

Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities

Final Report to BIG

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Without these many generous people, the research could not have been completed. Their help is gratefully acknowledged.

Executive summary

Introduction to the programme

- 1 The environmental remit of the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) was to improve the environment of communities across the UK, particularly those facing disadvantage. Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities (GSSC) was the first environment initiative of BIG. It supported projects that *'help disadvantaged communities understand, improve and care for their local environment'* and, as such, had a strong people and community focus. It had an overall value of £126 million.
- 2 Across the UK, nearly 3,500 projects have been delivered, many of them in the most disadvantaged communities. These projects have invested in a better future – for people and for places. As a result, there are new community green spaces, improved playing fields, cycling and walking routes, initiatives to reduce use of the world's scarce resources, children's play projects, and much else. Project diversity is a hall-mark of the initiative.
- 3 The vast majority of these projects began with a local focus, but many also had much wider impacts. There are communities with new perspectives on how they want to live, young people trying out improved environmental practices that can last throughout their lives, individuals newly equipped to tackle the workplace or to bring about change in their local communities. There are projects that are exemplars of good practice, continuing to influence the ways that our public services and goods are delivered. And there are many more people now able to go to somewhere local, green and inspirational, beyond their own homes, which they can share with others in their community.
- 4 The Policy Directions for the GSSC initiative envisaged funding projects that:
 - either create, preserve, improve or promote access to green spaces of educational, recreational or environmental value to the community, including the acquisition of land, reuse of derelict land, and creation of habitats which encourage biodiversity. Three quarters of the funding was for these green space projects, including playing fields and children's play
 - or, encourage small community-based projects, which engage local people in improving and caring for their environment and promoting sustainable development. One quarter of the funding was for these projects.
- 5 The initiative was tailored to differing priorities in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

- 6 Grant making and delivery of the GSSC initiative was delegated to 'Award Partners', enabling BIG to build on existing skills and experience in the environment sector. There were ten Award Partners in all, each running their own branded programme, and made up of organisations from the public and voluntary sectors. This was the first time that the Award Partner route to delivery had been used by a Lottery Distributor and represented an important innovation in grant making for BIG. From the outset, Award Partners were allowed significant levels of freedom to determine their own programmes.

Introduction to the evaluation

- 7 The terms of reference for the evaluation set two themes:
- *the impact of the initiative on social inclusion*: this theme covered questions regarding achievements of the initiative in the context of BIG's commitment to addressing disadvantage, and with respect to the sustainable development agenda
 - *the programme delivery route using Award Partners*: this theme considered BIG's decision to delegate delivery.
- 8 Much of the evaluation has been concerned with process. At both Award Partner and project levels, the area of concern has been the same; namely, have they contributed to positive social outcomes – but also to environmental and economic ones – and how have they worked to achieve this? Depth of understanding has been achieved through a review of available data on the whole initiative, individual interviews and group discussions with all the Award Partners over the duration of the initiative, and interviews with project initiators and beneficiaries from 101 case studies.
- 9 The sample of case studies was selected on a structured and independent basis to cover the ten programmes, project types, sizes, and geographical spread. The sample provides a robust reflection of the whole initiative. Most projects have been evaluated at least twice, with many visited a number of times to meet with beneficiaries and understand impacts over time.

GSSC and social inclusion

- 10 Making a real difference in the lives of the most disadvantaged was a central feature of the GSSC initiative. There were exemplary projects which responded to this in a wide variety of ways. These included, for example, delivery of benefits to local communities in areas affected by social exclusion; targeting of groups which have their own special needs; and incorporation of this targeting into projects with wider environmental objectives. Success with the social inclusion agenda was unrelated to project type, and was found in green space projects, play schemes, skate parks, local nature reserves, recycling projects and many others.

- 11 It is clear, however, that the commitment to tackling disadvantage was interpreted in a wide range of ways across the various GSSC programmes, and that it did not always sit comfortably alongside other considerations. For example, the spread of projects across all parts of the UK meant that regions and areas with particular concentrations of deprivation got fewer projects than their levels of deprivation would have justified; interpretation of 'facility-based' deprivation meant that more conventional definitions of deprivation and disadvantage were effectively put aside.
- 12 Just over half the case study projects were strong performers in terms of BIG's commitment to prioritising social inclusion. Given that these projects clearly demonstrated how disadvantage can be joined up with other agendas, it has been concluded that the overall performance with respect to social inclusion was not as good as it could have been. However, because many of the projects were good in their own right (i.e. delivered the objectives they had set for themselves), the issue becomes one of opportunity cost. More could have been achieved for those in greatest need if greater clarity had been provided by BIG over what it meant by deprivation, and how that could be combined with other ambitions without reducing the central commitment to those who are most disadvantaged in society. This is an important lesson for BIG when ensuring future programmes have their greatest impact.

Community involvement and social capital

- 13 From across the case study projects, evidence can be found of the extraordinary success of environmental action in genuinely engaging local communities. In consequence, the development of neighbourliness, mutual support, increased pleasure from knowing each other, and improved ability to work as a community with outsiders has been observed.
- 14 Success began with people coming together and working together. As such it is process-driven. A critical feature of the GSSC initiative is that there is real evidence that some of the projects have been done by people from within disadvantaged communities, rather than just the more traditional environmental organisations.
- 15 An important factor in predicting success appears to be the type of applicant. Only three out of the 36 projects that showed very substantial achievements with respect to social capital came from local authorities. The most successful were either grass roots community projects or used an intermediary to engage and involve the community. Intermediaries and support from workers employed through the Award Partners have played a significant role, but do not guarantee success.
- 16 Whilst there is much that is encouraging, the gains remain vulnerable. Community groups can over stretch themselves. Funding and support can disappear. Communities that have been supported and encouraged

can end up feeling abandoned when the support ends, and the social capital can rapidly disappear, or reappear in unwanted ways.

The role of project enablers

- 17 A number of Award Partners made use of enablers (also called mentors, field officers, advisors) to strengthen the support they provided for projects at both pre-application and project implementation stages. The enabler acted as a named contact, able to make visits, help out with problems, and provide links into specialist services such as legal help over leases and land acquisition. This helped ensure high quality applications and good outcomes.
- 18 The initiative provided a valuable demonstration of the importance of the enabler role in delivering support to new and inexperienced applicants from within disadvantaged communities. It links closely to the initiative's affirmation that it is possible and better to work with communities rather than on their behalf. These are lessons which can be transferred to future programmes which focus on disadvantage.
- 19 Ways of working which are tailored to the needs of potential applicants and to providing support during project delivery are very expensive, and could not be achieved within the 10% target overhead set by BIG. Their importance needs to be recognised and funded as a separate item from administrative overheads. BIG is already experimenting with this in programmes under development.

GSSC and sustainable development

- 20 The GSSC initiative delivered a wide spread of practical, community-level sustainable development projects, including waste and energy, reducing use of motor vehicles, local food production and environmental education. Benefits for the sustainable development agenda also came through the cycle routes and green spaces projects of other programmes.
- 21 The evaluation looked at the performance of all the projects against three dimensions – environmental, social and economic. The best contributions were to the social agenda, with the environment also performing well. Many of the projects that performed well against one of these agendas, did so against both. Gains for the economic aspects of sustainable development were the least developed, though some projects showed remarkable and stimulating results.
- 22 One of the very interesting findings was that projects which delivered against the sustainable development agenda had a wide variety of origins. The initiative has demonstrated that contributions to sustainable development at the community level can begin with a play project, a project to enhance activities for adults with learning difficulties, an initiative to tackle fuel poverty, green space improvement projects, and

many others. Local communities have joined up social, environmental and economic achievements at the local level.

- 23 There was no evidence from the sorts of projects funded through the GSSC initiative that delivery of environmental and economic benefits had a negative impact on social gains. Indeed, there was strong evidence that social gains can sit comfortably alongside other aspects of the sustainable agenda, and future programmes should be well placed to make these links clearer in their objectives.

Sustainability of effects

- 24 An initiative like GSSC, with a high component of capital spend, leaves behind a substantial legacy, with playing fields, cycle routes, green spaces and play spaces evident for all to see. The evaluation found that, so far, just over 70% of spaces were being well maintained, 20% showed significant signs of deterioration due to wear and tear, and 9% were suffering serious neglect. It was clear from the case studies that there was no single route to successful maintenance. Both good and bad standards were evident from all of the chosen routes to maintenance.
- 25 Local authorities were the cornerstone of the maintenance of the projects, though there were complaints about the resulting quality. At its best, a combination of local authority and community maintenance appears to offer the most productive approach. Notwithstanding the support given by a number of Award Partners during implementation of their programmes, many of the projects visited recognised the limitations to their capabilities with respect to long-term maintenance, with very few seeing themselves as the only source of care.
- 26 Different considerations applied when reviewing the process projects which heavily relied on their GSSC grants for revenue funding, particularly to support staff posts. They were principally the sustainable development and play projects. 40% of these projects continued in good financial health when the funding ceased and continued with their activities, and 30% continued in a reduced form. 30% closed, either on a planned basis, or through force of circumstances. The play sector was badly affected, reflecting perhaps the absence of follow-on funding for that sector. Fewer than 10% of the sustainable development projects had ceased, though many more had diminished the scope of their activity. There were anomalies, with energy projects suffering particularly badly. It was also strange that there was no clear correlation between further funding and project quality. Some of the very best projects (both play and sustainable development) were either closed or operating on a significantly reduced basis.
- 27 Whatever the project type, it is critical that project sustainability is considered at the outset, and not just in the final few months of funding. This is likely to require ongoing support during the implementation which, in turn, will need funding. There was also evidence of the need to

pay greater attention to risk assessment before projects start rather than operating rescue missions during implementation and afterwards.

- 28 Sustainability of the GSSC initiative is about more than tangible remains. The wider social dimensions have the potential to be a lasting legacy, though the value of this legacy is not yet fully understood. GSSC has also given impetus to a range of new ideas and approaches and the evidence is that these are being transferred on, both from projects still running and from those that have closed. Sharing of experience has been important, though the absence of systematic recording and collation of good practice means that this has not been maximised.

Overview of achievements

- 29 The case study projects show how GSSC has created opportunities for many communities to take action and make a difference at the local level. Assessment of the projects against the Fund's objectives for the programmes it funds, found:
- four fifths of the projects showed a very high performance against at least one of BIG's objectives
 - furthermore, when combined performance against these objectives is considered, virtually half the projects showed significant or very significant benefits
 - the funding has resulted in a stimulating and varied array of projects
 - only 15% of projects were poor performers in all respects.
- 30 Social and environmental benefits were strongly aligned. The initiative provided strong evidence of the value of the environment as a catalyst for local action which, in turn, brought about much wider outcomes in terms of knowing each other better, helping each other more, doing things together, and jointly moving into new activity. GSSC has been a significant success.

The Award Partner route to delivery

- 31 The initiative was delivered by ten Award Partners who undertook grant making on behalf of BIG. Each had their own branded programme with its own objectives. Award Partners were very different from each other. Some acted alone, and some in consortia. Altogether 30 organisations took part, coming from a mix of public and charitable sectors. The evaluation showed that this route to delivery was extremely successful, yielding anticipated and unanticipated benefits.
- 32 Different Award Partners produced very different programmes under the GSSC umbrella. For example:

- ones with low overheads, high levels of funding from alternative sources, limited development work with local communities, low risk taking, and small number of high-value schemes
 - ones with high overheads, low levels of funding from alternative sources, high levels of support for community groups most in need of help, and a large number of low-cost schemes.
- 33 The programmes varied in length from three to five years. Three years was insufficient for those programmes which were genuinely trying to reach into disadvantaged communities, because it took time for inexperienced community groups to build the understanding and confidence to complete a quality project application, deliver the project and cope with delays that occurred. In some instances, this will have implications for the size of future programmes as well as their length. If a programme value is too small, and hence can support only very limited overheads, it cannot be sustained over a five-year period.
- 34 The evaluation showed that the timing of the start of the programme was important. Award Partners were under pressure to start grant making as early as possible and, for a number, a premature start created later problems. In future programmes, both BIG and any delegated delivery partners (such as Award Partners) need to be fully prepared before grant making commences.
- 35 A key characteristic of the Award Partner route was their extensive provision of support for projects, both pre-application and during project implementation. Approaches varied, but were predicated on a belief that the right support would produce more and better applications, and better quality projects. The support included generic information giving (printed word and websites), telephone support, guidance on formulating applications, training, help with problem solving and technical advice, networking, and pre-emptive action if problems were identified in funding draw down.
- 36 The Award Partners invested substantial organisational energy in their programmes and a number also put in considerable amounts of their own money. They received significant benefits in return. GSSC gave them an opportunity to further their own objectives using (largely) external funding. It enabled them to improve their grant making skills, to address new agendas, to learn from each other, and to enhance their profile with external audiences, including central government, other funders and the media. Effectively, BIG invested significantly in their capacity building. The initiative also created an enormous opportunity across the environment sector. In the past it has tended in to be relatively inward looking, but GSSC encouraged the environmental Award Partners to engage with the play, sport and housing sectors, and with each other.
- 37 From the perspective of BIG, the Award Partner route to delivery was similarly a success. The Policy Directions to create or improve green

space and encourage small, community-based projects which contribute to sustainable development were met. The approach facilitated good penetration of grass roots organisations, and networking with disadvantaged groups, which BIG could not have achieved on its own. There was success in drawing in additional funding, and BIG was able to achieve this without needing to expand its own capacity for grant making.

Lessons for future programmes

38 From the outset BIG has referred to itself as an 'intelligent funder'. At its most basic, this means ensuring delivery of mission and values, currently expressed as *'bringing real improvements to communities, and to the lives of people most in need'*. However, the thinking that is going on in BIG with respect to intelligent funding has a number of dimensions. Of particular relevance are:

- the expectation of being an outcomes funder, linked to social change, and focussing on the broader impacts of programmes rather than their straightforward outputs; this has important links to the concept of added value
- the importance of acting strategically and, in particular, signalling the priorities for its work
- the benefits of using funding approaches which are tailored to intended achievements
- the desirability of having a good relationship between the funder and the funded, with the potential to jointly develop funding propositions and terms of reference, and then work as equals during grant management
- the value of being a learning organisation.

39 It will take a considerable period of time to translate these developing ideas into effective operational principles. However, the thinking provides fascinating context for this evaluation of the GSSC initiative. Many of the findings and issues raised through the evaluation link back to the concept of intelligent funding, and the Fund is already considering a number of the matters that follow.

40 Key lessons identified through the evaluation include:

- the importance of clarity of purpose with respect to desired outcomes; BIG will achieve best results by carefully discussing its expectations with its partners and agreeing them
- the very wide spread of constituent programmes within the GSSC initiative was ultimately confusing, and led to a loss of focus; more could be achieved through a more homogeneous groups of Award

Partners, with greater mutual support, better opportunities to join up programmes or projects to give enhanced social benefits, and creation of a programme which is more clearly 'badged' and recognised as funded by BIG

- the importance of working closely with partners so that strategic and operational guidance is jointly clarified and agreed, and working relationships are characterised by a partnership approach which plays to the strengths of each
- a style of working which provides significant support for applicants both pre-application and post-award is heavy on overheads and needs to be properly funded
- the use of project enablers has been an important component in the initiative's success. It too is expensive, but should properly be seen as an integral part of outcomes funding (where the desired outcomes are social) rather than as project expenditure and should be funded as such, rather than being seen as an overhead on which there is consistently downward pressure
- the current practice of achieving a geographical spread of projects has an opportunity cost in terms of the extent of funding going to areas with concentrations of deprivation, and needs to be reviewed in programmes which aim to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged
- a number of common principles apply to successful project design and delivery:
 - the importance of engaging local people; community involvement is needed in the design, implementation, and after care of projects
 - working from the bottom up leads to greatest gains in terms of value to the local community. Ideally this should be with groups rather than with individuals, which may in turn require development work
 - there is a need for support to projects, particularly where groups are inexperienced and in areas of disadvantage, and the benefits of providing it are substantial. This support will vary from project to project, covers pre-application and post-award stages, and is related to managing the award, engaging with the local community, and technical aspects of implementation
 - long-term project sustainability needs to be considered from the outset; in this respect, process is as important as money (though the need for money should not be dismissed lightly) and includes training and partnership building
 - opportunities to extend thinking and ways of working should be taken so as to secure social and economic benefits as well as

environmental ones, including use of local labour, purchase of local materials from local suppliers, taking opportunities to provide training and skills development, and considering opportunities for the formation of social and other local enterprises

- BIG's commitment to being a learning organisation needs to be extended to its partners. If necessary the Fund should ring fence money for evaluation and dissemination from within the overheads budget
- an environment-led initiative has been a very good vehicle for BIG to use as a means to engage communities and facilitate change in the most disadvantaged areas.

1 Introduction

“We wanted to transform a run down piece of land and create a paradise where our users could sit, relax and forget all their stress. We wanted green sitting places, fruit trees, a herb garden, olive trees, grape vines, and glorious smells. We aimed to attract birds and wildlife to the garden. And now it is finished, we have got all those things. It is a very special place, open to local residents and visitors. We can use it to teach our children about environmental issues.”

Kurdish Community Centre, People’s Places Programme

Aims and objectives of the Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities initiative

- 1.1 The environmental remit of the Big Lottery Fund¹ (BIG) was to improve the environment of communities across the UK, particularly those facing disadvantage. Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities (GSSC) was its first environment initiative². The GSSC initiative supported projects that *‘help disadvantaged communities understand, improve and care for their local environment’*³. It had an overall value of £126 million.
- 1.2 The GSSC Policy Directions were issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 1999 (see Annex 2), and envisaged funding projects that:
 - either create, preserve, improve or promote access to green spaces of educational, recreational or environmental value to the community, including the acquisition of land, reuse of derelict land, and creation of habitats which encourage biodiversity. Three quarters of the funding was for these green space projects, including playing fields and children’s play
 - or encourage small community-based projects, which engage local people in improving and caring for their environment and promoting sustainable development. One quarter of the funding was for these projects.
- 1.3 The initiative was tailored to suit differing priorities in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (see Table 1 overleaf).
- 1.4 In Scotland, additional support was provided for a programme of acquisition and management of rural land (the Scottish Land Fund)

¹ The GSSC initiative was started by one of BIG’s predecessor organisations (New Opportunities Fund) and completed by BIG following Lottery restructuring. The term BIG is used throughout the report, except where doing so would cause unnecessary confusion.

² GSSC is variously referred to by commentators as a ‘programme’ or an ‘initiative’. In practice, it is an umbrella for ten individually ‘branded’ programmes that sit within it. This report uses the term ‘initiative’ when talking about the whole of GSSC, and ‘programme’ to refer to the branded components within it.

³ GSSC Programme Review, New Opportunities Fund Board Paper, September 2002.

which also came under the GSSC umbrella. This is the subject of a separate evaluation and is not discussed further in this report.

- 1.5 From the outset the initiative was to address social as well as environmental concerns⁴. The Policy Directions for GSSC state the necessity for *'targeting projects on areas of multiple deprivation'*⁵. There was consequently a focus on tackling disadvantage, and GSSC was always intended to be a people-focussed initiative.

Table 1: Initiative themes in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

Country	Initiative themes
England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • green spaces for communities, including support for recreational green spaces and playing fields • making green spaces more accessible for communities • space for children's play • sustainable communities
Northern Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • green spaces for communities • making green spaces more accessible for communities • community involvement in sustainable development, taking into account how green space can help overcome community divisions
Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • green spaces for communities • making green space more accessible for communities • sustainable communities • the acquisition and management of rural land (the Scottish Land Fund)
Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • green spaces for communities • making green space more accessible for communities • community involvement in sustainable development

Approach to delivery of the initiative

- 1.6 The DCMS Policy Directions gave BIG considerable scope in formulating the initiative. It undertook a major consultation with stakeholders from the environmental sector to establish the best way to use the funding at its disposal. The challenges facing programme delivery were clear: the environment sector was extremely diverse and active; other funders, including lottery funding bodies, already had established programmes which addressed the scope of the Policy

⁴ See, for example, GSSC Programme Review, New Opportunities Fund Board Paper, September 2002.

⁵ GSSC: Award Partners, Paper to GSSC Panel, June 2000.

Directions; and a high level of interest had been generated about BIG's first environment initiative⁶.

- 1.7 Furthermore, it was recognised that it can sometimes be difficult for a large, UK-wide grant maker to ensure its programmes are accessible for smaller groups, and to provide all the help and support they need to gain funding and establish their projects⁷.
- 1.8 BIG therefore took the decision to fully delegate grant making and delivery of the GSSC initiative to so-called 'Award Partners', enabling BIG to build on existing skills and experience in the environment sector, avoid duplication, and implement an effective way of getting resources to local communities.
- 1.9 Award Partners were charged with running programmes on behalf of BIG, delivering funding at a local level whilst targeting and involving disadvantaged communities and groups. There were seven such Award Partners in England, and one each in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, making ten programmes in all (see Table 2 on the following page).
- 1.10 The Award Partners were very varied. Some were individual organisations, some partnerships, and some consortia. They drew on a broad spectrum of organisations from the public and voluntary sectors.
- 1.11 This was the first time that the Award Partner route to delivery had been used by a Lottery Distributor and represented an important innovation in grant making for BIG. From the outset, Award Partners were allowed significant levels of freedom to determine their own programmes: *".....we do not want to constrain them too far, and we want to give them the ability to deliver effectively at the grass roots level."*⁸

⁶ GSSC Discussion Paper, New Opportunities Fund Board Paper, June 1999.

⁷ Briefing note from New Opportunities Fund to external partner (undated); supplied to evaluators at outset of evaluation.

⁸ Dunmore, Stephen. *Minutes of Evidence to the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Select Committee*, 20 March 2000.

