the outcomes we are seeking to achieve by 2023. This Blueprint is set out over the following pages.

Vision - 2023

Greenspaces and routes are multifunctional, providing improved benefits for communities, helping us adapt to and mitigate climate change, increasing biodiversity, improving our air quality, managing surface water runoff and reducing flooding. Green infrastructure close to where people live provides economic, health and recreational benefits and enhances their quality of life. More people use greenspace for healthy activities and more people say that the greenspace meets their needs.

Communities have increased confidence from improvements in the quality of their local environment and their sense of place. Everyone within communities feels confident and empowered to use their greenspace and to be involved in, or influence, its management. Enjoying the outdoors has become more common and is part of our culture and identity. People have increased opportunities to experience and value nature.

This will be achieved through Projects which contribute towards the following outcomes.

Outcome 1 – Nature, biodiversity and ecosystems



Improved green infrastructure enhances and restores the biodiversity and ecosystem function of an area, helping our urban ecosystems be more resilient to change.

By increasing the strength of the urban green network, it provides, restores and safeguards many more services to people and nature. Improvements to urban ecosystems provide benefits to people and take account of those

people's needs, improving livelihoods and quality of life, especially for those who are most disadvantaged. People value nature and what it provides them and are aware of the steps then can take to conserve it.

Greenspace and green infrastructure are linked through a habitat network which has better connections and reaches further into towns and cities, enabling movement of wildlife. Improved green infrastructure has a varied structure, with trees, shrubs and a variety of ground vegetation.



Habitat networks are improved, increasing space for biodiversity and helping species to adapt to climate change. Better natural connections between urban and rural environments redress some of the losses resulting from our heavy industrial past.

Outcome 2 – Environmental quality, flooding and climate change



Our greenspaces and routes are multifunctional, providing improved ecosystem services for communities, helping us adapt to and mitigate climate change, improving our air and water quality, improving the ecological status of water bodies, managing surface water runoff and reducing flooding.

There are more buffer areas around greenspace including traffic-calmed roads. Our streets are greener, with more street trees/vegetation. Routes between greenspaces contribute to a green network. Our rivers, streams and wetlands (blue network) are re-naturalised, with vegetated banks, gentler slopes and swales. This improvement allows us to create space for the restoration of urban rivers, and provides enhanced opportunities for community amenity, physical activity and wellbeing.

Opening up and re-naturalising our urban watercourses helps to reduce flooding and improve the quality of our urban rivers. Green infrastructure will change the way communities perceive storm water; it is no longer viewed as a problem but as a resource that contributes to making better places. The urban fabric is permeable, allowing rain to infiltrate into the ground, slowing the flow by collecting and moving surface water safely above ground into the natural river system and removing it from the sewerage system. In extreme rainfall events green and blue infrastructure can be used to store water above ground and manage water safely through designated flood routes, reducing surface water runoff and managing surface water flooding. Run-off to rivers is reduced and water treated before it enters the river system - removing pollutants, improving water quality and managing river flooding.



Risks from climate change are reduced as communities and infrastructure are more resilient. Improved and new greenspace has reduced the impact of environmental problems like noise pollution, poor air and water quality, urban heating and flooding by improving the ecosystem services that urban land provides. Vegetation and soils absorb CO₂ and other atmospheric pollutants. Water management through greenspace mitigates the threat of flooding to transport, power infrastructure and homes.

Outcome 3 – Involving communities and increasing participation

People feel confident and empowered to use their greenspace. There is a perception that crime, including 'low level crime' or anti-social behaviour is reduced. People use their

greenspace more often and for a wider range of activities, both formal and informal. Schools and other organisations use greenspace for education, skills development, volunteering, recreation, and play.



Enjoying the outdoors has become more common and is part of our culture. People explore the area to experience nature, relax and stay fit. There is an increased choice of greenspace available with a range of different sizes, facilities, habitat, play equipment and experiences to visit close to home.

Interpretation helps make using the sites and network easier to and explains what wildlife, facilities and activities can be found there, and

what benefits they provide. There is a broad range of experiences that do not need expertise in the outdoors. There are more community gardens, allotments and food production and more wild food can be collected.

More people use path networks and cycle routes because greenspaces are better linked together, including links to and between national way-marked routes.

Communities across Scotland understand and engage with their green places and its improvement. Communities want to influence green infrastructure development and feel ownership and empowerment to use it to its full potential. Communities feel positive about green infrastructure investment and understand how it benefits them and want to engage with it and share their experience.

Communities close to or affected by green infrastructure are engaged and involved in the planning, management, improvement and use of their places and greenspaces. They see green infrastructure as a positive factor in the way their place functions and feel that the green elements of their environment add to their quality of life. Communities affected by green infrastructure improvements want to celebrate the improvements, and other communities are aware of and feel welcome to enjoy and experience the green places.

Outcome 4 – Increasing place attractiveness and competitiveness

Places are more attractive to live, work and invest in and more economically competitive as a result of green infrastructure improvements. More people use the greenspace and more people say that the greenspace meets their needs.

Greenspace provision has increased and enhanced, and deficits in access to greenspace for the most deprived



communities are addressed. The quantity of vacant and derelict land is reduced and is transformed into positive and productive greenspace where communities need and want it.

Improvements in green infrastructure underpin and complement activities to increase economic activity in our most deprived communities. Businesses are attracted to locate in the area and local businesses emerge to make use of the greenspace resource. People feel confident and empowered within their communities to use their greenspaces for work, education and leisure. More people take regular exercise before, during and after work and school, and so are healthier and more productive.

Outcome 5 – Improving health and wellbeing



Greenspace becomes a central feature of people's lives and they recognise and welcome the role it plays in their day to day wellbeing and happiness. Communities' health and wellbeing improves through the use of greenspace.

Green infrastructure close to where people live provides health and recreational benefits and enhances their quality of life through improving the quality of their local environment and their sense of place. People of all ages and abilities feel safe and confident to use and enjoy their greenspace. More people benefit from recreation and formal and informal exercise in greenspace. People's mental health and wellbeing is better as a result of increased contact with nature and with their community.

Healthcare professionals increase their use of green prescribing as an alternative to drugs or other therapies. Greenspace helps patients, visitors and staff to see their hospital or medical centre as a positive place.



Horizontal Themes – Environmental Sustainability, Social Inclusion and Equal Opportunities



The environment in which people live and the prosperity that they enjoy have significant impacts on their health and well-being. The way greenspace and places are planned, managed and used ensures that they provide a wide range of environmental benefits to local communities and helps them feel more secure and resilient. Barriers to advancement economically, socially and in outdoor workplaces are reduced for disadvantaged groups.

All sectors within communities feel empowered and confident to use their local greenspaces. Greenspaces and places are designed and managed so that everyone feels welcome and that there is something for them. All sections of local communities have opportunities to get involved with and use their local greenspace in ways that suit them. The whole community feels more in control of their local environment, more influential and better connected.

Enjoying the outdoors has become more common and is part of our culture. Communities are involved in management of their local greenspace, contributing to developing an outdoors culture.



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Scottish Natural Heritage
Great Glen House
Leachkin Road
Inverness IV3 8NW

01463 725000

www.snh.gov.uk



Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

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