Table 2: Programme details

Programme name	Award partner	Value of awards (£ million)	No of projects awarded
Better Play <i>Open grant programme</i>	Barnardos and the Children's Play Council	£9.45	225
Creating Common Ground <i>Umbrella and open grant programmes</i>	Northern Ireland Housing Executive and partners	£4.74	128
Doorstep Greens <i>Open grant programme</i>	Countryside Agency	£12.56	473
Enfys <i>Open grant programme</i>	Wales Council for Voluntary Action and partners	£6.39	341
Fresh Futures <i>Umbrella and open grant programmes</i>	Scottish Natural Heritage and Fresh Futures	£2.91 ¹	77
Green Routes, Safe Routes <i>Umbrella programme</i>	Sustrans	£7.03	87
People's Places <i>Open grant programme</i>	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) and English Nature	£6.04	739
Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces <i>Umbrella programme</i>	Sport England and partners	£28.27	650
SEED <i>Open grant programme</i>	Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts and partners	£14.16	532
Wildspace <i>Open grant programme</i>	English Nature	£7.2	175

Sources: BIG; information from Award Partners

1. Excludes monies allocated to the Scottish Land Fund.

1.12 Each Award Partner developed its own approach to grant making. Programmes operated:

- either a delegated open grant programme run on an open application basis, with the Award Partner managing the application, assessment and decision making processes, as well as grant administration and monitoring;
- or an umbrella scheme whereby the Award Partners delivered a series of projects that met objectives and criteria for the programme. These were not open to applications from the community, with funding being targeted by the Award Partner to appropriate recipients based on prior knowledge or solicitation.

In Scotland and Northern Ireland both open grant making and an umbrella scheme were incorporated within single programmes.

The ten GSSC programmes

1.13 All the GSSC programmes were individually named and branded, and Award Partners developed their own programme objectives (Table 3) within the terms of reference set by BIG. From a review of these objectives, two consistent themes stand out:

- first, new or improved green space was the single most important focus in terms of hard outputs, with seven out of ten Award Partners focussing some or all of their effort in this area, clearly reflecting the Policy Directions from DCMS
- in terms of softer outputs and outcomes from the schemes, community involvement and capacity building were the objective of nine of the Award Partners; included within these nine are four which explicitly aimed to address the needs of the disadvantaged.

Table 3: Objectives of the ten programmes

Programme Name Award Partner	Programme objectives
Better Play Barnardos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce stimulating opportunities for children to play safely within their neighbourhood • offer opportunities for community members to take part in providing good play opportunities for their children • enhance the health and safety of children in disadvantaged neighbourhoods • address the play needs of particularly disadvantaged groups within neighbourhoods • share and disseminate the experience with the programme and externally

<p>Creating Common Ground Northern Ireland Housing Executive and others</p>	<p>Environmental improvements in 40 targeted disadvantaged communities to address key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environmental regeneration • community safety • neighbourhood renewal • community diversity • building community infrastructure <p>plus grants to secure local improvements through environmental projects.</p>
<p>Doorstep Greens Countryside Agency (now Natural England)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable 200 communities in urban and rural England to plan, design, create and manage their own multi-purpose green spaces • develop safe access to and from these spaces and, wherever possible, link them to other community facilities, green areas and the wider countryside • target communities which are socially and economically disadvantaged and which have poor access to local open space • support communities through capacity building, training, and appropriate application and implementation processes
<p>Enfys Wales Council for Voluntary Action and others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • securing better use of green spaces - 100 improved or created • improving enjoyment of green spaces and understanding of related environmental issues • better community involvement in sustainable development • supporting and enabling volunteers
<p>Fresh Futures Scottish Natural Heritage and Forward Scotland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver working projects that demonstrate sustainable development, with a focus on better green spaces and more sustainable practices in waste, energy and travel • increase the level of engagement of communities in these activities • give priority to disadvantaged communities
<p>Green Routes, Safe Routes Sustrans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating cycling routes to green spaces • creating cycling routes which are green spaces • creating cycling routes which integrate with other forms of sustainable transport • involving the community • supporting smaller sustainable transport initiatives e.g. safe routes to school

<p>People's Places BTCV</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help local communities create or improve green spaces which demonstrate some form of environmental benefit • demonstrate wider community benefits, e.g. through empowerment of under-represented groups, increased community activity and provision of new community resources
<p>Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces Sport England et al</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect and improve playing fields and open space, including purchase of new space, bringing disused space back into use, improving condition of pitches and playing field strategies • offer funding to schools to improve use, design and management of playing fields • develop innovative community play projects for children and young people
<p>SEED Royal Society for Nature Conservation (now Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop local economic development activity and community enterprises • facilitate training and development of skills focussing on sustainable development activity • promote the sustainable use or reuse of resources and effect change in consumption and lifestyles • encourage projects which promote the conservation and improvement of biodiversity at the community level • support projects which provide learning opportunities and promote community involvement on local sustainable development issues
<p>Wildspace! English Nature (now Natural England)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the number of local nature reserves (LNRs) in England by 200, and realise their potential for wildlife and the community by enhancing the quality of experience of users • enable the employment of community liaison officers to facilitate community led management and development of LNRs • promote the use of LNRs for environmental education

1.14 Extra diversity came through the key themes of neighbourhood renewal and community cohesion in the Creating Common Ground programme (Northern Ireland), the aspiration to promote community enterprises in the SEED programme, and sharing and disseminating experience from the Better Play programme.

Evaluation terms of reference

1.15 The terms of reference required the evaluation to address two themes (Annex 3)⁹:

the impact of the initiative on social exclusion, which included:

⁹ Evaluation Specification, GSSC Programme, New Opportunities Fund, paragraphs 22-27.

- how integrated were the social, environmental and economic elements of sustainable development?
- the achievements of the initiative in the context of BIG's commitment to addressing disadvantage, and prioritising social inclusion and community involvement.

the programme delivery route which assessed the added value of using the Award Partners to deliver the initiative.

1.16 Much of the evaluation has been concerned with process. At both Award Partner and project levels, the area of concern has been the same; namely, have they contributed to positive social outcomes - and also to environmental and economic ones - and how have they worked to achieve this? The evaluation was not required to address more conventional questions such as how effectively the Award Partners used their overheads money, and whether project outputs represent value for money.

1.17 Given this process focus, the evaluation has required depth of understanding. This has been achieved through:

- a review of available data on the whole initiative
- individual interviews and group discussions with all the Award Partners over the duration of the initiative
- interviews with project initiators and beneficiaries for a sample of 101 case studies.

1.18 The sample of case studies was selected on a structured and independent basis (see Annex 3) to cover the ten programmes, project types, sizes and geographical spread. The sample provides a robust reflection of the whole initiative. Most projects have been assessed for the evaluation at least twice, with many visited a number of times to meet with beneficiaries and in order to understand the impacts over time.

Evaluation criteria

1.19 Evaluation criteria set out what it is to be measured, and would normally link to programme objectives. The guidelines for GSSC were, however, very broad and not suited to this purpose. A good link was found between the requirements of the Evaluation Specification and BIG's objectives for projects it funded¹⁰. These were:

- improve the quality of life for people throughout the UK

¹⁰ Evaluation Specification, GSSC Programme, New Opportunities Fund (paragraph 2).

- address the needs of those who are most disadvantaged in society
- encourage community involvement
- complement relevant local and national strategies and programmes.

They were used as the basis for development of the evaluation criteria.

- 1.20 Quality of life This was taken to be a commitment to sustainable development. The evaluation explored environmental, social and economic outcomes from the initiative, and the extent to which outcomes were achieved under all three of these headings or only some.
- 1.21 Those most disadvantaged in society and community involvement These objectives amplify the social dimension of the sustainable development agenda and reflect concern with social processes and impacts. Under the objective relating to disadvantage, the evaluation has explored the targeting effects of the GSSC initiative (whether it is contributing to social inclusion by reaching those who are most disadvantaged), and under community involvement it has addressed the extent to which the initiative is contributing to the creation of social capital.
- 1.22 Complementing relevant strategies and programmes The evaluation attempted to explore the extent to which projects sought to embed themselves into wider agendas and to exploit opportunities to support existing programmes or fund new ones. It also examined contributions made to policy development as a result of learning from the initiative.

Structure of this report

- 1.23 The remainder of the main evaluation report falls into seven further chapters:
- *Chapter 2: key features of the initiative* discusses the spread of project types, sizes and applicants
 - *Chapter 3: reaching out to disadvantage* examines the extent to which the initiative has funded projects which are run by or for disadvantaged groups
 - *Chapter 4: community involvement and building social capital* explores the extent of community engagement in the initiative and how this has contributed to change at the neighbourhood level
 - *Chapter 5: contributing to sustainable development* examines achievements of the initiative against the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development

- *Chapter 6: review of overall performance* sets out key findings with respect to the quality of projects and the performance of the initiative against the evaluation criteria, and explores the important issue of long-term project sustainability
- *Chapter 7: the Award Partner route to delivery* explores the ten different programmes which make up the GSSC initiative, and how they were delivered; it explores the benefits of this programme delivery mechanism both to BIG and to the Award Partners
- *Chapter 8: lessons for future programmes* considers what can be learned from the initiative's achievements, and the implications for future BIG programmes.

1.24 This main report has three supplements, one covering each of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which provide more detail on the local programmes.

2 Key features of the initiative

“... During 2002 I witnessed the hard work and dedication of a group of parents trying to rebuild a donated classroom in the grounds of a community centre. I thought I could help and volunteered to do something about the outside area. It’s been good fun! Thank you BTCV and the Big Lottery Fund for enabling an inspiration to become a reality and truly a People’s Place”

Mid Devon Alliance for Special Children, People’s Places Programme

Introduction

- 2.1 The Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities (GSSC) initiative has created opportunities for many communities and organisations to take action and make a difference at the local level. Nearly three and a half thousand projects have been delivered across the United Kingdom (UK), many of them located in the most deprived communities. These projects have invested in a better future – for people and for places. Results include new community green spaces, improved playing fields, cycling and walking routes, children’s play projects and initiatives to reduce use of the world’s scarce resources.

Box 1: Burlington School, Learning through Landscapes playground improvement programme

Burlington School used their award to divide up a stark playground, providing formal play equipment, court and pitch markings, areas with trees and shrubs, and somewhere to sit, and shelter from wind and rain. The impacts have been amazing. In the view of the Head Teacher, the school can offer more complete education, and also somewhere for young people in the wider community to come for formal and informal play. Co-operative play is now a hallmark of the playground. There are new opportunities for cross-curriculum work in arts, maths, science and English composition. It has helped foster a positive and inquisitive approach amongst pupils and other young people using the site. Help has been drawn in from parents and other local people, for example, for football training and maintenance. Elderly people use the playground for walking and sitting. The school and the wider community have grown closer.

- 2.2 The vast majority of projects began with a local focus. Many also had wider impacts. There are communities with new perspectives on how they want to live, young people trying out improved environmental practices which can last throughout their lives, and individuals newly equipped to tackle the workplace or to bring about change in their local communities. There are projects that are exemplars of good practice, influencing the ways that public services and goods are delivered. And there are many more people now able to go to somewhere local, green and inspirational, beyond their own homes, which they can share with others in their community.

Size of the GSSC initiative

- 2.3 The total size of the initiative, including the Scottish Land Fund, was over £126 million. In accordance with the DCMS Policy Directions, allocations to England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales were based on population distribution across the UK, weighted for levels of deprivation. Size of awards to the various Award Partners reflected the requirement to achieve a 75:25 split of funding between green spaces and sustainable development projects, and the submissions made to BIG by the Award Partners.

Scope of the initiative

- 2.4 The GSSC initiative cut across geographical, social, cultural and economic boundaries:
- *geographical*: projects were spread across all parts of the UK, having distinct characters and cultures and different social, environmental and economic problems. They ranged from the housing estates of Northern Ireland to hill farming communities in Wales
 - *cultural and religious*: a number of projects responded to cultural and religious diversity in their areas; some of these worked to challenge the divided nature of their communities (particularly in Northern Ireland), while others celebrated diversity through actively bringing together different faith communities. The majority of projects, however, catered for the needs and interests of the whole community irrespective of religion or ethnic origin
 - *economic*: many projects were located in very deprived urban areas; however, projects funded under the initiative also reflected the fact that economic deprivation is not purely an urban problem and that there are economically deprived communities in rural locations and in isolated pockets within otherwise relatively affluent parts of the country.
- 2.5 An understanding of the scope of the initiative can be got from examination of data for the whole programme (Table 4 and Annex 4). Nearly half of the projects funded revolved around green space and, coarsely, just over one quarter each were about sports/children's play and sustainable lifestyles. The Policy Directions included sports and children's play under green space, which means that around three quarters of projects are in the green space category. There is, therefore, in project terms, a close correlation with DCMS's expectation of 75% for green space.

Table 4: Categorisation of projects¹

Project category	No of projects	Total in category	% of total projects
• community greenspaces	1,163		
• woods and nature reserves	238		
• greenspace access	251		
All greenspace		1,652	48.2%
• sports	384		
• children's play	518		
All sports and children's play		902	26.3%
• healthy living	190		
• cycling routes and routes to school	126		
• education	300		
• energy conservation	71		
• recycling and renewal	184		
All sustainable lifestyles		871	25.4%
TOTALS	3,425²	3,425²	100%

1. More information on these categories is in Annex 4.

2. Two English projects are omitted due to categorisation difficulties.

Data source: MAGIC data base, Big Lottery Fund; analysis by consultants.

- 2.6 In England, the proportion of different projects paralleled the whole initiative. In Northern Ireland, projects were much more heavily weighted to green space, reflecting the importance of 'contested space' in the Northern Ireland social cohesion agenda, and projects addressing sustainable lifestyles were fewer than 10% of the total. This was reversed in Scotland, where more than two thirds of the projects addressed more sustainable ways of living, with a particular focus on recycling and energy conservation, but with no sports and children's play projects. In Wales, projects were split roughly equally between green spaces and sustainable lifestyles with a small number of play and sports projects.

Range of award sizes

- 2.7 Award sizes went from a few hundred pounds to over £0.75 million:

- in Derby, the SEED programme funded St Osmund's Wilmerton Can Recycling Project to recycle aluminium cans collected from the local community. This allowed the church to promote recycling more widely and recycle more efficiently. The award value was £814.
- in London, Sport England funded the Royal Parks Agency to make capital improvements to upgrade the condition of intensively used sports pitches for cricket, football, softball and rugby. This linked to an

affordable pricing policy for target stakeholders including state schools, black and minority ethnic communities, and special needs groups, including people with disabilities, the under-18s and the over-50s. The award value was £754,930.

- 2.8 The average size of awards made by the different GSSC programmes ranged from just over £8,000 (People's Places programme) to £80,000 (the Green Routes, Safe Routes, and the Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces programmes). The Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces programme funded 73 awards of over £100,000 and the Green Routes, Safe Routes programme funded 28. The variations reflect the very different nature of the programmes (Chapter 7; Annexes 4 and 7).
- 2.9 The size of BIG's contribution to overall project value ranged from an average of about 19% for Green Routes, Safe Routes to an average of more than 90% for People's Places. There were projects which successfully combined a multiplicity of funding sources to create major initiatives, and much smaller projects where the award money reached communities with few resources who would have found it difficult to access other sources of funding

Range of applicants

- 2.10 To understand the spread of applicants, four categories have been used:
- intermediaries, which were organisations like Groundwork, plus some of the Award Partners who applied for project funding under different programmes, for example the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)
 - local authorities and other public bodies, which included county, district, and unitary authorities, plus town, community, and parish councils, and regeneration partnerships
 - schools
 - voluntary and community sector organisations, which ranged from nationally based charities to local neighbourhood groups.
- 2.11 Across the whole initiative, 64% of awards went to voluntary sector organisations, 20% to local authorities, 12% to schools, and 4% to intermediaries (Annex 4). So almost two thirds of successful applications were from the voluntary and community sector. The picture was rather different, however, if the value of awards is used as an indicator. By value, only 48% of awards went to the voluntary and community sector, 38% went to local authorities, 6% to schools, and 8% to intermediaries. This shift was because many of the larger awards, especially those made by the Green Routes, Safe Routes, and the Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces programmes, went to local authorities or schools.

More than environmental projects

2.12 This overview of the initiative shows that GSSC was always about much more than delivery of a sequence of environmental benefits. Use of Award Partners meant that BIG was able to offer an initiative with the potential to get money into places where funding did not normally reach. The approach combined the ability to deliver a wide variety of awards to a wide range of applicants with the aim of addressing disadvantage.

Evaluators' summary and review

Chapter 2 introduces two major themes which run throughout the evaluation findings. The first is the great diversity of achievement of the GSSC initiative. In this chapter it has been reflected in the spread of project types, the range of sizes, and the different sorts of applicants. The second theme derives from the importance that was attached to social outcomes, including addressing disadvantage, securing community involvement, and capacity building.

It is an indication of the sophistication of the GSSC initiative that it has been able to achieve this wide spread, and that the support systems have been in place to enable awards to go to groups without previous experience of project development and implementation, as well as to the more usual sorts of applicants. Both BIG and the Award Partners were experimenting with aims to achieve something much more significant than simple project outputs. To an extent, the GSSC programme was thus a precursor of the more clearly articulated 'outcomes approach' to funding which has now been adopted by BIG.

3 Reaching out to disadvantage

“...We are a charity working with the homeless, especially those with added vulnerabilities of substance misuse and/or mental health issues. I have been taking volunteers from our client group to work with the Sustainable Trust at Crenver Woods, with several outcomes in mind: increasing healthy activity, more meaningful occupation of time, increasing self esteem, and enhanced group working skills - as well as improvements to the environment.

I cannot praise the work at Crenver Woods enough. Our clients - many of whom do not leave their rooms for days on end - enjoy the woodland sessions so much that they remain motivated and keen to attend. It has built a greater cohesion within our supported houses and crisis accommodation, and two of the volunteers are now so enthused that they are starting an NVQ 2 in environmental conservation in September.”

Client Development Coordinator, The New Connection, whose clients are working as volunteers with the Sustainable Trust, Crenver Woods, People's Places Programme

A commitment to those most disadvantaged in society

- 3.1 In information for Award Partners (January 2000), the then Chair of BIG was unambiguous. She said ‘we are committed to ...ensuring that the projects we support make a real difference to the lives of those who are most disadvantaged in society..’¹¹ This commitment was a cornerstone of the Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities (GSSC) initiative, and is just as important to BIG now¹².

Who benefited from the projects, and how?

- 3.2 An important issue in any consideration of achievements of the initiative with respect to disadvantage is an exploration of who benefited, and in what ways. Much of the evidence for this comes from the case studies. A number of different types of beneficiary were identified (not necessarily mutually exclusive):

- *whole neighbourhoods or geographical communities:* these were the intended users and project beneficiaries for neighbourhood-wide initiatives, such as green space projects or initiatives to promote waste reduction
- *communities of need:* these were the targeted client groups for projects addressing specific needs; they included the elderly, teenage parents and their children, people with physical or learning disabilities, and those disadvantaged through fuel poverty. Projects addressing

¹¹ Pitkeathley, Jill. Chair, BIG, Information for Award Partners, January 2000.

¹² See, for example, BIG's current Mission Statement.

their needs ranged from adventure playgrounds to improvements to home insulation

- *volunteers*: volunteers were major beneficiaries and fell into two categories; the first were *volunteering in a development and management capacity* and were, for example, the chair or committee members of a tenants' association or a group delivering a service such as a play group; the second were *volunteering in a 'doing' capacity*, with many of the projects relying on volunteer inputs to non-managerial tasks such as practical environmental conservation work, parent participation in child-oriented projects, or recycling activities
- *relatives and carers*: these beneficiaries were linked to project users from communities of need; they are families and others involved in regular support and care of need groups
- *beneficiaries as a result of employment*: people who were managing projects as part of their paid employment experienced a wide range of opportunities for personal and work-related development; they came from national and local charities, hospitals, local authorities, care homes, play associations, recycling projects, statutory agencies, and many others.

3.3 An illustrative spread of the benefits experienced by project users and other project beneficiaries is shown in Table 5. The range is wide, providing access to new facilities, respite from stress and care, opportunities for new activity, development of new work-related skills, enhanced self esteem, and much more. Where such benefits accrue in neighbourhoods, or for groups, experiencing disadvantage and/or exclusion, their importance is further compounded.

Table 5: Benefits for project users and participants

Beneficiaries	Types of benefit
Whole neighbourhoods (communities of place)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to new local spaces and new environmental resources of nature conservation interest, with a mix of activities for community use • improved local environments • engagement in new activities, for example through community-based approaches to long-term after-care of space • learning and participation opportunities • raised environmental awareness through experience and personal discovery • neighbours helping each other more and knowing each other better • bridges built between different communities and religious and ethnic groups • joint social and celebratory activities across former

	<p>community divides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different generations understand each other better and have greater respect for each other's interests • understanding that dialogue is a more effective way of bringing about change than aggression and confrontation
Project users/ project participants (communities of need)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to new dedicated space tailored to preferred activities e.g. children's play space, cycle routes, and special needs of users e.g. wheelchair-accessible Local Nature Reserves • engagement of hard-to-reach through a mix of community involvement approaches and targeted outreach work • bridges built between people of different religious and ethnic groups • self esteem through participation • development of skills relevant to the workplace • engagement of isolated parents through their children • access to new opportunities for recreation, leisure, environmental sustainability, healthy eating
Relatives and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feeling supported that someone cares • opportunities to spend time with fellow carers • learning and sharing good practice • self esteem through participation and 'making a difference' • development of learning and skills relevant to the workplace • getting access to paid employment through activities undertaken
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • satisfaction of initiating, managing, completing and running own projects • getting to know more people • self esteem through 'making a difference' • skills development relevant to the project e.g. hedge laying, health and safety, child protection, better play • development of learning and skills relevant to the workplace • getting access to paid employment through activities undertaken • getting involved in the local community, e.g. . sharing learning with other groups
Paid staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of learning and skills enhancement relevant to the workplace

Where did the money go? - geography and disadvantage

- 3.4 BIG expected the GSSC initiative to fund a good spread of projects across the UK, focussing on disadvantaged areas¹³. More precisely, the DCMS Policy Directions (Annex 2) expected projects to be targeted on areas of multiple deprivation. Available data has not permitted a review of the extent to which all the individual projects were located within areas of deprivation.
- 3.5 In England, however, data is available which shows the regional distribution of funded projects. This can be compared with regional levels of deprivation. Table 6 has the percentage share of each English region in terms of deprivation and the distribution of awards. The regional proportion of the grant total is expressed as a ratio of the regional proportion of deprivation, and indicates that some regions had much more than their 'share' of awards and others much less.

Table 6: Distribution of awards to English regions and the regional incidence of deprivation

Region	% of deprivation ¹	% of total awards (£ value)	Ratio of deprivation and awards
East Midlands	7.2	8.6	1.2
Eastern	3.5	7.3	2.1
London	19.9	12.3	0.6
North East	9.8	10.7	1.1
North West	22.4	15.2	0.7
South East	4.4	8.9	2.0
South West	4.2	14.2	3.4
West Midlands	14.2	10.5	0.7
Yorkshire & Humber	14.4	12.2	0.9
England	100.0	100.0	1.0

¹ This column shows the percentage of people from the 20% most deprived areas in England, living in this region. Data taken from the Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2004.

- 3.6 The most over-funded region (on this measure) was the South West, with a ratio of 3.4 (in other words, this region received 3.4 times the grant money its proportion of deprivation indicated). Other regions where funding exceeded deprivation were Eastern (2.1 times), South Eastern (2.0 times), East Midlands (1.2 times), and North Eastern (1.1 times). Other regions had less than their entitlement. Yorkshire and Humberside received 90% of what they would have had on deprivation grounds, the North West and the West Midlands only 70%, and London 60%.
- 3.7 There was no requirement for Award Partners to systematically record and assess who got their awards in terms of deprivation, but further

¹³ Evaluation specification, page 3.

insight can be gained from evaluations done by the Award Partners and other information provided by them.

- 3.8 In Northern Ireland, for example, the consortium developed their own assessment procedure to identify the 40 'most disadvantaged' housing estates, and the estates component of the Creating Common Ground programme targeted these. The criteria included: physical condition of housing, external residential environment, and socio-economic characteristics of residents. The focus on disadvantage was therefore very strong. People running projects in Northern Ireland, and benefiting from them, typically included people on low incomes, young people (some excluded from school), lone parents, people from minority groups, long-term unemployed adults, and people who regularly suffered from crime and the fear of crime, especially the elderly. The Carnany Cares project (Box 2) shows how well-targeted GSSC grant aid reached into disadvantaged areas and created opportunities for people to come together and work together.

Box 2: Carnany Cares environmental improvements project, Creating Common Ground

The Carnany Cares project was the work of the Carnany Community Association which had been established for ten years. It was one part of the implementation of the Association's Community Plan, drawn up involving the whole community. The aim of the Plan, and all projects associated with it, was regeneration of Carnany in ways that brought social, economic and environmental improvements. It was, and is, a vision for lasting change.

The project funded by Creating Common Ground contributed to environmental regeneration, through completion of a community garden, with a woodland, wildflower meadow and walks. The works included safety improvements, particularly with the needs of elderly residents in mind. Funding from other sources enabled the Association to carry out IT projects with younger residents.

Environmental improvements have not been the only change. Working together precipitated a growing trust amongst people living on the estate who were able to get to know each other better through their involvement in environmental and community safety projects. This growing trust was also reflected in new relationships between the community and officials in a number of public and voluntary sector organisations, including the local council and the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland. The Carnany Community Association was involved in a Consumer Panel for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, making links with community groups on other housing estates.

Another real gain from the project was the opportunities for learning that it helped to create. Not only did estate residents learn through doing, but there were also specific initiatives such as a new toddlers group, and a learn-to-read scheme for the estate.

Overall, there was an exciting balance between the environmental and social gains. There was no sense of one being neglected for the other but rather of the two going together, hand-in-hand.

- 3.9 The People's Places programme actively targeted disadvantage. It did this in part by looking at the extent of deprivation in the project area. 53% of their awards went to groups located in the most disadvantaged 24% of areas, measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. It also allowed wider definitions of deprivation. Applicants were asked why they considered they were deprived. Accepted evidence ranged from police statistics to local press articles on anti-social behaviour. Applications were also deemed to target deprivation when they benefited marginalised user groups such as old people's groups or mental health projects¹⁴. Evaluation of this programme identified a number of linked, but wider, benefits from the People's Places commitment to targeting disadvantage; for example, 13% of volunteers were from BME backgrounds compared to 9% in England's population as a whole.
- 3.10 Both the Creating Common Ground and the People's Places programmes used deprivation, however defined, as an eligibility criterion. This is in contrast with some of the other programmes where deprivation was one amongst many of the factors taken into account by the grants panel (or other determining body).

Approaches to defining and identifying disadvantage

- 3.11 In keeping with its desire to draw on the expertise of the Award Partners, BIG left them to define disadvantage for themselves. A number of different approaches were used, sometimes on their own and sometimes in combination. They included:
- communities affected by the deprivation described through the Index of Multiple Deprivation in England, or its equivalents in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The Index incorporates a wide range of data including, for example, low incomes, high unemployment, reliance on benefits, poor health and under-attainment at school
 - rural communities where access to services is often poor (for example, public transport) but where the extent of other deprivation is insufficient to appear in the indices
 - people of all ages with limited mobility or impaired vision or speech, or other forms of disability, who consequently had restricted opportunities to enjoy the local environment
 - ethnic minorities who suffered from social exclusion because of prejudice and intolerance

¹⁴ BTCV People's Places Award Scheme evaluation report, SQW Ltd, April 2006.

- children, young people and others who felt disadvantaged because inadequate account was taken of their particular needs and aspirations
- areas and communities defined through facility deprivation, for example with respect to space for children's play, active recreation and sitting out; these were typically in rural areas.

3.12 The best overview of how disadvantage was identified across the whole GSSC initiative comes from the case studies (Table 7 and Annex 5).

Table 7: Case studies and disadvantage

Project target	Description of target	% of projects
Deprivation	Projects for whole geographical communities in areas of multiple disadvantage identified through national indices	26
A specific need group	Projects for target need groups (e.g. the elderly, people with disabilities, BME groups, children and young people)	12
Deprivation combined with a need group	Projects in areas of significant deprivation <u>and</u> a target need group from within it	19
Facility-deprived	Projects to tackle the needs of communities affected by a shortage of facilities (e.g. children's play, active sports)	7
Deprivation combined with facility deprived	Projects located in areas of significant deprivation, <u>and</u> which target facility deprivation within it	2
Facility-deprived combined with a need group	Projects in areas which are short of facilities <u>and</u> which target a specific need group within it	1
Environmental sustainability and need group/ deprived	Projects that target environmental sustainability <u>and</u> either area based deprivation or a specific needs group	10
Environmental sustainability	Projects that targeted environmental sustainability as an objective in its own right i.e. global target beneficiaries	21
Other	Projects about environmental change, but not environmental sustainability	2

- 3.13 One quarter of the case study projects were targeting communities affected by deprivation, as evidenced through the Index of Multiple Deprivation or a similar indicator (e.g. receipt of Single Regeneration Budget money). The indicators (i.e. the appropriate level of deprivation to justify funding) varied between Award Partners. Typically, projects that focussed primarily on areas of deprivation were environmental improvement projects, though in terms of their outcomes, many went much wider than purely environmental results. Box 3 illustrates this.

Box 3: Longley Four Greens Doorstep Green

The Longley Four Greens Doorstep Greens project aimed to 'make a difference' for residents of the Longley housing estate. It was located in an area affected by high levels of deprivation (most disadvantaged 5% on the IMD), with unemployment more than twice the UK average. The project's aim was to improve and make better use of four semi-derelict areas of land on the Estate, affected by criminal activity and anti-social behaviour. Part of what made the project special is that it was organised by a grass roots, community-run charity (LOCAL).

The GSSC grant was used to 'kick start' the improvements, and was a major contributor to enabling the local community to transform two of the spaces. They now look good, and provide opportunities for recreation and for use as an outdoor environmental classroom. Fly tipping has stopped, and whilst there is still some alcohol abuse and dog fouling on the site, local residents feel more willing to tackle this behaviour themselves. New links have been forged with a view to clients from a local rehabilitation project getting involved in maintenance work. The local probation service has been involved.

Overall expectations always went beyond environmental outputs. In particular, the hope was that improving the spaces would contribute to greater community safety and would help to make the estate a place where people want to live. In addition, the aim was to provide opportunities for skills development and work experience. The outcomes have justified the hopes. People have got to know each other better, and the areas are now being used by residents when previously they were not. Work has started on the other two greens as well and all four areas will be managed as an integrated whole. Links have been made to other organisations active in the area, including Sure Start and local schools.

The project is particularly interesting. It shows how environmental improvements can be an important catalyst in helping local neighbourhoods, affected by all sorts of disadvantage, to be active in making changes which 'snowball' into a much wider range of linked benefits.

- 3.14 Around one in ten projects targeted 'need' groups independently from any other consideration of disadvantage. These were projects which took social inclusion as their starting point, effectively defining disadvantage in these terms. As examples, they were about access for people with disabilities, opportunities for the elderly, and new facilities for people suffering from ill-health.
- 3.15 Tackling facility-based deprivation was different again. It targeted whole communities, and was concerned with area deficiencies relating to lack of access to adequate facilities (Box 4). Some of these projects also used social deprivation to help make the case for their funding, but this was not always supported by the evidence on the ground.

Box 4: Downlands School playing fields, Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces Programme

Downlands School is located in a commuter town with little deprivation. It had an excellent Ofsted report. The quality of its education was also reflected in its specialist school status in science. Its own short-comings with respect to sports facilities had been noted in an Ofsted report, and the Mid Sussex Playing Fields Strategy showed a shortage of pitches in the area. This was the justification for the school's bid for GSSC money. Award money was used to create 7.5 acres of new playing fields from agricultural land adjacent to the school. Money for land purchase and fencing came from the County Council.

Success bred success. The school treated the GSSC application as Phase 1, and proceeded to Phase 2 on the former, poor quality, playing fields. This is a sports complex with a fitness suite and all weather floodlit pitch. There will be substantial community use, and priority is given to clubs who helped support the lottery applications. Phase 2 could never have been done without Phase 1 because it released the land, and the GSSC award was the critical factor in Phase 1. In addition to the £100,000 award from GSSC and money from the County Council for land purchase, the school has attracted more than £1 million from other funders (BIG, Mid Sussex District Council, and the Football Foundation).

This is a straightforward project based around the need for additional sports facilities rather than social deprivation. The school has achieved exactly what it wanted. It has gone from being the poorest school in the County in terms of sports provision to the best, and at the same time has increased local access to sports and fitness facilities.

- 3.16 Other projects began with a focus on environmental sustainability. They were 'whole community' programmes, which aimed to create opportunities for all. Their targeting of disadvantage (where it happened) came through the project's location in or near areas affected by deprivation. The most socially inclusive of these projects were those with successful outreach work with disadvantaged communities. The best

amply demonstrated the ways that tackling environmental problems and social inclusion can go hand in hand.

3.17 In total, nearly one third of GSSC projects were working in this way to actively combine more than one type of disadvantage in their project. There is evidence of projects that successfully combined wider definitions of deprivation to suit their own expectations with a serious commitment to tackling disadvantage. Examples are shown in Box 5 below. From these, it can be seen that a shortage of facilities and deprivation can be very successfully combined to achieve good benefits, as can environmental sustainability and deprivation.

Box 5A: Colley Fields Play Fields, Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces programme

The Colley Park Playing Fields Improvements project revolved around the provision of facilities in an area which had been identified as short of facilities in the Sheffield Playing Pitch Strategy. From the outset, the project was an integral part of local regeneration initiatives by tackling deprivation and meeting the needs of young people. The approach to project development and implementation reflected this, and included a real commitment to school and youth involvement, including preparedness to change plans in response to the views collected. The result was that young people involved in the project planning stages became regular users of the completed facilities. There was less litter and minimal graffiti, and a wider range of sports could be facilitated and enjoyed.

Box 5B: Computers in the Community, Enfys programme

Computers in the Community began as an environmental project – taking redundant computers and recycling them to re-use serviceable equipment and reduce material going to landfill. But the project grew exponentially in many directions:

- the computers were supplied free to community-based organisations and needy individuals (from referral agencies such as doctors, women's refuges, etc)
- IT support and maintenance was provided in the community for community groups and disadvantaged individuals, and through a telephone support line. Help was provided at home for the housebound on internet use for banking, shopping etc
- training was provided in computer use and simple maintenance
- work with groups led on to lots of other advice and support e.g. with their constitutions, setting up bank accounts etc.
- the process of recycling, providing a service, training etc was used as the basis for a training scheme for people who were long-term unemployed; vulnerable adults were helped into full-time employment
- opportunities for volunteering extended the life skills and practical experience of a wide range of volunteers.

Did the GSSC initiative make a difference to the lives of those who are disadvantaged?

- 3.18 The case studies have shown that an initiative like Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities can have a very real and very positive impact on the lives of those who are disadvantaged. Based on the case studies, half of the projects were strong performers in terms of BIG's commitment to prioritising social inclusion (see Annex 6), and only three projects out of 101 case study projects could be said to have had no impact in these terms, suggesting a very low failure rate. There were significant differences in performance between the programmes, with Better Play, Doorstep Greens and Creating Common Ground having done particularly well. The other programmes all had a patchy performance.
- 3.19 Notwithstanding the fact that there were many very good projects which worked to tackle deprivation and social exclusion, overall performance has to be judged against BIG's expectation that the GSSC initiative as a whole would address disadvantage and the DCMS Policy Directions requirement that projects would be targeted on areas of multiple deprivation. It would be unrealistic to expect every project to have been very successful in this respect, but a performance where only half of the projects are really good suggests to the evaluators that more could have been achieved.

Evaluators' summary and commentary

Making a real difference in the lives of the most disadvantaged was a central feature of the GSSC initiative. There were exemplar projects which responded to need in a wide variety of ways. These were located in communities identified as a result of their multiple deprivation, they targeted groups with their own special needs, and/ or they combined this targeting with meeting wider environmental objectives or with tackling facility-based deprivation.

Overall, however, performance with respect to this key aspect of the programme could have been more consistent. Because many of the projects were good in their own right, the issue is one of opportunity cost. More could have been achieved for those in greatest need. A major question, therefore, is why achievements with respect to deprivation were not greater, when it is clear from the best projects that so much can be done. A number of key factors appear to have contributed to this, and three contain important learning points for BIG.

First, there was no clarification of the terms 'disadvantage' as used by BIG or 'multiple deprivation' as used in the Policy Directions. In consequence, disadvantage was interpreted in a wide range of ways across the various programmes. Some projects and Award Partners took the opportunities provided by the broad umbrella of the GSSC programme to define disadvantage so that it was tuned to achievement of their own objectives, with insufficient attention to the underlying

objectives of the initiative.

Secondly, a number of the Award Partners were focussed on achieving good regional spread, in accordance with BIG's expectations. This will have impacted on the extent to which the projects they funded targeted deprivation. The spread of projects across all parts of the UK meant that regions and areas with particular concentrations of deprivation got fewer projects than would have been expected. There appears to be a conflict between achieving a consistent geographical spread of projects across regions on the one hand, and a focus on deprived areas on the other.

Thirdly, not all Award Partners made use of the concept of multiple deprivation as an eligibility criterion, preferring to use it as a factor to be taken into account when assessing applications.

All three of these can be linked back to BIG's decision (Chapters 1 and 7) to allow the Award Partners significant freedom to determine the programmes for themselves, thereby enabling BIG to draw on their substantial experience. At that stage, it was not clear how very advantageous it is for an organisation to be an Award Partner (Chapter 7), and a higher degree of prescription would not have inhibited organisations from becoming Award Partners and using their expertise on behalf of BIG.

Future programmes would benefit from much greater clarity. An effective approach would be to ensure that appropriate deprivation criteria, defined by BIG to suit the particular circumstances of the programme (and in conjunction with the Award Partner if appropriate), are used as eligibility criteria so that projects that do not qualify on these grounds cannot get funding. The design of programmes which make use of the Award Partner route need to ensure that the objectives of both parties go hand in hand i.e. are mutually supportive. By such means, BIG would be able to ensure that its funding has greatest impact.

4 Community involvement and building social capital

“Regeneration fails in so many ways and, in contrast, this project is very good practice. It has got the community as its focus and is genuinely bottom-up. Combating poverty and disadvantage is at the heart of the model, and the task is finding ways to engage people.

The starting point was children’s play. Play brought energy into the situation. Play is a universal language. In the playground and the centre, they have created something like a village square. Families are coming along too. It has become a place where people can meet and be themselves. They are seeing their children having fun, being together. They have started to eat together, breaking down barriers between different communities.

What we are seeing is the build up of trust. Trust is critical. The creation of trust needs processes and time. By building trust, this project is creating a new sense of community.”

Neighbourhood Management Team, LB Haringey, about Triple A Play project, Better Play Programme

Community involvement

- 4.1 At its most basic, a project funded out of lottery money can provide a service. In the case of GSSC, this might be recycling white goods so that people can get access to low-priced equipment, or provision of a skate park. People can make use of the service without any other form of involvement. Where that service is wanted or needed, this act of provision brings community benefit. However, BIG was committed to encouraging community involvement. Involving communities, so that they are participating in project development and implementation, as opposed to having the project done for them or to them, can contribute to building social capital (see Annex 3 for definition), as well as to the individual and community benefits explored in Chapter 3.
- 4.2 The evaluation, therefore, looked for evidence of community involvement in the projects, and the extent to which involvement contributed benefits in terms of the building of networks, connections and trust which lead, for example, to communities knowing one another better, caring for each other better, and taking ownership of what they have achieved.
- 4.3 All but one of the Award Partners took on board BIG’s expectations about community involvement (Annex 7). The remaining Award Partner was much less successful than others in generating community involvement in the planning and implementation of most of the projects it funded, but latterly experimented with a “bottom-up approach” to grant making.

- 4.4 Award Partners varied in the intensity with which they encouraged or required applicants to thoroughly consult with, and fully involve, local communities in the design and implementation of schemes. In consequence, case study projects showed a wide variation in approaches to involvement. These included:
- consultations at the outset of the projects to establish user interests, needs, and preparedness to be involved. These ranged from basic, and not fully interactive, consultation approaches, such as house-to-house-surveys, through to participatory involvement in objective setting and even design through 'Planning for Real' exercises
 - active involvement of the local community and/or target user groups in implementation of project works. This included, for example, litter picks, hedge laying, and planting schemes on newly laid out green space
 - active participation in a core project activity, for example participating in, and helping manage, green travel schemes or parent involvement in new play activities at play schemes
 - on-going involvement in long-term care and maintenance, for example in the management and care of local nature reserves
 - use of facilities without active involvement in maintenance and further development, for example use of facilities by elderly people or by teenage parents and their children.
- 4.5 Successful outcomes were ultimately in the hands of the projects. Not least, this is a difficult way of working and takes a lot of time. Where groups were under pressure to finish their projects relatively quickly, or were inexperienced in community engagement, results sometimes fell short of expectations. Given the difficulties, it was a significantly good achievement that more than a third of the projects performed well in terms of community involvement and social capital (Annex 6). Canmore Back Greens (Box 6) is a good example.

Box 6: Canmore Back Greens Project, Fresh Futures Programme

The Edinburgh Community Back Green Initiative supported tenement residents to revitalise underused or derelict greens and create shared 'community back greens', with opportunities to install new facilities such as play areas for toddlers, secure bike sheds and composting facilities, to improve security and to build a sense of community.

The Initial Phase 1 project, funded by Fresh Futures, was a project to survey back greens, survey residents about what they wanted, and test interest and feasibility. It has developed into an exciting practical project to put community back greens into practice, led by the consultant who developed the original idea and worked with the original housing association applicant. Theory has been turned into practice on two pilot

back greens, and active and enthusiastic resident support really marks the project out.

The consultant's outreach approach has generated lively and thriving resident back green associations for both pilot schemes, bringing residents together, in many cases for the very first time. Near neighbours previously ignorant of each other are now friends; socialising both on the greens and in the tenements is increasing; mutual help networks are developing; steering group meetings in local pubs (previously never set foot in) become the trigger for a friendly follow-on drink; and cooperative work on the greens themselves is netting rapid benefits. Spurred on by success, the initiative is now being extended to a further five greens which already show healthy signs of developing along similar lines.

"never met, laughed, or socialised with neighbours before, with the odd exception" – member of Wheatfield Community Back Green Association

"now feel part of community – contributing to it – feeling more involved – I input to, therefore I am part of, the community" – member of Dalry Community Back Green Association

- 4.6 Successful projects in this respect were not confined to any one project type. Projects that built social capital included play schemes and skate parks, local environmental clear ups, Doorstep Greens, local nature reserves, work opportunities for people with disabilities, feasibility studies, recycling projects, energy projects, a cycle routeway, a 'home zone', and an education project.
- 4.7 The most successful projects with respect to social capital were either grass roots community projects or those using an intermediary to actively engage and involve the local community in the planning and implementation of a project. Whilst not always as successful as was hoped, this latter approach has been very important in generating local ownership of a project.
- 4.8 Conversely, one third of projects had only modest success with respect to lasting community engagement and building of social capital, and just under a third had little or none. The least successful were top-down projects, either as a result of the applicant organisations or because they were inspired and carried through as the vision of one person, or of a small group of people, rather than of the community. Whilst they may have endeavoured to engage local communities, there was much more of a flavour of 'doing things for' communities than of them being done by communities.
- 4.9 It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to consider all the reasons why the task of engendering real and lasting community engagement is so challenging. It is worth mentioning, however, that success is linked in part to timing. One of the most outstanding projects in terms of social capital (Gin Pit Village, Box 17, Chapter 6) was a result, amongst other

things, of the right people being around, with the necessary levels of commitment, at a time when funding was available.

Who got awards?

- 4.10 Evidence from the case studies showed that awards to public sector applicants were less effective in building social capital than awards to the voluntary and community sector. Success was most likely with projects run by community-based organisations or projects that could access or provide skilled and dedicated help with community engagement. Out of 36 projects identified as having significant or very significant effects on building social capital, only three of the applications were from local authorities. All three were projects involving Local Nature Reserves (Wildspace programme) where a community liaison officer had specific responsibility for working with the local community to develop a community role in the long-term care of the reserves, and increase their enjoyment of them. This was an outreach role, involving little of traditional public sector formality.
- 4.11 At the time that the GSSC initiative was established, no targets were set for funding to the voluntary sector. The combined priorities of the GSSC programmes meant that half of the funding went to the voluntary and community sector (Chapter 2 and Annex 4). This represents a self-limiting feature of the initiative in terms of overall achievements with respect to community involvement and social capital, since the best performances largely came from voluntary and community sector organisations.

Environmental action as a means of community engagement

- 4.12 Environmental action provided a relatively uncontroversial reason for people to come together. The modest, but often sufficient, levels of funding available from most of the Award Partners enabled applicants from community-based organisations to feel comfortable about taking on relatively low cost, and thus low risk, green space improvement projects. These projects, when successful, provided highly visible improvements to the environment of their local communities, as well as being the catalyst for joint action.

Box 7: Surtees Doorstep Green, Ferryhill Station, Doorstep Greens Programme

The Surtees Doorstep Green developed an open field close to the village of Ferryhill Station. It was an opportunity to improve a run down area of informal green space and create a community park to benefit the whole village. The project included the establishment of grassed areas, small woodlands, play areas for toddlers and younger children, a kick-about space for teenagers, paths and seating/picnic facilities.

The project was led by the Residents Association, working with a Doorstep Green Committee and Ferryhill Town Council. The Town Council's support

was vital to successful delivery of the project. This relationship has continued, following completion of the Park, with the Council taking financial and organisational responsibility for key maintenance works whilst the Committee coordinates day-to-day management and upkeep, and organisation of local events. The site is extremely well looked after.

Local people are proud of what had been achieved and of how the whole community, both young and old, was involved in the design, planning and implementation processes. They feel that it has bridged the gap between the younger and older generations and brought the whole community closer together to create a better sense of community spirit. The support of local children is evidenced by the absence of significant damage, vandalism or graffiti. Several members of the Committee commented that their involvement had improved their confidence and capabilities, broadened their horizons, and extended their work beyond the project to other local groups and committees.

- 4.13 A number of the community-level sustainable development projects were also able to operate in a similar way.

The Creating Common Ground programme and social cohesion

- 4.14 In Northern Ireland, GSSC grants were, literally, about 'creating common ground' in divided communities. There was a strong emphasis on making use of opportunities which would help to create local pride and improve community relations. Projects involved a wide range of participants and, with the support of field officers, local residents were engaged in, and empowered by, the regeneration of their own estates and in implementing projects. Grass roots action was a keynote of the programme.
- 4.15 Box 8 on the Seacourt Estate provides a remarkable example. Environmental and social achievements abound. There has been an increase in social cohesion. The community living on the estate has been willing to attract in, and work alongside, outsiders. It has involved a huge turnaround in community relations between a mixed, but predominantly Catholic, community on the estate and the wider, predominantly Protestant, culture of Larne.

Box 8: Seacourt Housing Estate improvements: Creating Common Ground programme

Creating Common Ground provided seedcorn funding of £50,000 for the Seacourt Estate and a model process as to how that money, and more from other sources, should be spent. A dynamic Community Association, led by a very dynamic chair person, has totally transformed the run down, divided estate into a calm, more integrated, outward looking, connected, and environmentally attractive environment for its residents. A state of the art children's playground is at the heart of the improvements. It provides 'common ground', enabling youngsters to attract their friends from other estates and religious backgrounds to

come in to Seacourt, breaking down past community divisions.

The planning and implementation of the environmental improvements (tree planting, bedding plant displays, recycling bins, dog bins and litter clear ups) provided a reason for the Community Association representatives to talk to everyone on the estate and get them to join in the various activities. The social capital and capacity building gains have been enormous. The Community Association led by example, and overcame cynicism from within and outside the estate. They have gained respect locally for their achievements, in turn enabling them to access new funding and influence the work that the statutory agencies and government departments do on the estate.

In mapping out their future plans (including an outreach project, cliffway path, polytunnel, Multi-Use Games Area and youth club), they identified 20 different groups they expected to work with to achieve these projects, including the Local Strategic Partnership, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the North Eastern Education and Library Board, Larne Borough Council, the NI Police Service, Renewable Energy Systems, Sports Council and many others.

The key activists have seen that winning people over to your point of view by talking works, and that it is now possible to gain influence in the right places to win the support that will continue to benefit Seacourt.

- 4.16 During evaluation visits to the Northern Ireland estates, numerous people explained the benefits of getting to know more of their neighbours. Good relationships had been achieved between project activists and beneficiaries, even when they came from different backgrounds and had previously been in conflict. Community representatives led by example – picking up litter, challenging anti-social behaviour, setting up youth groups, and delivering services for young women and the elderly. Some of the Community Associations have become the delivery mechanism for mainstream services on their estates, and were expected to act as the go-between, communicating the needs of residents to the relevant authorities and vice versa.
- 4.17 The estates improvement programme's requirement to consult with, and involve, local residents in drawing up plans and implementing work on the ground, brought people from different backgrounds into contact with each other, and this yielded greater understanding of each other's perspectives and of their mutual concerns, such as the needs of their young people and their elderly. Groups have visited other projects, run by those from different religious or political persuasions, and been inspired and motivated. The Creating Common Ground approach of persistent efforts at community engagement yielded substantial added value, where divisions between one excluded group and another can have such a dramatic affect on quality of life. Communication and understanding were increased.

Role of intermediaries

- 4.18 Through the People's Places, Doorstep Greens, Creating Common Ground, Wildspace, Fresh Futures and Enfys programmes, even applicants for small grants were backed up with advisory or mentoring support from their Award Partners (discussed further in Chapter 7). Many groups reported that this made all the difference to their ability to complete the application process and see their projects through to completion. In addition to support with the application, community group representatives reported learning about project management, legal issues surrounding the leasing, management and ownership of land, and the difficulties of sustaining environmental improvements once initial funding runs out. Support to groups has been an important feature of the GSSC initiative, and a major contributor to success with community engagement and building social capital.
- 4.19 In addition to project support via the Award Partners, projects were able to access other types of support. Some were encouraged by their Award Partner to work through an intermediary person/organisation, particularly for the community engagement aspects of the work. This involved organisations such as Groundwork or local development trusts, and individuals employed by them as community development workers. Parish and Town Councils helped individuals and groups from their local communities to apply for awards and implement projects.
- 4.20 Use of project support and, to a lesser extent, intermediary organisations, brought a significant number of people forward from within local communities. They learned to take effective action and to create links with staff from public and third sector organisations. This empowered their organisations to gain better support from these bodies and, at best, to start a process of joint engagement (partnership building) in the delivery of neighbourhood change. What is particularly significant about the GSSC initiative is that it has created the opportunity for this to be done by local residents and community leaders from within the disadvantaged communities, rather than by the more traditional voluntary and community sector groups that have typically engaged in environmental projects in the past or by the environmental agencies.

What happens next?

- 4.21 Success with respect to community involvement and capacity building has been an exciting outcome from parts of the GSSC programmes, most especially when this has also been combined with tackling disadvantage. Such results sit comfortably within current policy agendas at both national and local levels. The thinking is to reinvigorate the very local, almost doorstep, level. Potentially, putting more power into the hands of local people will mean that they can shape the places where they live, including at the neighbourhood level that has been most important to the communities that have benefited from GSSC funding.

- 4.22 Communities that have become engaged and shown evidence of new social capital have been enabled in part by the Lottery funding granted to them, and sometimes also in part by support workers from the Award Partner.
- 4.23 Comments made to the evaluation team have raised a number of important issues. First, many projects continue to be dependent on funding sources from the lottery or elsewhere. Interruptions to the availability of follow-on or appropriately themed funding increases the vulnerability of these projects to one or more of closure, the loss of services to their client groups, and threats to the social capital that has been built.
- 4.24 Secondly, significant success can be destabilising for a community-based organisation. One very successful GSSC project visited for the evaluation had achieved significant successes through environmental improvement projects, incorporating both a children's playground and training initiatives. Newly won skills in fundraising generated new sources for a second round of projects, with resulting awards of greater value than was necessary. This created difficulties in spending the monies to timescales, which in turn led to pressures on the organisation and on the relevant support workers. There was also evidence from other case studies that human nature can intervene and undermine achievements where personalities clash. Goodwill and enhanced community relations are vulnerable and easily eroded by early difficulties before trust and understanding is really embedded.
- 4.25 Finally, there can sometimes be an underlying assumption that communities will go on and use their experiences of one project to do more and more. However, it is very clear that, whilst some will, there are very many who do not want to. Their funding from GSSC has enabled them to undertake the project that they wanted, and they see no reason to go on and do more. For them, keeping that one project in an appropriate shape for the future is challenge enough.

Evaluators' summary and review

The GSSC initiative provides a reminder of how much can be achieved using the environment as a means of engagement. From across the case study projects, evidence can be found of the power of environmental action as a means of bringing people together to work for a common objective. In consequence, a growth in neighbourliness, mutual support, increased pleasure from knowing each other, and improved ability to work as a community with outsiders, and much else that is positive, can be observed.

Success was unrelated to project type, and was found in green space projects, play schemes, skate parks, local nature reserves, recycling projects and many others.

Success in building social capital began with people coming together and

working together. As such it is process driven. A critical feature of the GSSC programme is that there is real evidence that some of the projects have been done by people from within disadvantaged communities, rather than just the more traditional environmental organisations.

An important factor in predicting success appears to be the type of applicant. The most successful projects were either grass roots community projects or used an intermediary to engage and involve the community. Intermediaries and support from workers employed through the Award Partners or by public sector applicants can play a significant role, but do not guarantee success. The question of who gets its funding is an area of policy that is already being addressed by BIG as it develops its new role as distributor of more than half of all Lottery funding and its focus on the lives of people most in need. It now has a target of getting 60-70% of all its funding to the voluntary and community sector, so that the limitations to the GSSC initiative that have arisen from who got the funding should not be replicated in future programmes that are seeking to reach out to the most disadvantaged.

Whilst there is much that is encouraging, the gains remain vulnerable. External initiatives which act as a catalyst for change but are only short-term may, at worst, do more harm than good. Community groups can over stretch themselves. Funding and support can disappear. Communities that have been supported and encouraged can end up feeling abandoned when the support ends, and the social capital can rapidly disappear, or reappear in disappointment, alienation and lack of self worth.

5 Contributing to sustainable development

“Behaviour changes will be needed to deliver sustainable development. However, attitude and behaviour change is a complex subject... One of the key elements of the new approach is the need to engage people close to home. The new Community Action 2020 – Together We Can Programme... will support communities to work together to make the world more sustainable for themselves and future generations.”
Securing the future: delivering UK sustainable development strategy, March 2005

Sustainable development and the GSSC initiative

- 5.1 BIG had an interest in the sustainable development (quality of life) agenda and wanted to fund projects with more than social benefits (Chapter 1). One of the best definitions is that sustainable development is *‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’*.¹⁵ It is seen as having environmental, social and economic dimensions. Sustainable development is looking to integrate environmental, social and economic benefits – achieving ‘win:win:win’ solutions.
- 5.2 Action to promote more sustainable development was an integral part of Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities (GSSC). The DCMS Policy Directions indicated that it should be 25% of the initiative. The focus was on small, community-based projects that engaged local people in improving and caring for their environment and promoting sustainable development.
- 5.3 BIG had a particular interest in whether integrating social, environmental and economic elements of sustainable development would weaken impacts on social inclusion and community involvement. The evaluation therefore looked for evidence of ways that the environmental gains linked to social and economic benefits.

The Fund’s first environment initiative

- 5.4 In any consideration of sustainable development, it is important to note that GSSC was an environment initiative. Nine of the ten programmes had direct environmental outputs. There was no requirement on Award Partners to collect data on all those outputs and benefits. However, a good indication of achievements can be seen in Table 8 on the following page.
- 5.5 An important theme from the findings in earlier chapters of this evaluation is that environmental action has been an important catalyst for other changes. In a sense, therefore, and given BIG’s commitment to

¹⁵ Our Common Future, Report of the Brundtland Commission, Oxford University Press, 1987.

wider outcomes such as reaching disadvantaged communities, it may be more accurate to describe the GSSC programme as 'environment-led'.

- 5.6 Three of the programmes branded themselves as funding practical sustainable development projects with an environment focus. Of these, the SEED programme was exclusively about sustainable development, and the Enfys and Fresh Futures programmes had a mix of funding for sustainable development and funding for green space projects.
- 5.7 The sustainable development (as opposed to green space) projects included improved practice with respect to waste, energy, car use, food production and land management. They also covered education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles. Many were taking ideas which have been trialled elsewhere and developing or extending them so as to create locally relevant projects. A number were opening up new areas of work in the sustainable development agenda, particularly around integrated rural development and tackling fuel poverty.
- 5.8 The Green Routes: Safe Routes programme was also embedded in the sustainable development agenda. The programme had a relatively narrow area of focus (sustainable transport).

Table 8: Scope of environmental outputs from GSSC initiative

Programme	Environmental outputs
Creating Common Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - environmental improvements to 40 housing estates, which incorporated new sitting out areas, entrance gateways, clearance of graffiti and sectarian symbols, new play areas - number of other projects x type
Doorstep Greens	<p>Creation of 193 Doorstep Greens which incorporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sitting out areas - children's and young people's play space - ponds and water features - sculptures and community art - areas of nature conservation interest - sensory gardens
People's Places	<p>Creation of 722 new or improved green spaces which incorporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sitting out areas - new or improved access - clean ups and clearances - improved wildlife habitats - 'green' initiatives e.g. sedum roofs, solar panels, use of recycled timber

Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 226 playing field improvements - 29 young people's play projects - 334 school grounds improvements projects
Enfys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of greenspace projects x type - number of sustainable development projects x type
Fresh Futures ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 115 new access point to green spaces created - 270 kilometres of recreation path created or improved - 574 hectares of green space improved - about 93,000 kilometres of vehicle travel reduced - 127 kilometres of cycle or walking path created or improved - 11,200 journey to work undertaken without using a car - 6,900 tonnes of municipal waste reduced - 4,247 tonnes of household waste recycled - 503 tonnes biodegradable waste diverted from landfill - about £413,300 saved on electricity bills per year
Green Routes: Safe Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - kilometres of new routeway - kilometres of improved routeway
SEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of projects x type
Wildspace ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creation of new Local Nature Reserves well in excess of the 200 target - creation of two LNR sites per region as centres of excellence for environmental education - three quarters of projects established new 'Friends of...' groups

1. Source: programme level estimates from Fresh Future's own evaluation.

2. Source: information from own Wildspace's own evaluation.

- 5.9 Finally, the greenspace projects made environmental contributions, for example through enhancement of visual amenity and tree planting. In addition, three of the green space programmes (Doorstep Greens, People's Places and Wildspace) engaged with wider aspects of environmental sustainability through the nature conservation and biodiversity agendas.

Contributing to sustainable development

- 5.10 Notwithstanding their environment origins, very few of the projects could be described as solely environmental. The Green Routes: Safe Routes projects, for example, showed how action to reduce CO₂ emissions by promoting cycling also brought social benefits through links to schools, to safe travel plans, and also to the health agenda. One of these projects is illustrated in Box 9 below.

Box 9: Stourport-Kidderminster canal path improvements, Green Routes: Safe Routes programme

Sustrans awarded a £70,000 grant through GSSC as part of the £300,000 upgrade of the canal towing path between Kidderminster and Stourport. New paths, routes to join the path through open spaces, links to safe routes to school, traffic calming and landscaping improvements were funded through the grant. British Waterways and Worcestershire County Council were the other main partners, supported by Wyre Forest District Council.

Whilst this is a strongly environmental initiative, with benefits for air quality and CO₂ emissions, there have been social and economic benefits as well, not least because the path passes through well-used parts of the two towns at either end. The path is in regular use, and users were very pleased with the path improvements. Previously it had been virtually impassable in wet weather and had felt unsafe at night. Some users were looking forward to cycling even further once more sections of the network were opened up.

- 5.11 Overall, just under a half all the case study projects (i.e. the 101 green space and sustainable development projects combined) showed good environmental performance (Annex 7). Initially it was a surprise that this proportion was not higher, since the majority of the organisations making up the Award Partners came from the environment sector. However, review of the projects showed that a number were looking to combine environmental change with social benefit. This did not make environmental gains unimportant in their thinking and project planning, but meant they were often not pre-eminent.

Box 10 Stainton Quarry, Middlesbrough Local Nature Reserves, Wildspace programme

The Middlesbrough Local Nature Reserves (LNR) was a genuinely exciting project, combining environmental benefit with community gain.

It was located in one of the ten most deprived local authority areas in England, and provided local access to natural areas, in places where half the households didn't have use of a car. Its chosen approach was firmly rooted in a community development agenda. It wanted to nurture community pride, encourage participation and confidence, and create opportunities for the development of community groups. It involved a wide cross section of local people. Education work with schools and young people was also important, and was about citizenship as well as environmental education. In a sense, environmental gain was used as a means to an end, the end being more confident communities with higher self-esteem, a greater sense of belonging, and a determination to keep things moving for the better.

Work at Stainton Quarry transformed a village of disparate groups into a joined-up, interactive community. Conservation activities, clean-ups and events have encouraged families to come together. A village run by the elderly has commenced the journey to becoming inter-generational, moving away from earlier attitudes. And to cap all, cooperative work on the LNR spawned a spin-off village green project which has brought together the previously separate communities of Stainton and Thornton.

- 5.12 Interestingly, it was the social dimension of sustainable development that performed most strongly in the evaluation. We looked for evidence of contributions to health, crime reduction and community safety, educational benefits (including environmental education), cultural benefits, community events, and similar. Nearly two thirds of the total case study projects had significant or very significant benefits in this respect. We did not take social inclusion and building social capital into account because they were separately scored.
- 5.13 Contributions to the economic element of sustainable development were the least developed. This is not a surprise since very few of the projects took economic issues as their starting point. One third of case study projects had no impact on the economic aspects of sustainable development, and another third had only a little impact.
- 5.14 The vast majority of the projects that performed well with respect to economic aspects of sustainable development were projects which were explicitly aiming to address the sustainable development agenda, and took account of its wider ramifications. Three, however, were the product of lateral thinking on the part of project initiators looking for wider benefits from the work they were doing in the areas of both children's play and greenspace. This is a critical marker for future programmes. Wide ranging outcomes across the sustainable agenda can be achieved where projects think wide and are ambitious.

Box 11: Community Energy Support Project, SEED programme

The Community Energy Support Programme co-ordinated advice, support and training to non-environmental community-based

organisations in inner city Birmingham, enabling them to develop their capacity to provide energy efficiency and fuel cost advice to their beneficiaries, energy efficiency improvement measures to their beneficiaries' homes, and access to finance for installing the improvements. The project used a community development approach, with a trickle down effect by building capacity in community groups.

The aims were a mix of social and environmental. One was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the other to increase levels of affordable warmth amongst disadvantaged households. Yet economic benefits were just as evident. Reducing expenditure on fuel so that households have more disposable income was one aspect. The other was a whole raft of social enterprise creation, facilitated and enabled through the Energy Support Programme.

Though SEED funding is over, the Programme has continued. Seven social enterprises are in development by partner organisations for installation of the energy efficiency measures. Their prime mission is to get disadvantaged people into work through the development of skills, but their awareness of environmental issues is rising and a broader spread of objectives is becoming more common.

The current target is involvement in city-wide sustainable warmth initiatives, which will bring social, environmental and economic gains in equal measure.

A wide variety of starting points

- 5.15 GSSC projects demonstrated that wide-ranging benefits can come from social, economic or environmental projects. There is good evidence, for example, of strong, combined environmental and social benefits from projects involving environmental action. Box 12 below describes an exemplar project.

Box 12: Hidden Garden Project, Glasgow, Fresh Futures Programme

This project reclaimed a former derelict site adjacent to the Tramway Theatre in Glasgow to create a public green space that was Scotland's first 'contemporary sacred gardens'. A unique aspect of the project has been its aim of bringing together the different faiths and cultures within the Pollokshields area by celebrating their differences rather than looking for areas of common ground. To achieve this, project staff placed the highest priority on an active and in-depth process of consultation and engagement with a very wide range of community interests both in the planning phase and during the Garden's subsequent development. This was carried through into an annual programmes of activities and events at the Garden for diverse faith and ethnic groups, and which promotes links with other community initiatives.

The Hidden Garden is one of the highest profile projects supported by

the GSSC initiative across the UK. It has won a number of awards and has regularly featured in the landscape architecture and design press. The success of the Garden was reflected in comments from local community leaders interviewed as part of the evaluation, with particular praise for the ongoing commitment of project staff to working with the local community. Project staff are aware, however, that the Hidden Garden is a long-term project and it will be 10 to 15 years before its true impact can be assessed in terms of “overturning 50-70 years of isolation and separation and racism”. Expectations and hopes are high.

In common with many greenspace projects, the key challenge for the Hidden Garden is to raise sufficient funding to maintain the momentum, both to maintain the infrastructure and take forward its programmes of events that focus on the local community, volunteers and the wider public. Staff are focussing on opportunities to offer community-based services to local authorities in the fields of health and social care.

- 5.16 Equally, a strong social agenda can produce social, economic, and environmental gains. Tyddyn Mon was an environmental improvements project, but its impetus came from social objectives. The project demonstrated that gains can be integrated in significant ways (Box 13). The project helped the economic viability of the farm, created new employment and skills, enhanced opportunities for interaction between the public and the client group, and also benefited the environment.

Box 13: Tyddyn Mon Farm project, Enfys programme

Tyddyn Mon Farm is in a rural area with high unemployment, problem housing estates, and rural isolation. It is part of a network of support facilities for people with learning difficulties and their families. The vision is for the farm to be a mix of community service provider and visitor attraction. The surrounding community is involved in a number of ways – farm visits, opportunities to buy the local produce, the chance to mix with the client group, and use of a farm barn for dances and community events. Local tourism businesses benefit from the farm's role as a visitor attraction and supplier of local produce.

Whilst the project at the farm had a target client group, its impacts were much wider and it would be wrong to see it as a single focus initiative. Works funded through Enfys made getting round the farm easier – for example new footpaths, gates and stiles. Ditches and scrub were cleared, culverts built, and new interpretation boards on local history, habitats, and wildlife provided. Clients can now work outdoors in all weathers, and it is easier for visitors to see round the farm. The project took on a school leaver with no qualifications and gave him training and confidence. He gained three OCR's and became a valued team member with permanent employment prospects. Members of the client group developed skills in path laying, ground clearance, and simple building works.

The award gave staff and clients new confidence that they could win the

funding and manage the projects that will enable them to achieve their long-term vision. An associated project, funded by the Arts Council of Wales, enriched the visitor attraction side of the farm, and could not have gone ahead without the Enfys project. Enfys money was added to by private sector support such as cut price rates for gravel and plant hire. The local authority gave old slabs and hardcore free. A final piece of the jigsaw is that the project was associated with an initiative for farm diversification, linked to the coastal footpath.

- 5.17 From the outset, BIG was interested in the extent to which social benefits could be combined with environmental and economic ones. It is notable that, in very many of the GSSC projects, environment and social gains went hand in hand. A small number did well in only one or the other, but for many there was a good performance in both. The economic gains were the least developed. Overall, it can be concluded that lottery-funded projects can successfully combine benefits across the sustainable development agenda, and that pursuing environmental and economic objectives need not inhibit social gains. However, few, if any, projects were able to deliver a win:win:win project without working to address seriously all three strands.

Evaluators' summary and review

This chapter shows that the GSSC initiative delivered a wide spread of practical, community level sustainable development projects, including waste and energy, reducing use of motor vehicles, local food production and environmental education. Benefits for the sustainable development agenda also came through the cycle routes and green spaces projects of other programmes.

The evaluation looked at the performance of the projects against three dimensions – environmental, social and economic. The best contributions were to the social agenda, with the environment also performing well. Many of the projects that performed well against one of these agendas, did so against both. Gains for the economic aspects of sustainable development were the least developed, though some projects showed remarkable and stimulating results.

There was no evidence from the sorts of projects funded through the GSSC initiative that delivery of environmental and economic benefits had a negative impact on social gains. Indeed, there was strong evidence that social gains can sit comfortably alongside other aspects of the sustainable development agenda, and future programmes should be well placed to make these links clearer in their objectives.

It appears likely that the extent of this was not well understood at the start of the initiative, and that the potential for delivering wider gains, whatever the starting point of a project, were not fully explored. There has been a real opportunity for learning through delivery of the initiative. Armed with evidence of the successes of the GSSC programme with respect to 'joined up' benefits, future programmes should be well placed to build on

this. BIG could promote a wider range of aspiration amongst the projects it funds, secure in the knowledge that social projects can deliver environmental benefits, that economic benefits such as training and social enterprise creation can come from either social or environmental beginnings as well as economic ones, and that win:win:win is an appropriate expectation.

6 Review of overall performance

“I believe the effects will really last. Community spirit has been revived. People have made new friends. They are willing to give up their weekends to improve the area. Elderly residents are no longer isolated. They are not afraid to speak to their neighbours. People look in on them, shop for them, and take them to hospital appointments. We have BBQ evenings, carol services and Christmas meals. I didn’t realise how much I could believe in the benefits of an integrated neighbourhood. I am proud to live in the village.”

Committee Member, Gin Pit Village, People’s Places Programme

Introduction

- 6.1 The earlier chapters have been dealing with how the programmes have performed with respect to the first evaluation theme, namely the impact of the initiative on social exclusion, which included integration of the social, environmental and economic elements of sustainable development, and the achievements of the initiative in the context of BIG’s commitment to addressing disadvantage. Before leaving this theme and going on to consider the delivery mechanism (the Award Partners), this chapter summarises the overall performance of the initiative.

Quality of the projects

- 6.2 Many projects successfully hit a spread of targets, delivering environmental excellence whilst achieving social goals with the marginalised or excluded. Some improved quality of life for local communities while simultaneously offering those same communities training and job opportunities. Others offered up robust models of thriving social enterprises, able to carry schemes confidently forward well beyond their lottery-funded beginnings.
- 6.3 The very best delivered across the board, helping to resurrect community spirit, articulate local needs, engage local people in project delivery, and enable individuals to realise and fulfil untapped potential. Such projects evoke admiration for the range and depth of what has been done, the incredible journeys – both collective and individual – undertaken to get things done, and the far-reaching implications of the achievements.
- 6.4 The projects which displayed the converse of such good practice stand as the initiative’s disappointments. These are projects that purported to engage with, and include, local communities but proved to be just solo, personal crusades; schemes which lacked clear project management; groups unready or unprepared for the responsibility of grants and project workers; top-down projects which failed to properly engage with the community; and those projects where the assessment of risk was less rigorous than it should have been.

Understanding performance of the projects

- 6.5 In this evaluation, the overall assessment of performance comes from the case studies. They demonstrated immense variety, both in terms of the types of activity undertaken and the extent to which they were run-of-the-mill or truly exploratory or innovative. This meant that evaluators were not comparing like with like. An intuitive response to the projects was insufficient for the purposes of evaluation of the whole initiative. A simple five-point project scoring system was therefore devised to help with the task of assessing, on a consistent basis, the extent to which a project met BIG's objectives (Annex 2 and Annex 6).
- 6.6 The scoring measures achievement against the evaluation topics (see paragraphs 1.19-21), namely contributions to quality of life (sustainable development, broken down into its environmental, social and economic components), disadvantage (social inclusion), and community involvement (social capital). Results from scoring the projects are shown in Figure 1.

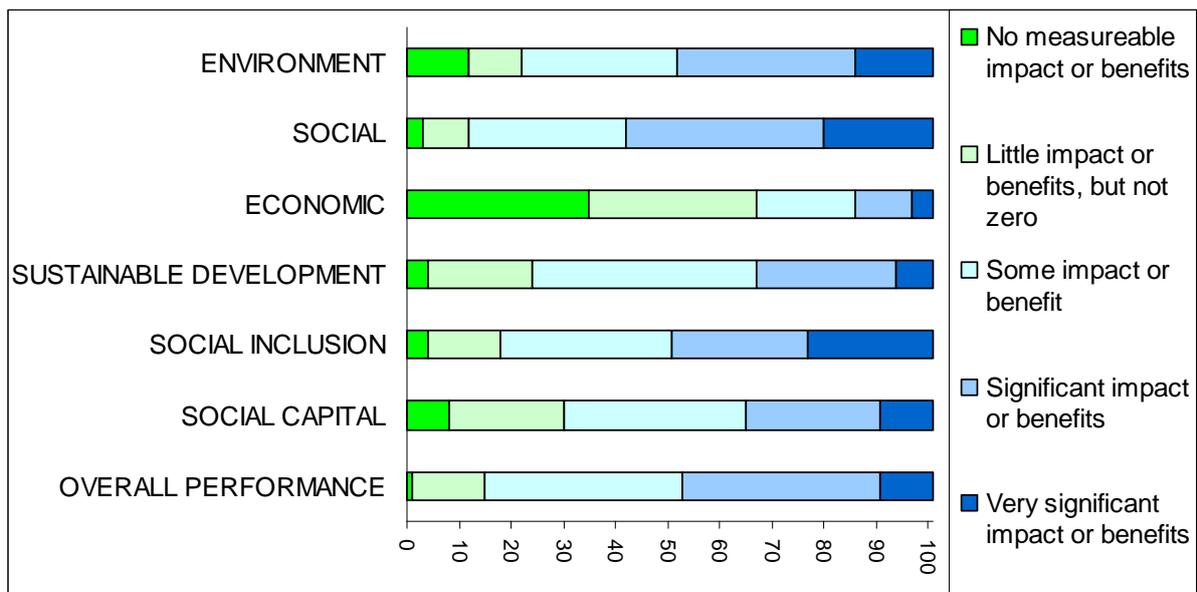


Figure 1: scoring of the Case Studies

- 6.7 It is a measure of success that nearly half of the 101 projects (48) had significant or very significant impact/benefits when judged against their overall performance. Amongst these are projects which seem to shine by whatever standards are set. Not only did they perform well against the evaluation criteria, but they went on and, variously, developed their approach, shared their experience with others and helped to see it rolled out elsewhere, pushed at the forefront of approaches to more sustainable living, extended into new activities and much else. However, some very good projects were narrower in their aspirations, and unlikely to score positively against all the criteria. Their performance against individual components was, therefore, also examined (Annex 6). Four fifths of the projects (81) had significant or very significant impacts on at least one of the evaluation themes. In a sense, this gives a true picture of the programme. Four out of five projects were high performers

against at least one of BIG's objectives for the projects it funded. For the great majority, Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities (GSSC) projects demonstrated an ability to develop good ideas and deliver them.

- 6.8 These evaluation scorings reflect BIG's own aspirations, and not necessarily those of the projects themselves. Poor performance on our scoring does not mean that a project is bad but, rather, that it did not achieve those things that BIG hoped for. The reasons for this do not always sit with the projects themselves. Design of programmes and uncertainty of the Fund over what it was really trying to achieve contributed in equal measure.

Complementing local and national strategies

- 6.9 At the most strategic level, in common with other Lottery programmes, links to national programmes and strategies were made by DCMS when the GSSC initiative was established. Those links were reinforced through the combined impacts of the Award Partners who, in their turn, were chosen for their broad knowledge base and range of contacts, their ability to make the necessary programme and policy linkages, and their alignment with relevant policy agendas.
- 6.10 At the project level, the policy links were made through a complex fit between the projects themselves and the Award Partners. Applicants looked for funders whose programmes coincided with the objectives of their own project and applied for grants in those places. Award Partners looked for projects that met their programme objectives. Given that programme objectives were aligned, in whole or in part, with national agendas, projects became so too.
- 6.11 Early stages of the evaluation examined fit with national programmes and strategies among the case study projects. Amongst experienced applicants, for example local authorities and well-established non-governmental organisations, there was good understanding of these agendas, and many different links were quoted to us during evaluation interviews. Amongst community groups, knowledge of the links was more limited, though a number showed good understanding of how they could identify and use such links in order to attract further sources of funding.
- 6.12 More interesting is the extent to which we found evidence of links to future policy, and how experience gained through the GSSC initiative was being used to disseminate good practice. This was particularly strong in relation to projects directly addressing the sustainable development agenda because it is here that testing of ideas through demonstration projects was most evident. Examples from across the programmes included, for example:
- use of experience gained through GSSC to present evidence to national policy makers, both civil servants and politicians; this has been done both by projects themselves (for example with respect to

renewable energy through the SEED and Enfys programmes) and by the Award Partners (for example, Sustrans and the obesity agenda)

- use of Doorstep Greens by CABI Space as good practice examples for widespread dissemination of successful consultation and community involvement in green space projects
- use of experience gained through cycling projects to enhance local policy making and accessing of funds, for example through the Sustrans programme with respect to the second generation of Local Transport Plans.

6.13 In both Scotland and Wales, the links between the local programmes and the sustainable development agenda were particularly marked, with Enfys providing a good demonstration of the Assembly's commitment to sustainable development being put into action at the local level, and Fresh Futures providing a programme which fitted well with the emerging environmental justice agenda.

6.14 It was a characteristic of successful projects everywhere that they were keen to talk to others and share their experiences. Some translated this into specific work to disseminate their learning and encourage others (Box 14). It was therefore disappointing that there was no systematic effort across the programmes to collect and distribute examples of good practice which could be used in future initiatives.

Box 14: Mill Hill School: Learning through Landscapes playground improvement programme

Mill Hill Nursery School eagerly embraced the opportunity to upgrade its outdoor play and learning facilities with the aim of improving the children's physical, social and creative skills. The new facilities are popular with the children. There has been an improvement in behaviour and enthusiasm for outdoor play, as well as a drop in play-related accidents. The school's ability to deliver in several key areas of the National Curriculum has improved. At a recent (2006) Ofsted inspection, the school was rated as 'outstanding', and was especially praised for the quality of its play provision.

Success breeds success, and these improvements had a significant impact on school staff, improving their knowledge and skills in managing playground behaviour, giving them greater confidence in their own abilities, and inspiring them to be more creative and imaginative. One of the Nursery Nurses is now acting as a trainer in play development whilst another has been appointed Nursery Nurse Support Practitioner for Sunderland Council. Through this work, school staff are active at both regional and national levels, making visits to other schools to talk to them about play development, and inviting them to visit Mill Hill and see what has been done. Staff have also been involved in national conferences on play provision, sharing the skills and experiences gained and disseminating good practice.

Making things happen

- 6.15 The evaluators explored whether case study projects would have happened without GSSC funding. Projects were scored high where the project was clearly started as a result of the GSSC money, and would not have happened without it. Projects which made use of the money and were in part determined by it, but would have happened anyway (albeit differently), scored medium. Projects where the GSSC funding was a convenient component of a much larger package of money, but did not substantially contribute to the overall concept and 'shape' of the project, and where the project would have happened regardless of the GSSC funding, scored low.
- 6.16 Based on this assessment, the evidence from the case studies is that the GSSC monies were very important. Three quarters of projects would not have happened in anything like their eventual form without the GSSC money, and in fewer than 10% of cases was the GSSC impact low. Perhaps not surprisingly, awards to local authorities were disproportionately represented amongst those in the 'low' group. This is because some local authority projects were put together as a funded package by the local authority, in which the GSSC money was but one component, and which would have gone ahead anyway.
- 6.17 A number of the programmes funded feasibility studies. In the Doorstep Greens programmes, this was effectively a two-stage application process. For programmes with a strong sustainable development component, feasibility studies were valuable in enabling organisations to test the reality of their aspirations. In some instances, the result was abandonment of an idea. None of the case studies where this happened felt that the feasibility study was a mistake. A common response was relief that it was now possible to move on in new, productive directions.
- 6.18 In some cases, the feasibility study was a launch pad. With the idea tested and 'proven', the ideas have been put into practice. Hebden Bridge car sharing scheme is typical in this respect.

Box 15: Hebden Bridge Ground Floor Car Share scheme: SEED programme

The project aimed to research and generate a business plan, marketing strategy and appropriate working systems in connection with the establishment of a not-for-profit transport initiative in and around Hebden Royd. The initiative was aimed at providing efficient, low-cost car sharing for the local community. Within a little over a year from the study's end, a fully fledged car share scheme was launched, with two vehicles, 10 members, staff, funding and systems in place, based largely on study findings. Almost three years further on, and the project has gone from strength to strength, with four cars, 50 members and its own website. The scheme is now self-financing and its fleet is run exclusively on bio-fuel provided by a local supplier – completing the circle back to the initial study which originally researched the viability of just such an alternative fuel source.

6.19 The opportunity to link environmental initiatives with social benefits has encouraged new partnerships and innovation. But perhaps the most startling thing is the evidence of individuals, groups and larger organisations that have been willing to go the extra mile in order to explore the best of what they can achieve in the circumstances they are working in.

Project sustainability

6.20 BIG's expectation was that the portfolio of funded projects would 'genuinely involve communities in designing and delivering projects and ensuring sustainability'¹⁶. Implicit in the GSSC approach was the view that communities have a role to play in keeping benefits going.

6.21 From those case study projects for which we have sufficient information to judge, the following picture emerges (see Annex 9 for more details):

- in terms of the green space projects, just over 70% were being well looked after and were in good condition, 20% showed significant signs of deterioration due to wear and tear and/or vandalism, and 9% were being seriously neglected
- in terms of the sustainable development projects and play schemes (not involving new facilities), 40% were in good health and were continuing with, or increasing, the activities started with GSSC money, 30% had had to reduce activity due to shortage of money, and 30% had closed.

6.23 Taking the green spaces first (play space, sitting out space, playing fields and games areas, and green transport routeways), spaces resulting from the GSSC initiative have joined other new and improved green spaces recently funded through multiple mechanisms, including

¹⁶ Evaluation specification, para 12; our underlining.

lottery programmes. Management and maintenance of this green space is of great current concern. There is widespread recognition that it would be a sad irony if high quality new spaces, some delivered through painstaking efforts by local communities, rapidly commenced the downward spiral that leaves them in need of renovation. With nearly one third of the GSSC spaces already showing cause for concern, the conclusion can be drawn that maintenance will be a problem for these new green spaces, as for many others.

6.24 A review of the case studies has shown that there were three dominant approaches to management and maintenance of the green space. They are reliance on local authority maintenance budgets, community involvement in maintenance, and engaging help from others, and are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Interestingly, judged by the case studies, there is no single route to success. Very good maintenance standards were achieved through local authorities on their own, communities working on their own, and a mix of approaches. Similarly, projects giving cause for concern are not confined to a common maintenance and care route.

6.25 The case studies showed that a combination of local authority and community maintenance can be very powerful. Typically this involved the local authority in responsibility for aspects normally handled under maintenance contracts (e.g. mowing), with smaller, more fiddly jobs being done by groups. There were many good examples of this (see, for example, Box 16 below). In contrast, at a number of case study locations there was concern over the quality of local authority care (see Annex 9 for more details).

Box 16: Mapesbury Dell Trust, Mapesbury Dell, Doorstep Green Programme

“We got a lot of input to the design from London Borough of Brent. The Dell had been a place for criminal activity before it was improved, so they were particularly concerned about designing out crime and using robust materials. Using granite sets and other local authority approved surfaces which are easy to maintain, we have nonetheless created a garden as opposed to a municipal park. Taking care of it is our joint responsibility”

- there is a Steering Group of LB Brent and the Trust to run the maintenance and care. LB Brent is mowing, picking up the leaves, caring for the gravel, looking after the play equipment, and emptying the bins
- members do the gardening and the ‘frills’ – planting, pruning etc; the committee runs Sunday gardening days (about once a month) and have 25 people who are consistently active, plus always some extras
- one of the members visits each day to keep on top of routine maintenance tasks
- this level of care and maintenance needs careful organising; a grid of areas and a task list for each square in the grid has been prepared so

that people know what they have to do. This means work has a beginning and an end and so feels enjoyable. Information is provided to help with weed identification and other guidance, and food and drinks help the maintenance days to go well

- small amounts of money come out of people's own pockets to cover costs of the work, plus contributions from the Residents Association Biennial Open Gardens Day.

6.26 The Wildspace programme extended this approach by promoting involvement of community volunteers in the management of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) through organisations such as 'Friends of...' and the County Wildlife Trusts. This was facilitated through 'community liaison officers' funded through Wildspace, who worked to engage 'Friends' in long-term maintenance as part of their enjoyment of the LNR. Case study visits showed how much local communities valued their Wildspace, and how committed enthusiasts welcomed opportunities to be involved.

6.27 From the outset, some groups began with the idea that they would undertake maintenance without external support, and continued to do so. At its best, this approach can achieve very significant results, both in terms of standards of care and in terms of on-going investment in capacity building and development of social capital. In such situations, social change initiated by the GSSC initiative did not stop when the funding ended and instead continues to evolve.

Box 17: Gin Pit Village, People's Places Programme

The Gin Pit Village project targeted environmental change. It tackled the improvement of the village's woodland surroundings. This involved rubbish clearance, new planting, creation of improved paths, and proposals for management. It has been done by a group of local users and has provided a safer, greener, cleaner and more accessible place for residents and wildlife.

The benefits are substantial. Environmental improvements are clear. They are being maintained and enhanced. And from the perspective of local residents there are also many other gains. There is much more community cohesion with, for example, group members going on holiday together and organising local get togethers, and more people knowing each other and caring for each other. Significantly, the local housing association is finding an increase in the waiting list for its properties in the village. For individuals, it is raising their interest in wider environmental education and action including birds, wildflowers, composting, and use of rainwater. The environmental initiative is leading on to wider environmental thinking and to an enriched local community.

6.28 Devolving care of green spaces to the community sometimes produced ineffective and demoralising results. More often than not, this arose when the wider community had insufficient involvement in developing or implementing the project, and felt little ownership of what had been

created. In such cases, there was little interest in looking after it. In some instances, the task was clearly beyond the resources of the group doing the maintenance, both in terms of labour and financial resources, with the whole investment consequently at risk. Overall, the strong message emerging from the evaluation is that it is difficult for communities to maintain their involvement over time without some form of external support.

- 6.29 A variety of support was provided by Award Partners during project implementation (Annex 7) to help groups to complete their projects and build capacity for the post implementation period. Only two Award Partners put real effort into keeping support going once projects were complete. Both were government agencies where the GSSC initiative was an important mechanism for delivering their own objectives (Doorstep Greens and Wildspace programmes). Doorstep Green projects were encouraged to meet the Civic Trust's Green Flag standards and apply for the annual award. So far, 14 have won a Green Flag or Green Pennant Award, and the case studies showed that more intend to apply.
- 6.30 A substantial addition to community effort was achieved where projects were able to make use of an external source of labour for maintenance. Typically this involved some form of social enterprise or, in at least one case, the Probation Service. Such approaches have the advantage that they also bring wider social benefits – again addressing disadvantage and/or developing social capital. The approach has been well demonstrated at the Ashton West End Doorstep Green where some of the Council's grant contribution was used to pay for post-completion maintenance in the short term. It is intended that the social enterprise which undertook this initial work, and which is expected to become self financing, will look after the area in the longer term.

Box 18: Ashton West End Doorstep Green

Regular maintenance at the Ashton West End Green is undertaken by St Peter's Partnership's Greenscape Team, part of a wholly owned subsidiary company of St Peters Community Partnership, a local trust. They visit twice a week and also make call outs. Funding since April 2005 has been via a grant sum committed to St Peters from the Council's project contribution - £20,000 in total, giving £3,500 a year over five years, including an element for improvements and repairs.

Greenscape was established in 2002, driven in part by the need to put in place a mechanism which could pick up the maintenance in years to come of the trust's first major asset. It has since developed into a very successful enterprise, currently employing a team of seven, made up of a manager, skilled operatives, trainees, labourers and office support staff. Its community and landscape teams are fully equipped to offer a wide range of services including landscape design and build, site maintenance and repairs, all types of fencing, cleansing, resurfacing and risk management.

Greenscape has taken part in many community-led initiatives ranging from environmental clean ups to paving and shrub planting. Greenscape now have a diverse portfolio of clients and contracts including landscaping/horticultural maintenance contracts for New Charter Housing and local housing associations and environmental schemes for Tameside MBC, as well as tackling community issues from local residents.

In five years time, it is anticipated that the strength of St Peter's Trading Company (running employment and training programmes) will generate sufficient resources to maintain the Doorstep Green and other community assets held by the Trust.

The Green won a Green Pennant Award in 2005 in recognition of its environmental quality and the project management skills which underpinned its creation.

- 6.31 Project sustainability has different connotations for the sustainable development and play projects which did not involve new facilities. Essentially GSSC grants provided revenue funding for 'process' activities. We had anticipated that mainstreaming by relevant local authorities would be an important component in providing project sustainability for such projects. In practice, fewer than 10% were fully maintained in this way. As many were run by, or supported by, the private sector as by local authorities. Only 40% of the projects were in good financial health when the funding ceased, and were either sustaining themselves or growing in strength. The remainder were roughly equally split between closed down and struggling.
- 6.32 The play sector experienced significant difficulty in attracting new funding. One half of the play projects did not continue after their GSSC funding had ceased. The end of the Better Play programme coincided with a time when there was no other Lottery funding available for play. This is in the process of changing, and at least one of the closed case study projects is hoping that funding from a new BIG programme will enable them to re-open. In comparison, fewer than 10% of the sustainable development projects ceased completely, though energy projects had significant difficulties with their funding, with valuable activity either curtailed or lost. A number of the sustainable development projects are looking towards at least partial self financing, but this will require a considerable period of time and continued investment meanwhile.
- 6.33 There was no correlation between the pattern of closures and significantly reduced activity on the one hand and quality on the other. As would be expected, very weakly performing projects are amongst those that have either closed or significantly reduced, but some of the very best projects (both play and sustainable development) experienced major difficulties with future funding and are either currently closed or substantially reduced.

Benefiting from the GSSC impetus

- 6.34 A number of local authorities found GSSC projects an impetus for new linked activity. Several of the Sustrans projects, for example, stimulated a raft of cycling-related activity in the partner local authorities. Even where local authorities were unable to put in further funding, they observed benefits from approaches adopted for Green Routes: Safe Routes project delivery and some used that learning to extend their own processes and practices.
- 6.35 It is a hallmark of success that knowledge gained is applied in new ways. There is evidence of the capacity and experience built up through the GSSC initiative being subsequently used to extend or branch out from the initial benefits gained from the funding.

Box 19: Wild About Play, Better Play programme

Following their very successful 'Wild About Play' project, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust found funding to keep it going for a further two years. Involvement in the Better Play programme gave the Trust a new direction and helped them develop the capacity to deliver. They now focus part of their energies on environmental play, utilising their substantially increased ability to combine environmental and social benefits. They are working with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and three other local authorities to spread the confidence and experience gained through Wild About Play to all the authorities in Staffordshire. Together they will access new BIG funding through the Children's Play programme to roll out an enhanced approach across the City and County.

- 6.36 An extension of this can be found when the experience gained was shared, so that the lessons learned are also applied by other groups and in other locations. This happened in a number of ways. For example:
- individuals who built up their own experience through working on a project then went on to work as a trainer to others, or in a different capacity which built on what they had learned
 - partners in organisations involved in projects rolled out the experience, transferring the lessons to a new arena; as an example, the Kirby Thore Doorstep Green was initiated in part by the local Housing Association which owned the land and managed many of the properties in the nearby housing estate. The success of the Green encouraged the Association to be more proactive in landscaping its other properties and in undertaking or supporting other local environmental improvement works
 - schools have been particularly good at sharing skills and experience; in Perth and Kinross, for example, the Council was one of the leaders in the Eco Schools concept, now one of the Scottish Executive's

indicators of local authority performance. The Council was working to link the Eco Schools approach into the whole sustainable development agenda with the aim of encouraging good practice not only in schools but also within the wider community, other public sector organisations and businesses.

- 6.37 Given this willingness to learn and to share, it is disappointing that there has been no consistent approach from the Award Partners to collating the evidence of good practice from their programmes for use by subsequent projects. If learning had been better embedded as a principle behind the GSSC initiative, it could have helped in part to ameliorate the 'stop and start' impacts of short-term funding regimes under which so many of these important and innovative projects operate, ensuring a legacy from the projects of shared and accessible learning for the future.

Risk management and risk assessment

- 6.38 Managing risk is inextricably linked with project sustainability. Programmes dealing with innovative projects relating to the sustainable development agenda and/or trying to reach beyond groups who normally apply for grants are more risky than those that target proven approaches and the 'usual suspects'. In looking for potential applicants from areas affected by disadvantage and with limited skills with respect to applying for and managing grant funding, there will inevitably be challenges.
- 6.39 The strongly managed relationship between the Award Partners and BIG meant that, in practice, there was a high level of protection against failures during the implementation phase. Award Partners did experience problems with projects being undertaken by inexperienced groups, but were under pressure to secure completion of the projects. The extent of the management caused frictions between BIG and the Award Partners (see Chapter 7), and the evidence from the case studies showed that this also extended to the relationship between Award Partners and the projects. At the project level, the view was that awards of less than £5,000 - £10,000 should not be overly managed or monitored, but that proportionate risk assessments should be conducted for all projects over that level of total costs. Hand in hand with the risk assessment, a proportionate approach should then be taken to providing project support and monitoring.
- 6.40 There was evidence that a small number of voluntary and community sector organisations with good skills in grant applications accessed funding which took them out of their operational 'comfort zone'. This has important implications. If money is to genuinely support projects in areas which have not traditionally accessed large amounts of funding, there are obligations on grant makers in terms of risk assessment in advance of, and support during, project implementation. The project outlined in Box 20 was worthy of funding, assuming it could demonstrate the necessary organisational capacity to maintain the project and its

activities once the funding period was over. Building that capacity in arrears is not the right option.

Box 20: The need for effective risk assessment, project location withheld

An outstanding project visited as part of the evaluation was run by a small voluntary sector organisation. The result has helped to transform life in the surrounding area.

But the whole project was a huge undertaking for a small association and very draining. It required new skills to run the various activities and the associated management. Its association's traditional, and very important, local role is consequently under pressure. GSSC funding has run out, and new funding is not yet forthcoming. The organisation has shrunk. There is some core funding from the local authority, but insufficient to meet all the needs. One part of the GSSC-funded project is now closed and immensely successful activities have ceased until further funding can be found.

The closure is much more than the loss of a project. In an area where cynicism and mistrust are common, this project had demonstrated the way that service delivery, done in the right way, can help to create new social capital, bridging the divides between ages, cultures, sectors and agencies. Both this trust and the new physical infrastructure are now at risk.

Furthermore, the applicant organisation itself is also at risk:
"It is a huge achievement and we are tremendously proud. But it has created significant difficulties. We are a small organisation knocked off course. There was danger in seeing the pot of money and going after it. Our efforts got diverted. We have had to make cuts and, as an organisation, we are now operating at the margins. But we have now got good new Trustees in place. We are doing a three- year strategic plan and developing a better sense of purpose, forward business planning and watching cash flow. This is a huge evolutionary period, and we are re-emerging. We hope to survive."

- 6.41 Failure post implementation cannot easily be protected against. However, getting funding to relatively 'secure' locations (by design and through support), especially where awards are for large sums of money, is part of being a good grant maker. Royal Society Wildlife Trusts (RSWT) operated eligibility criteria as a first stage in the selection process, designed to reveal projects likely to be at risk (Annex 9).

Is sustainability a hall mark of the initiative?

- 6.42 For BIG, the policy context for its programmes is the need to ensure that funding leads to sustainable outcomes in the long term. BIG encourages the projects it funds to work towards sustainability, advising them to consider it from the very outset of their planning. Whilst flexible

about match funding requirements, BIG encourages projects to make in-kind contributions so that they are not completely dependent on its funding. It is recognised that individual projects do not necessarily have to continue indefinitely to achieve sustainable outcomes¹⁷.

- 6.43 An initiative like GSSC, with a high component of capital spend, automatically leaves a substantial output, with playing fields, cycle routes, green spaces and play spaces evident for all to see. So there is a legacy from these green spaces projects, and the question revolves around quality of the legacy, and the extent of its care.
- 6.44 It is clear from the case studies that increased community involvement in green space provision has not been a 'magic bullet'. There is unlikely to be a single route to successful maintenance of green spaces, and solutions need to be tailored to local circumstances. The findings are a reminder that there has to be continued investment in green space projects of all sizes and kinds (including small community spaces), as in other public goods.
- 6.45 Some responsibility rests with projects. At the time of application, they were asked how they intended to maintain the project once it was complete. Judged by the case studies, for many this was seen as a 'hoop to be jumped through', with applicants crafting an answer which met Award Partner expectations. This was quite different from taking it sufficiently seriously for project sustainability to be built into planning from the outset. Whatever model or approach is being taken to the delivery of green space, and whether a new space is being created or an existing space improved, it is critical that the issue of long-term care is properly considered from the outset.
- 6.46 BIG hoped for project sustainability, but did not put in place resources to help this happen and placed no substantive requirements on the Award Partners to secure such an outcome. Award Partners were effectively intermediaries between a remote funder and applicants. The majority of Award Partners appear not to have actively encouraged projects to systematically think through their post implementation strategy. There was an expectation underpinning the initiative that engagement of local communities would bring a sense of ownership that would, in turn, translate into an on-going process of care, maintenance and renewal. An insufficient period has elapsed to know if this will prove to be the case over a period of time.
- 6.47 It is already clear, however, that where the community is involved, there is a need to provide on-going support to nurture after care. This requires an approach with a cascade of information, support, face-to-face contact, and events flowing from a support agency, through community groups, and on to the individuals who will take action. It is likely that this will need to last for a period of time – sometimes for a number of years – and would require funding. Otherwise there is a risk of ending up with

¹⁷ Written communication of BIG practice to consultants, 2006.

just one or two key leaders caring for projects who may move away or slowly get defeated by the scale of the task.

6.48 Projects funded through GSSC have worked in places and in ways which the public sector would find difficult, particularly with respect to disadvantaged groups. However most continued to be dependent on short-term funding sources from the Lottery or local strategic partnerships. Interruptions to the availability of follow-on or appropriately themed funding increases the vulnerability of these projects to closure and the loss of services to their client groups.

6.49 Finally, the study brief asks about the characteristics of sustainable and unsustainable projects. Whilst it is impossible to be definitive, there appear to be a number of features/processes/ practices that increase the likelihood of a project being maintained over time. These are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Factors that promote project sustainability

- good understanding of the linkages between the environmental, social and economic elements of sustainable development
 - a shared sense that things have to change, and shared agenda setting for the change
 - involvement of a good number of people rather than just one person (impossible) or five or six (difficult); it needs community ownership to make a project grow and sustain
 - addressing the issue of longevity at the beginning, and building up the skills, contacts and other resources needed to keep the investment going
 - levels of support tailored to the needs of projects, including face-to-face support. Such support is needed to:
 - work with communities to map out the sorts of actions that could bring about the changes they are seeking
 - help develop and use a process that involves everyone likely to be affected by the change
 - build capacity and social capital through the project
 - undertaking a proper risk assessment and providing constructive support for 'at risk' projects both pre- and during application, and, where levels of investment justify it, post-completion support
 - achieving early success to sustain motivation and overcome cynicism
 - access to sources of follow-on funding or new sources of appropriately themed funding to sustain successful projects and develop new ones.
-

- creation of new collaborative relationships with people in positions of influence and potential funding bodies.

6.50 Factors which undermine the sustainability of projects include lack of follow-on funding, loss of partner contributions (money or action), loss of a charismatic leader and early destruction or vandalism of new facilities or improvements.

Evaluators' summary and review

The projects evaluated show how GSSC has created opportunities for many communities to take action and make a difference at the local level. Assessment of the projects against BIG's objectives for its programmes, found:

- *a stimulating and varied array of projects*
- *a very high level of achievement: virtually half the projects showed significant or very significant benefits*
- *four fifths of the projects showed a very high performance against at least one of the Fund's objectives*
- *only 15% of projects were poor performers in all respects*

Social and environmental benefits were strongly aligned. The initiative provided further evidence of the value of the environment as a catalyst for local action - engaging local communities, which brings about much wider outcomes in terms of knowing each other better, helping each other more, doing things together, and jointly moving into new activity. The chapter is, therefore, documenting a success. The analysis recognised that some projects performed poorly, and others performed well in only some respects.

An initiative like GSSC, with a high component of capital spend, leaves behind a substantial legacy, with playing fields, cycle routes, green spaces and play spaces evident for all to see. The evaluation found that, so far, just over 70% of spaces were being well maintained, 20% showed significant signs of deterioration due to wear and tear, and 9% were suffering serious neglect. It was clear from the case studies that there is no single route to successful maintenance. Both good and bad standards were evident from all of the chosen routes to maintenance.

Local authorities are a cornerstone of the maintenance of the projects, though there were complaints about the resulting quality. At its best, a combination of local authority and community maintenance appears to offer the most productive approach. The findings are a reminder that there has to be continued investment in green space projects of all sizes and kinds (including small community spaces) as in other public goods.

Different considerations applied when reviewing the sustainable development and play projects which heavily relied on their GSSC grants for revenue funding, particularly to support staff posts. 40% of these

projects continued in good financial health when the funding ceased and continued with their activities, and 30% continued in a reduced form. 30% closed, either on a planned basis, or through force of circumstances. The play sector was badly affected, reflecting perhaps the absence of follow on funding for that sector. Fewer than 10% of the sustainable development projects had ceased, but there were strange anomalies, with energy projects suffering particularly badly.

There was no clear correlation between further funding and project quality. Some of the very best projects (both play and sustainable development) were either closed or operating on a significantly reduced basis.

Whatever the project type, it is critical that project sustainability is considered at the outset, and not just in the final few months of funding. This is likely to require ongoing support during the implementation which will need funding. There was also evidence of the need to pay greater attention to risk assessment before projects start, rather than rescue missions during implementation and afterwards.

The more that projects are located in disadvantaged areas and serving people in greatest need, the more important it becomes to halt or diminish the impacts of the stop:start funding packages that emerge from short-term priorities. There is a significant need for a wider debate about how the public sector will continue to develop its relationships and expectations of the voluntary and community sector to deliver complementary and high quality services to communities in need, and what the Lottery's role should be in a more strategic approach to funding.

Sustainability is about more than tangible remains. The wider social dimensions have been discussed in preceding chapters, and these have the potential to be a lasting legacy, though the value of this legacy is not yet fully understood. GSSC has also given impetus to a range of new ideas and approaches and the evidence is that these are being transferred on, both from projects still running and from those that have closed. Sharing of experience has been important, though the absence of systematic recording and collation of good practice means that this has not been maximised.

7 The Award Partner route to delivery

“The GSSC initiative appealed to us because it was a blank piece of paper. Its objectives were broad enough to encompass a wide range of activity. This gave us the opportunity to make Better Play into something really worthwhile. Through GSSC, we have been able to respond to the needs of our sector by innovating.”

Project Manager, Better Play programme, Barnardos

Introduction

- 7.1 The Award Partner route to delivery was the second evaluation theme (Chapter 1). However, creation of BIG part way through the Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities initiative meant that mechanisms for future programme delivery came under scrutiny. In consequence, a report on the Award Partners was submitted to BIG in December 2004, the key points of which are set out in this chapter.
- 7.2 Ten Award Partners delivered the GSSC programme on behalf of BIG (Chapter 1 and Annex 7). They were appointed because of their:
- ability to bring additional partnership funding to the initiative
 - ability to build on their experience of similar schemes
 - ability to add value through helping communities to design and develop sustainable schemes
 - knowledge of the policy context, including national, local and regional strategies, and
 - expertise in the field of environment, green spaces and sustainable communities, which BIG did not have¹⁸.
- 7.3 BIG anticipated that this approach would also keep administration costs associated with making a large number of grants to a minimum¹⁹.

Who were the Award Partners?

- 7.4 The Award Partners were made up of many and varied organisations, ranging from environmental protection agencies to advocates in the field of social policy (Annex 7). Some had a proven track record in grant making, some a network of contacts with grass roots organisations plus skills in working at that level, and others research based knowledge to underpin innovative programmes. The constitution of the Award Partners was as follows:

¹⁸ Evaluation specification, December 2001.

¹⁹ Board Paper, August 2002.

- three were single organisations; two of these were government environmental agencies (Countryside Agency and English Nature, now merged into Natural England) and one a national environmental charity (Sustrans);
- three were pairs of organisations; in one case, both were charities (led by Barnardos with support from the Children's Play Council) and in each of the other two there was a partnering of a charity with an environmental agency (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers [BTCV] with English Nature, and Forward Scotland with Scottish Natural Heritage)
- four were consortia, ranging from four to twelve members; these included public sector and charitable organisations. Each had a lead organisation (Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, Sport England, and Wales Council for Voluntary Action).

7.5 The ten programmes that together made up the GSSC initiative were very different. Annex 8 contains a thumbnail sketch of each.

Approaches to delivery of the programme

7.6 All Award Partners established a core delivery team, located in the offices of the lead organisation. These teams sought out applicants, fielded initial enquiries, selected projects for awards, managed grants, coordinated the activities of their project enablers, reported to BIG, and controlled publicity and public relations.

7.7 Support was provided for projects, both pre-application and during implementation, with each Award Partner devising their own approach. Details are in Annex 7. Typically:

- *at the pre-application stage*: generic information giving (printed word and web) to potential applicants, telephone support, guidance on formulating the application
- *at the project implementation stage*: information giving (printed word and web), telephone help line, training, networking, and pre-emptive action if problems were identified in funding draw down.

7.8 A distinctive feature of the GSSC initiative was that a number of Award Partners used enablers (also called mentors, field officers, advisors) at both pre-application and project implementation stages. The enabler acted as a named contact, able to make visits, help out with problems, and provide links into specialist services such as legal help over leases and land acquisition. The aim was to help ensure high quality applications and good outcomes, with a particular focus on support for inexperienced groups. The Creating Common Ground, Doorstep Greens, Enfys, People's Places, and SEED programmes were notable in this respect.

7.9 Award Partners reported that need for project support varied with type of applicant, and this was confirmed by the case studies:

- local authorities and experienced voluntary sector organisations had extensive knowledge of how to make bids and had back up support from within their own organisations; they needed little or no support over the application, though some made use of specialist technical support during implementation
- at the other end of the spectrum were applicants making their first funding bid, with little knowledge of operational and technical issues. These needed support throughout the process, and for them the enabler route was particularly important.

7.10 Not surprisingly, therefore, the nature and extent of support varied between the Award Partners, depending on the nature of their programmes. Two programmes had applicants that needed little help (Wildspace and Green Routes, Safe Routes). Both were dominated by local authority applicants, or others acting on the local authority's behalf. Local authority applicants to the Playing Fields programme did not require support, but some school playground projects made extensive use of available help. The remaining programmes needed to supply very differing levels of support, with more needed where programmes had inexperienced applicants.

7.11 Case study projects were asked about the quality of the support they received, and it was clear that it varied (Annex 7). Four programmes were regarded by their respective projects as good at the pre-application stage. Six of the programmes were regarded as good at the implementation stage, including all of the four who were good pre-application. For the remainder, the picture was mixed, with both good and negative comments.

7.12 From the project interviews it appeared that a consistent factor underpinning success was the extent to which support was tailored to a project's individual needs. Hence an Award Partner which provided no face-to-face support could be well regarded by a project where the applicant was already experienced in getting grant aid, and where good technical advice over knotty problems had been available over the phone. The human factor in face-to-face contact was particularly welcomed where it happened. Extensive written support, however good, was off-putting for less experienced groups. Where opportunities were created by Award Partners for networking between projects, this was also valued.

The value of project support

7.13 Did project support produce better projects? There is evidence at the pre-application stage from the Better Play and the People's Places programmes. Each refined their approach during the course of their

programmes so as to offer more personal advice at the front end of the application, working with potential applicants to ensure that they were eligible and help them develop project ideas that fitted programme objectives. The result was improved quality of applications and a higher success rate. This had a parallel benefit for applicants in that they did not waste time on ineligible applications.

7.14 Many of the community projects reported that they would have been unable to do what they had done without the help of their Award Partner. There were many accolades for the Award Partners and the enablers from projects being done by inexperienced communities, particularly for the Creating Common Ground, Doorstep Greens and People's Places programmes. *"Crucial and essential; we would not have succeeded in getting funding without the positive attitude of the Award Partner"* is a typical example.

7.15 The Award Partners who were particularly active in targeting disadvantage needed to do significant development work, both in order to reach those in greatest need and then to assist them through the grant application process and sometimes through project implementation. It appears from the evaluation findings that effective use of an Award Partner route to delivery by the Lottery depends, in part, on adequately funding support when applicants are inexperienced in initiating and implementing projects. This support and development work is a component of project implementation in that it is essential for some projects and some groups.

Financial costs of the Award Partner route to delivery

7.16 Award Partners were paid for their management costs. BIG's expectation was that this should not exceed 10%. In practice, management costs were variable. Comparing two of the completed programmes, 10.8% of the Better Play award went to management costs whereas Green Routes: Safe Routes had 5.0%, the latter reflecting the relatively small number of capital intensive awards made to knowledgeable applicants who did not require a great deal of support.

7.17 Not all of the overheads were borne by the GSSC initiative. Award Partners were reluctant to reveal figures for the additional money they contributed, so only a broad picture can be painted:

- Wildspace contributed £200,000 each year towards its programme, principally as contributions to management costs. This was done by BIG being charged only 59% of actual management costs, and the arrangement was part of the initial agreement with BIG
- Doorstep Greens paid 70% of staff costs attributable to GSSC; again, this was part of original contract
- there was extensive 'hidden' support as many Award Partners (including the Enfys, Fresh Futures, People's Places, Doorstep

Greens, and Creating Common Ground programmes) made use of internal resources by diverting staff from other activities

- the time of people on programme boards, advisory panels and selection panels was largely been given freely and would otherwise have cost in the region of £50,000 per Award Partner (their estimates)
- members of the Creating Common Ground consortium put in financial contributions as well as staff support to help with project support
- additional funding was gained in other ways; these included, for example, £250,000 from Rio Tinto plc for the People's Places programme, used to help projects buy plaques, T shirts, and other equipment, and funding which another Award Partner drew from other sources to directly supplement awards.

7.18 The net effect was that some (but not all) of the Partners subsidised the real overhead costs. At one extreme, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, which ran one of the most intensive programmes of project support, estimated true overheads at 30% of project awards. At the other, Sustrans was considerably below 10%, reflecting the nature of its applicants and funding. With only ten case study projects each for most of the Award Partners, it is difficult to be categorical, but the emerging pattern is that there was a direct relationship between the level of support provided, the amount of money put into project support, and the extent to which that support was valued by community-based organisations.

7.19 Award Partners regarded BIG's starting point of a 10% 'flat rate' as inappropriate. Costs varied with the number and value of projects funded, and the types of projects and of applicants targeted. Not all Award Partners wanted and/or needed to do intensive project support. At least one Award Partner decided that such work could not be funded within the available overhead and therefore did not do it. Case study findings showed that its programme would have been better with greater commitment in this respect. Award Partners who did significant project support with inexperienced and/or disadvantaged groups were unable to work within the 10%.

7.20 During evaluation discussions, Award Partners put forward a number of suggestions for the real cost of this support work, varying between 10% and 20% of the award's value, and independent of other overheads.

Benefits and drawbacks of being an Award Partner

7.21 The single most important reason for wanting to be an Award Partner was the opportunity it created to further an organisation's own objectives using (largely) external funding. In this respect, all Award Partners regarded the initiative as a success. For the great majority, there were many additional benefits:

- *enhanced grant making*: for all but the most experienced, there was a steep learning curve about grant making which included ‘sharpening up’ of procedures and practices, facilitated by BIG’s compliance procedures (even though they were sometimes irksome). The skills and experience gained enabled development of new programmes, with more than one Award Partner basing systems and approaches for a new programme on those used for GSSC
- *development of new or enhanced skills*: a collaborative approach allowed individual organisations to make unique contributions to the delivery of their particular programme, with small organisations finding influential roles in partnerships and consortia
- *addressing new organisational agendas*: seven out of the ten Award Partners found the GSSC experience energising, in particular promoting a greater people focus, and increased awareness that achievement of social and environmental objectives can go hand in hand. Participation in GSSC helped Sustrans, for example, to go from a focus on what they delivered to a focus on what communities need, with their output now seen as a tool for meeting community and wider environmental needs rather than as an end in itself
- *influencing the agenda of others*: the initiative provided a routeway to influencing the agenda of others with, for example, the Countryside Agency consolidating its position in green space, advising CABE Space, and contributing to the development of a learning network for groups aiming to set up their own pocket park or community space, and Sustrans influencing the development of policy at the Department for Transport initiatives and giving evidence to the Select Committee on Obesity
- *knowing each other better and learning from each other*: Award Partners took the opportunity to raise their profiles with each other, giving them confidence in future partnership working. There was mutual learning, both within consortia and between the different Partners
- *learning from their evaluations*: for those Award Partners who did them, programme evaluations were a route to consolidation of experience and learning.

7.22 There were, however, also problems. Inherent in delegated delivery was a tension between BIG’s need to be accountable to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and hence satisfied on progress by its third party partners, and the Award Partners’ desire for autonomy. The initial selection process for delivery partners was rigorous, and many felt that this should have enabled a relatively ‘hands off’ approach from BIG. There was, therefore, a persistent current of concern amongst Award Partners over the level of reporting requirements, reinforced by an uneasy sense that arrangements had not been consistent, with some case managers having more requirements than

others. The consistent message that came from the Award Partners was the need for *“less reporting, more trust”*.

- 7.23 Tensions in the relationship were exacerbated by the fact that Award Partners came under pressure to publish programme details, invite applications and make grant awards within the first few months of launch. The time for design and testing of processes was short, and some Award Partners commenced grant making before they were fully ready.
- 7.24 BIG did not complete design of its data capture system until grant making had commenced. In consequence, changes were made to reporting requirements part way through the initiative. Reporting forms had to be altered and projects given additional guidance. This was a further pressure on the overhead, and created frustration for many applicants. It was compounded by problems with the data capture system which did not collect or generate information Award Partners could use to improve their delivery. The majority felt that information from projects required by BIG yielded little, if any, useful information (for example on project beneficiaries which was inadequately specified and proved unusable). It was summarised by one of the very experienced Award Partners as *“very onerous, problematic, resource intensive and wasteful”*.
- 7.25 Now that the initiative is complete, it is clear that three-year programmes to deliver projects with disadvantaged communities were too short, with some programmes having to extend their timescales. It took time for inexperienced community groups to build the understanding and confidence to complete a quality project application, deliver the project and cope with delays that occur. Five years is much more appropriate. In some instances this will have implications for the size of programme, because some Award Partners elected to work over three years in order to manage overheads within the agreed budgets. If a programme is too small, it cannot be sustained over a five-year period.

Sustainability for the Award Partners

- 7.26 All Award Partners intend to carry on grant making but, given that it is opportunity driven, the nature of their roles is expected to change in the future. A number of dimensions were reported:
- Award Partners have proceeded with their grant making activities both jointly (i.e. in existing arrangements) and severally (i.e. reconfigurations and individual programmes)
 - the Enfys, Fresh Futures, SEED and Better Play Award Partners were able to go on to other grant making activity with good continuity during the life of the GSSC programme. In this respect, other Lottery programmes were important such as Transforming Your Waste and Clean Stream, and will continue to be so in the future, but monies also came from other donors

- ending of the money with no confirmation of a role in other Lottery programmes meant that one Award Partner had to close its grant making unit with consequent redundancies and loss of organisational capital (experienced staff). Whilst future Lottery funding is anticipated, the discontinuity of awards was exceedingly disruptive
- a further Award Partner was told by the Lottery that their agenda is a government responsibility, and there would be no significant streams of Lottery money emerging that they could access. Again they had built up huge capacity around grant making with Lottery funds and the situation was very disruptive but, in practice, a good opportunity has opened up
- the Countryside Agency and English Nature were involved in major restructuring into Natural England and, for a period, the extent of their future involvement in grant making was unclear; it is now obvious that this will remain an important route to delivery of their objectives, and Natural England is a participant in bids to BIG for future funding
- Sport England continues to be a lottery distributor in its own right
- the Northern Ireland consortium has continued to work together, though its focus has shifted away from environmental matters to a more mainstream social agenda
- the Fresh Futures partnership has no further joint work in sight at present and will disband; they will work together again if future opportunities arise.

7.27 Sustainability for Award Partners is about more than future grant making. The organisational effects described in the paragraphs about benefits from being an Award Partner will live on.

Did the type of Award Partner influence delivery?

7.28 Apart from BTCV, Award Partners operating alone or with just a small amount of policy advice from other organisations, tended to take a risk adverse approach to their programmes such that most represented an expansion of tried and tested processes, albeit targeted at new audiences. Consortia and partnerships were more innovative, demonstrating an ability to underpin their schemes by expertise which could not have been supplied by the lead organisation alone.

7.29 Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales all took the consortium route. In part, this reflected small populations and relatively small amounts of money. Achieving spread of activity through a number of programmes would have been unrealistic. They developed ambitious programmes, supported by expertise (plus human and financial resources) drawn from partner organisations.

7.30 In terms of project quality, no obvious differences were found between the public and voluntary sector led Award Partners, be they consortia or single organisations. Very good performances were found across both sectors, as were less developed ones.

7.31 Overall, the nature of the target groups was more important in determining approaches to delivery of programmes than the sector of the Award Partner. Programmes substantially targeted at the most disadvantaged and/or inexperienced applicants generally offered substantial amounts of project support. Earlier analysis (Chapter 4) showed that, in terms of building social capital, awards to the voluntary and community sector were more effective than awards to the public sector. So whilst public sector led Award Partners achieved good outcomes with respect to engaging communities, provided that they work in the right way, Award Partners who concentrated on awards to the public sector were less likely to be successful in these terms.

Benefits to BIG from the Award Partner route

7.32 From the BIG perspective, the Award Partner route was expected to be cost effective in that it utilised existing networks, skills and experience, without requiring BIG to build up its own capacity. The key benefits identified during the evaluation can be summarised as follows:

- expectations with respect to the number and types of green space projects and community-based sustainable development projects were met
- BIG wanted a focus on communities affected by disadvantage; despite variable performance (Chapter 3), the Award Partner route achieved some good penetration of grass roots organisations and networking with disadvantaged groups, with some projects getting to places that others haven't. An important additional benefit was that this thinking became embedded in the approach of the Award Partners and will be taken on into their future work
- BIG tapped into existing infrastructures and experience of similar schemes from within the environment, sport and play sectors; in so doing, it reinforced and extended that experience, contributing to a huge building of organisational capital in both public and voluntary sector organisations, with an explosion of joint learning and organisational development
- there has been success in drawing in additional funding (Chapter 2 and Annex 7) – though future emphasis on this may not be compatible with engaging disadvantaged groups in taking their own actions; too much emphasis on matched funding would mitigate against first time community-led projects
- it responded to the serious interest of the environmental sector in being involved in grant making, with the added benefit that it built up

capacity within the sector. It helped the Award Partners to contribute to emerging agendas, including sustainable development (in relation to energy, food, transport), green space (particularly with respect to management issues), the liveability agenda (for example through better integration of health, mobility and communities) and play (inclusive play for children with and without disabilities)

- it provided a means to help communities that might otherwise not have been involved. Furthermore, it increased capacity at the community level, bringing about changes in neighbourhoods that communities wanted to see and confirmed the critical nature of the enabler role in facilitating the participation of inexperienced and disadvantaged groups in such programmes.

7.33 BIG assumed that the approach would keep administration costs to a minimum, and for BIG it has been effective. This was done without BIG having to fund the building of its own capacity in grant making.

7.34 BIG experienced some problems with the Award Partner route. The setting up period took longer than expected and created political concern about the slowness of grant making. Expectations that umbrella schemes would proceed faster than open grant schemes were not justified. The due diligence process proved onerous for BIG as well as the Award Partners, but this has been rectified in more recent initiatives by BIG making its expectations clearer at an earlier stage. It has been less clear than it should be to applicants that BIG (or indeed the Lottery in general) has been the funder of GSSC, with BIG thereby not getting the recognition that it deserves.

7.35 Overall, however, we conclude that the Award Partner route has been extremely successful in terms of the type of projects, their integration with other agendas and, to an extent, their engagement of the hard to reach. It has brought multiple benefits at many levels, and has well justified the assumptions made about it at the outset. Use of the Award Partner route has helped BIG to get local.

The mix of Award Partners and their individual programmes

7.36 The spread of Award Partners enabled delivery of a diverse set of projects, with wide ranging gains. However, it also had limitations. There was an uncomfortable fit between the overall initiative, with its community-based focus, and the top-down, capital-intensive programmes where applicants were commonly local authorities, where social capital benefits proved limited, and where the extent of focus on disadvantage was much more diffuse than in those programmes where the Award Partner's approach was to find mechanisms to work at the local level with local communities on implementation of their own projects.

7.47 This discontinuity was most marked in the playing field projects (capital spend on purchase and on improvements, for example to drainage) and

the cycle routeways. This does not mean that those projects have not delivered benefits to significant numbers of people. In fact, with the increasing recognition given to links between exercise and good health, these projects were a contribution to an important contemporary agenda. However, their inclusion made the initiative into something different from what it might otherwise have been. It reduced the focus on working with disadvantaged communities. In a situation where the freedom provided by BIG for Partners to innovate could have been mutually explored and exploited through joint discussion and learning amongst the Award Partners, the imperative to do so was diminished by the inclusion of these capital intensive programmes which gave the initiative a different complexion. Whilst there were only two of them, the context is that over £31 million (one third of the total awards) went to playing fields and cycle routeways.

- 7.38 We conclude that the extent of the mix of Award Partners and programme themes was a mistake. A smaller programme (without the capital intensive, top-down projects) would have enabled BIG and the Award Partners to develop greater clarity over what the initiative was trying to achieve. We conclude that a BIG programme should not be a 'hotch potch' of ideas and agencies under a common banner. To be most effective, and to remind external audiences of the value of the funding, it should be focussed and clear.

Evaluators' summary and review

The Award Partner route to delivery was an experiment. More than 30 organisations delivered 10 programmes, with an extensive range of activity, very varied levels of partnership funding, and different approaches to grant making and programme delivery. There were:

- ones with low overheads, high levels of funding from alternative sources, much less active development work with local communities, low risk taking, and a small number of high value schemes (e.g. Green Routes: Safe Routes)*
- ones with high overheads, low levels of funding from alternative sources, high levels of support for community groups most in need of help, and a large number of low cost schemes (e.g. People's Places).*

Award Partners and their programmes should not be seen as better or worse than each other overall, but simply very different.

From the perspective of BIG, the benefits of using this route to delivery were many. In particular, it meant that the initiative's objectives to create green space and deliver sustainable development projects were realised. Expertise and operational capacity came from the Award Partners, rather than BIG having to create its own, and there was good success amongst some of the Award Partners in drawing in additional funding. But above all, it got to communities affected by disadvantage that BIG could not have reached alone.

Award Partners got the opportunity to further their own objectives using BIG funding, and were provided with a good routeway to enhancing their profile and influencing the agenda of others. They developed relationships with the other Award Partners, with a consequent sharing of expertise and benefits for the environment sector as a whole. In the past the sector has tended in to be relatively inward looking, but GSSC encouraged the environmental Award Partners to engage with the play, sport and housing sectors, and with each other.

Impacts on different Partners varied, with some getting an opportunity to increase their skills in grant making, and others learning the importance of people focused work, and that social and environmental objectives can go hand in hand.

A key lesson is the extent of the benefits derived from being an Award Partner. The scale of these benefits means that BIG has a very real opportunity in future programmes to use its partnership with Award Partners to ensure delivery of its own objectives in more rigorous ways than was done through the GSSC initiative.

The initiative provided a valuable demonstration of the importance of the enabler role in delivering support to new and inexperienced applicants from within disadvantaged communities (e.g. the People's Places and Doorstep Greens programmes), together with affirmation that it is possible and better to work with communities rather than on their behalf (e.g. Creating Common Ground and Fresh Futures programmes). When programmes are focussed on groups affected by disadvantage, and who may also be inexperienced as grant applicants, project support should be seen as an integral part of the programme and funded as such, rather than as an overhead to be minimised. These are lessons which need to be transferred to future programmes which focus on disadvantage.

A very clear message from the initiative is that ways of working which are tailored to the needs of potential applicants and to providing support during project delivery are very expensive, and could not be achieved within the 10% target overhead set by BIG. Their importance needs to be recognised, with project support funded as a separate item from administrative overheads. BIG is already experimenting with this in programmes under development.

The programmes varied in length from three to five years. Three years was insufficient for those programmes which were genuinely trying to reach into disadvantaged communities, because it took time for inexperienced community groups to build the understanding and confidence to complete a quality project application, deliver the project and cope with delays that occur. In some instances this will have implications for the size of programme, because some Award Partners elected to work over three years in order to manage overheads within the agreed budgets. If a programme is too small, it cannot be sustained

over a five-year period.

Timing of the start of the programme is also important. Whilst it is important to start grant making as early as possible, a premature start creates later problems. Both BIG and Award Partners need to be fully prepared before grant making commences.

BIG had responded to the innovative nature of the initiative by being 'hands off' with respect to the strategic framework for programme development and grant making. In particular, it was not prescriptive over interpretation of some of its own objectives and priorities, particularly with respect to disadvantage and sustainable development, preferring to leave it to the Award Partners to develop their approach. However, we have concluded that in any future programmes involving Award Partners, BIG could beneficially work with them at the outset to develop a joint position so as to drive through some of its wider expectations. Instead, in the case of the GSSC initiative, there was a vacuum, filled by the Award Partner's own objectives. This did not make the programme bad, but it does mean that it could have been even better in terms of BIG's own aspirations, had BIG been willing to give more guidance about strategic direction. The scale of the benefit from being an Award Partner means that BIG has a very real opportunity in future programmes to use its partnership with Award Partners to ensure delivery of its own objectives in more rigorous ways.

The problems do not undermine the effectiveness of the Award Partner route to delivery, but indicate a need for refined procedures in future. A longer lead-in time between approval of bids and programme start would have enabled all systems to be in place, of benefit to BIG, Award Partners, and projects alike. BIG is under pressure from DCMS to achieve spend, but the lesson from the GSSC initiative is that working with disadvantaged/inexperience groups is time consuming, and requires good systems and procedures. A slower start would have avoided some of the later pain.

8 Lessons for future programmes

“I was doing a computer course at a women’s workshop and came to the recycling project as a placement. After the placement, I wanted to stay on as a volunteer, and they said ‘yes, but you will have to train’. Since then, I have got very good at sharing what I have learned with others. It seems I have got natural training skills, and now I have confidence in my ability to show things to other people so that they can do it too. What I would like to do is go self-employed – supporting community groups, and training disabled people who can’t get out in the use of computers. Perhaps I could also work with Asian women and at a women’s refuge.

Everything has changed. My whole life has been transformed in every way. I just used to knit and sew, and now I’m a computer technician. I was a stutterer, and now I’m not. I have become an entirely different person.”

Senior volunteer trainer, Computers in the Community, Enfys programme

Being an intelligent funder

- 8.1 Since the start of the Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities (GSSC) initiative, BIG has been going through a significant development period. BIG was formed from two earlier Lottery distributors – the Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund. It was the New Opportunities Fund that had set up GSSC. BIG is currently charged with distributing half of Lottery money going to good causes, and has an objective to get between 60% and 70% of it to the voluntary and community sector, making it a significant source of funding for many organisations. Its mission is *‘bringing real improvements to communities, and to the lives of people most in need’*.
- 8.2 From the outset, BIG has referred to itself as an ‘intelligent funder’. At its simplest, this refers to ensuring delivery of mission and values, but the thinking that is going on has a number of dimensions. Of particular relevance here are:
- the expectation of being an outcomes funder, linked to social change, and focussing on the broader impacts of programmes rather than their straightforward outputs; this has important links to the concept of added value
 - the importance of acting strategically and, in particular, signalling priorities for its work
 - the benefits of using funding models which are tailored to intended achievements

- the desirability of having a good relationship between the funder and the funded, with the potential to jointly develop funding propositions and terms of reference, and then work as equals during grant management
 - the value of being a learning organisation.
- 8.3 It will take a considerable period of time to translate these developing ideas into effective operational principles. However, the thinking provides fascinating context for this evaluation of the GSSC initiative. Many of the findings and issues raised in the previous chapters link back to the concept of intelligent funding, and BIG is already considering a number of the matters discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

Clarity of purpose

- 8.4 GSSC awards have largely gone to thoroughly worthwhile projects, that worked painstakingly and persistently to achieve their aims. Wonderful results have been delivered, be they new community spaces, playing fields, cycle routes, car sharing schemes, recycling or a myriad of other things. The achievements clearly relate back to the Directions from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and demonstrate that the initiative has delivered the intended types of project.
- 8.5 Within the projects, there are ones which have gone much further than delivering their practical outputs. They have genuinely involved individuals and their local communities. At best, they have been able to respond to the circumstances and challenges of where they have been working and what they have been trying to achieve. Social, environmental and sometimes even economic prospects have changed as a result.
- 8.6 Whilst there have been successes in terms of the wider social objective of addressing disadvantage and prioritising social inclusion, performance with respect to this key aspect of the programme could have been more consistent. There was clarity over the types of projects that BIG was expecting from the initiative, but there was less transparency over expectations with respect to the social agenda. In part this resulted from BIG's desire to provide the Award Partners with room to experiment. The resulting issue is one of opportunity cost, since more could have been achieved for those in greatest need. An important lesson from the GSSC initiative, therefore, is the importance of clarity over principles which underpin an initiative. There is a need to work with delivery partners to define terms and reach a mutual understanding consistent with BIG's mission and values.
- 8.7 In keeping with the spirit of intelligent funding, therefore, BIG must be more explicit about its wider social aims. It seems likely that the current mission statement will need to be clarified with respect to the types of overall benefit envisaged for communities and the concept of need, otherwise this risks being a broad and unfocussed agenda under which

almost anything can fit, and bearing a strong resemblance to the umbrella of the GSSC programme under which so many different perspectives of disadvantage and community engagement could sit.

- 8.8 This clarity of social focus will impact on a number of current BIG practices. In particular, the current approach of achieving a geographical spread of projects has an opportunity cost in terms of the extent of funding going to areas with concentrations of deprivation, and this needs to be addressed in future programmes which aim to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged.

A focussed programme

- 8.9 The GSSC initiative mixed a wide spread of organisational objectives, a number of models of project selection (open grant, umbrella, and solicitation), different approaches to project delivery, and a diverse spread of projects under the umbrella of the same initiative. It would have been easier to achieve an appropriate level of focus with less diversity, and future programmes using the Award Partner route should narrow down their terms of reference so as to have a more homogeneous group of Award Partners focussed, say, on capital spend, or on work with local communities, tailored to the needs of the particular programme.

Community environment projects

- 8.10 Local communities have been doing environmental improvement projects based around improvements to local spaces for a considerable period of time, and their value as a catalyst for joint activity is well understood. In a sense, they are now relatively mainstream. In contrast, the community-level sustainable development projects are more experimental, and there is a lot to learn about how to make them effective.
- 8.11 Despite these differences, a number of common principles apply to successful project design and delivery. These include:
- the importance of engaging local people; community involvement is needed in the design, implementation, and after care of projects
 - working from the bottom up leads to greatest gains in terms of value to the local community; ideally this should be with groups rather than with individuals, which may in turn require development work
 - there is a need for support to projects, particularly where groups are inexperienced and in areas of disadvantage, and the benefits of providing it are substantial; this support will vary from project to project, covers pre-application and post-award stages, and is related to managing the award, engaging with the local community, and technical aspects of implementation

- long-term project sustainability needs to be considered from the outset; in this respect, process is as important as money (though the need for money should not be dismissed lightly) and includes training and partnership building
- opportunities to extend thinking and ways of working should be taken so as to secure social and economic benefits as well as environmental ones, including use of local labour, purchase of local materials from local suppliers, taking opportunities to provide training and skills development, and considering opportunities for the formation of social and other local enterprises.

Maximising the benefits of the Award Partner route

8.12 The Award Partner route has shown itself to be capable of delivering a very varied range of programmes on behalf of BIG, whilst also securing significant benefit for the Award Partners themselves. The opportunity therefore exists in future programmes to work in closer partnership with the Partners so that there is joint development of an approach to ensure clarity over key concepts underpinning delivery. Ideally, this joint development could also be extended to design of reporting expectations which would avoid a number of the tensions that emerged in the GSSC programme.

8.13 In effect, the aim would be to alter the balance of the relationship between BIG and the Award Partners so that:

- the Award Partners are chosen well to reflect BIG's expectations
- there is clear strategic and operational guidance which has been jointly clarified and agreed
- the Award Partners are then allowed significant flexibility with respect to grant management, with appropriate financial accountability.

8.14 The Award Partner route enabled the funding of many projects over a wide spread of activity. This volume and spread was beyond the capability of the Fund to do itself, and was accompanied by a delivery model (the enabler route) which the Fund could not have undertaken itself. There were, however, significant costs in this model, and it is important that the proper price is paid for the overheads incurred.

8.15 Given that the enabler route is more properly part of project delivery than grant management, it should be funded as part of the projects and not as part of the overhead. BIG has already been experimenting with this. An important component in the development of the mechanism for such funding will be the perspective of the projects. Projects were strongly resistant to the approach of counter-charging adopted by one Award Partner and did not understand it. Furthermore it was very expensive to administer. The need is for a funding mechanism which is

between BIG and the Award Partner, rather than one between the Award Partner and its projects.

- 8.16 Where Award Partners are working with hard-to-reach communities, there is an important timing issue. It can take a prolonged period to build trust and reach the stage where applications are made and award agreed. This needs to be reflected in the programming of the initiative so that the spend profile reflects a slow start up. Three years is an insufficient length for programmes aiming to reach into disadvantaged communities, and five years is more appropriate. This in turn has implications for size of programme, because the programme needs to be large enough to support the overheads over a five-year period.
- 8.17 Finally, there is a need for sufficient lead-in time between approval of bids and programme start to enable the requisite systems to be properly in place in both BIG and the Award Partners. Some of the difficulties here lie outwith BIG, but BIG should be working to develop understanding in its governmental and political partners of the difficulties caused by a premature start resulting from public announcements before delivery is organised.

Building on the enabler route

- 8.18 GSSC has shown the value of the enabler route, and the aim should be for it to be an integral part of delivery wherever programmes are working with disadvantaged communities and/or communities who are new to joint activity. The enabler approach is starting to have wider resonance and its potential application is being explored in other arenas, for example in enabling local delivery of the UK's Sustainable Development Strategy.
- 8.19 This is therefore a good time to consider a range of issues around standards, training, and reasonable job prospects. This is a BIG and environment sector issue, rather than one just restricted to Award Partners, and only brought up for consideration when they are running relevant programmes.

Building in learning

- 8.20 Learning amongst the Award Partners has been an important component of the GSSC initiative, and has been valued by them. A number of programmes have created opportunities for networking and learning between their projects. However, despite good intentions, overall there has been insufficient attention to learning. This is particularly important in the case of the sustainable development projects which are trying out new approaches, experimenting with new technologies, and involving new types of partners. Many feel they are 'starting from scratch' and are particularly interested in the experiences of their peer group. Because there has been no systematic recording of the projects and collation of good practice from them, there is a

likelihood that future projects will 'reinvent the wheel', rather than learning from past experience.

- 8.21 Future programmes need to be more insistent about the importance of learning, if necessary ring-fencing money for evaluation and dissemination.

The value of environment-led initiatives

- 8.22 Both green space projects and sustainable development projects have demonstrated that they can be a good means for involving groups and individuals from disadvantaged communities. The initiative showed that an environment-led programme is not a soft option, instead having the capability to deliver very real benefits for social and environmental agendas, and able to join up with economic objectives to contribute to a wide ranging sustainable development agenda.
- 8.23 There was no evidence that an underlying concern on the part of BIG that achievement of social objectives would be limited by wider environmental and economic gains was justified. Indeed, from very many of the case study projects there was evidence of powerful social and environmental links, with benefits for both agendas sitting comfortably side by side and supporting each other. The GSSC initiative has provided strong evidence that environmental action can be a valuable route into social change.

ANNEX 1 TERMS AND ACRONYMS

aka	also known as
AP	Award Partner
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
BIG	Big Lottery Fund
BME	Black and minority ethnic
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
CA	Countryside Agency (now Natural England)
CCG	Creating Common Ground
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs
DETR	Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions (former)
DfT	Department for Transport
DG	Doorstep Green
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EN	English Nature (now Natural England)
FF	Fresh Futures
FS	Forward Scotland
GSSC	Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities
GWD	Groundwork West Durham
HAZ	Health Action Zone
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
ILM	Intermediate Labour Market
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
LB	London Borough
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LtL	Learning through Landscapes
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MUGA	Multi-Use Games Area
NCN	National Cycle Network
NDPB	Non Departmental Public Body
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NI	Northern Ireland
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NITAP	Northern Ireland Tenants Action Project
NOF	New Opportunities Fund
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (former)
OGP	Open Grant Programme
PCT	Primary Care Trust

PT	Public transport
RSNC	Royal Society for Nature Conservation (former)
RSWT	Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts
The initiative	The Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities initiative
TYS	Transforming Your Space
SCPF	Sustainable Communities Programme Fund
SD	Sustainable development
SE	Sport England
SEN	Special Education Needs
SIP	Social Inclusion Partnership
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
SWEAC	South West Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
UK	United Kingdom
VCS	Voluntary and community sector
WCVA	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
YP	Young people

ANNEX 2 BACKGROUND TO THE GSSC INITIATIVE

Objectives of the New Opportunities Fund

A2.1 The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) distributed funds working in partnership with other organisations, including other lottery distributors. It supported sustainable projects that would:

- improve the quality of life of people throughout the UK
- address the needs of those who are most disadvantaged in society
- encourage community participation
- complement relevant local and national strategies.

Policy directions

A2.2 A summary provided to the Board in 2002 provides useful background on the evolution of the Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities (GSSC) initiative (NOF Board Paper, September 2002). It was to support projects that *'help disadvantaged communities understand, improve and care for their local environment'*. The Policy Directions from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (1999) required this to be met through the commitment of funding to projects that:

- create, preserve, improve or promote access to green spaces of educational, recreational or environmental value to the community, including the acquisition of land, reuse of derelict land, and creation of habitats which encourage biodiversity
- encourage small community-based projects, which engage local people in improving and caring for their environment and promoting sustainable development.

A2.3 The *'Policy Directions for this initiative, when compared with others issued to the Fund, were not overly prescriptive – the only targets set being that the £125 million (including administration costs) be:*

- *divided between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales by population, weighted to take into account levels of deprivation*
- *committed to projects falling within the initiative, so that at least 75% shall be for green spaces projects*
- *funding is committed by 2002'* (NOF Board Paper, September 2002).

A2.4 Delivering funding through Award Partners (see later paragraphs) has meant that the Fund was able to make grants beyond the commitment date set in policy directions.

Programme priorities

A2.5 In response to the Policy Directions, and following Board approval, the Fund described GSSC as *'having a focus on the following themes:*

- *green spaces for communities*
- *making green space more accessible for communities*
- *sustainable communities.'* (1999, summarised in NOF Board Paper, September 2002)

A2.6 The Board Paper of September 2002 also noted that *'Subsequently, and belatedly, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport made it clear that the 75% in England must include a substantial programme for playing fields.'*

A2.7 Programme priorities varied between England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. The final mix was as follows:

- England
 - recreational green space and playing fields
 - space for children's play
 - making green space more accessible for communities
 - sustainable communities
- Scotland
 - green spaces for communities
 - making green spaces more accessible for communities
 - community involvement in sustainable development
- Northern Ireland
 - green spaces for communities
 - making green spaces more accessible for communities
 - community involvement in sustainable development
- Wales
 - green spaces for communities
 - making green spaces more accessible for communities
 - community involvement in sustainable development.

A2.8 It was agreed that, in Northern Ireland, the focus of the sustainable communities theme on supporting community involvement in sustainable development, was to take account of how green space can overcome community divisions.

A2.9 In Scotland, additional support was also provided for a programme of acquisition and management of rural land (the Scottish Land Fund). This is the subject of a separate evaluation.

A2.10 All programme priorities shared a focus on tackling social inclusion (NOF Board Paper, September 2002).

Delivery model

A2.11 In its choice of delivery route, the Fund wanted *'to establish a balance between:*

- *addressing disadvantage and funding sustainable development, so that awards made under the programme could address social as well as environmental concerns*
- *meeting demands for a range of grant sizes, whilst ensuring that delivery complemented existing funding streams, encouraged strategic working, sustainability and cost effectiveness*
- *adding value through innovation and good grant making, including a consideration of using our power of delegation, to appoint expert bodies to deliver funding on its behalf.'* (NOF Board Paper, September 2002).

A2.12 To achieve this balance, and, recognising the technical expertise and development support required to issue a large number of grants to disadvantaged communities, the Fund decided to formally involve a number of external bodies (known as Award Partners) in the initiative. The benefits of this approach were set out in the Board Paper (September 2002) *'as being the opportunity to:*

- *tap into existing infrastructures needed to provide support for applicants from organisations with experience and expertise in carrying out such projects*
- *complement or lever in other sources of funding*

- *keep administration costs associated with making a large number of grants programme to a minimum*
- *respond to the serious interest of existing bodies, already working in the sector, in having a formal involvement in the delivery of the programme’.*

ANNEX 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Focus of the evaluation

- A3.1 The Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities (GSSC) initiative *'provides grants to help communities understand, improve and care for their natural and living environment'*. The overall emphasis set by BIG for the evaluation was on *'the policy and practice of the programme including social processes/impacts and the effectiveness of the delivery route via Award Partners'*. Thus the evaluation task had two focus areas.
- A3.2 Evaluation Focus Area 1: the impact of the programme on social exclusion This was to address:
- the ways and extent to which the social, environmental and economic elements of sustainable development have been integrated; the word 'integration' here has been substituted by the consultants for the word 'balance' contained in the brief, better reflecting recent thinking about sustainable development i.e. the concept of 'win:win:win'
 - the achievements of the initiative in the context of BIG's commitment to addressing disadvantage, and prioritising social inclusion and community involvement.
- A3.3 Evaluation Focus Area 2: the programme delivery route This was to assess the added value of using Award Partners (AP), and test the assumptions which justified BIG's decision to deliver the initiative in this way. Specific questions in the study brief cover:
- how different types of APs influenced delivery
 - how APs interpreted and promoted sustainable development
 - whether the approach increased the effectiveness of project delivery
 - how APs have facilitated the development of measurable targets for environmental impact and community involvement.
- A3.4 Overall, the evaluation is focused on **process**. It does not address more conventional evaluation questions such as how effectively the Award Partners have used their overheads money, and whether project outputs represent value for money.

Concepts underpinning the evaluation

- A3.5 Social inclusion (or its corollary, social exclusion)) BIG makes use of the Social Exclusion Unit's definition of exclusion and sets it out as *'what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown'*.
- A3.6 We concluded that no one definition adequately describes social exclusion. It encompasses fundamental inequalities and adverse combinations of circumstances, both of which social policy seeks to address. The process focus reminds us that individuals and communities can be sucked into social exclusion by many factors including poverty and also much broader matters such as poor access to facilities/transport, limited opportunities to exercise citizenship or prejudice. There is a belief that individuals and communities can be drawn out of exclusion through the right combinations of fiscal measures and other programmes.
- A3.7 Social capital Increasing attention is being drawn to the concept of 'social capital'. It began in America with the simple, but compelling, observation that social isolation is increasing and we are becoming disengaged from one another (Robert Putnam in 'Bowling Alone', 2000). Like social inclusion, social capital is difficult to precisely define, and a number of definitions are in use.
- A3.8 It has been summarised as *'features of social life - networks, norms and trust - that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives'* (Robert Putnam, quoted in Prove It, June 2000). In work undertaken by the New Economics Foundation (P. Walker et al, 2000), the concept of reciprocity is added in, and the following useful amplifications are provided:

- *networks and connections*: groups of people linked either by strong ties (as between friends) or by weak ties (as between acquaintances)
- *trust*: the expectation that other members of a community will be honest and co-operative
- *norms*: standards of behaviour, sanctions for breaking those standards, and shared aims and objectives. Norms create expectations that others will be trustworthy and will take part in activities that benefit the group
- *reciprocity*: the preparedness of 'me' to help 'you' when you need it, because I know that someone else will help me when I need it.

A3.9 Two concepts are of particular interest. 'Bonding capital' is the links between similar people who work together for a common purpose. This might exist, for example, amongst a group of singers in a choral society in a homogeneous neighbourhood. 'Bridging capital' is the links across cultural, ethnic, geographical and social divides. It might be created, for example, through a group coming together to develop an adventure playground so that it can benefit a wide range of different children and young people from within a heterogeneous neighbourhood.

A3.10 Use has been made of these notions in the evaluation.

A3.11 Sustainable development Identifying positive (and negative) social outcomes is at the heart of the research. However, BIG was also committed to sustainable development. The evaluation specification therefore required us to examine how the GSSC initiative contributes to the different elements of sustainable development (environmental, social, and economic), in the context of BIG's commitment to prioritising social inclusion and community involvement.

A3.12 The full scope of the sustainable development agenda touches on all aspects of life. In the UK, its starting definition derives from the Brundtland Report (Our Common Future, 1987) which describes sustainable development as '*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*'. The definition and key objectives of the Government's strategy for sustainable development in use at the time that the GSSC evaluation parameters were set was in 'A better quality of life' (DETR, 1999). The definition of sustainable development was '*a better quality of life for everyone, now and in the future*', and has four objectives:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- effective protection of the environment
- prudent use of natural resources
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

A3.13 Across the UK, the amplification of this definition has evolved to reflect local priorities. Of critical importance everywhere is the concept that sustainable development must address social and economic change at the same time as protecting the environment. The evaluation has particularly looked for projects which are delivering outcomes across the sustainable development agenda.

Evaluation methodology

A3.14 The evaluation has been characterised by:

- three levels of evaluation, namely the programme level, the AP level, and the project level
- a commitment to depth of understanding, rather than breadth of data collection
- a sample of 101 case studies
- a largely qualitative approach, to reflect the scope of material being assembled
- a consistent approach (achieved through the use of interview pro-formas) to ensure that all projects and Award Partners are treated on a similar basis so that results from one project and another, and from one Award Partner and another, can be contrasted and compared
- a process orientation i.e. it is considering the ways in which the processes of community involvement and utilising APs are contributing to social inclusion.

A3.15 Empirical work consisted of cycles of research/evaluation, with report back to BIG and to the Award Partners. All projects have had at least two rounds of evaluation, and many have been visited more times during the evaluation where there was more to learn.

A3.16 The qualitative approach has produced relatively fine-grained data which gives a better understanding of processes and of who benefits. This has enabled us to generalise beyond the specific; for example, we comment on the principles which underpin good practice.

Choice of evaluation criteria

A3.17 Evaluation criteria set out what is to be measured and would normally link to programme objectives. The guidelines for GSSC were, however, very broad and in consequence not suited for this purpose. A good link was found between the expectations of the evaluation and NOF's objectives for projects it funded (evaluation specification, paragraph 2) which are:

- improve the quality of life for people throughout the UK
- address the needs of those who are most disadvantaged in society
- encourage community involvement
- complement relevant local and national strategies and programmes.

A3.18 These were used as the basis for development of the evaluation criteria.

A3.19 Quality of life This was taken to be NOF's commitment to sustainable development. The evaluation explored environmental, social and economic outcomes from the initiative, and the extent to which outcomes were achieved under all three of these headings or only some. In addition, the evaluation addressed what is commonly referred to as the 'sustainability' of projects. However, that phrase has not been used because of potential confusion with the whole sustainable development agenda. The evaluation addressed the extent to which projects have led to long lasting changes both in terms of project longevity, and in terms of the lives of the people who have benefited (see discussion on social capital in following paragraph).

A3.20 Those most disadvantaged in society and community involvement These objectives amplify the social dimension of the sustainable development agenda and reflect BIG's concern with social processes and impacts. In effect, BIG's aspirations for tackling social inclusion are encompassed within these objectives. Under the objective relating to disadvantage, the evaluation has explored the targeting effects of the GSSC initiative (whether it is reaching communities which are most disadvantaged), and under community involvement it has addressed the extent to which the initiative is contributing to creation of social capital.

A3.21 Complementing relevant strategies and programmes This was important to BIG because it assesses both the relevance of the initiative and the additionality deriving from GSSC projects. The evaluation attempted to explore the extent to which projects sought to embed themselves into wider agendas and to exploit opportunities to support existing programmes or fund new ones. It also examined contributions made to policy development as a result of learning from the initiative.

Selection of case study sample

A3.22 Given the commitment to understanding processes, it was clear that depth of understanding was an important component of the evaluation. With over 3,000 projects, and a huge number of variables to be explored in-depth, a sample which is large enough to be statistically significant was an unrealistic option. The aim therefore was to construct a sample which was reasonably representative, so that in combination the projects examined would give a good indication of the type and achievements of the projects.

A3.23 The starting point was that all Award Partners needed a reasonable spread of their projects explored. We therefore began with an overall target that each AP should have 10 awards, giving a total sample of 100 projects. However, early consideration showed that, for two Award Partners, adjustments to this number were appropriate:

- Sustrans, where a sample of six was agreed, in recognition that there is broad similarity in many of their projects, particularly the medium-sized ones
- The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), where a very large number of awards were being made, so that the sample was increased to 15.

- A3.24 This gave a total sample of 101 projects. With respect to project type, we used a structured random sample that is reasonably representative of the Award Partners' projects in terms of geographical location, project size and type. The selection was based on data provided by BIG on the MAGIC Database, with the exception of the Northern Ireland housing estates, where an additional manual step was undertaken to enable us to select estates to reflect the range of cultural allegiances.
- A3.25 In all instances, both BIG's case manager and the relevant Award Partner were asked to comment on the selection. Where Award Partners had specific and reasonable requests with respect to choice of sample, these were accommodated. Thus, for example, one Award Partner requested that we do at least one case study from each of their regions, since regional delivery was an important feature of how they were working.
- A3.26 Two of the case studies for each Award Partner were chosen after the first six months of the evaluation. Most of the remainder were chosen one year later. In a small number of cases, a sampled case study was replaced by another during the course of the evaluation; for example, where a project had been slow to make progress because of illness amongst relevant staff and where a previously chosen project had already been over-visited.

Project scoring

- A3.27 Projects vary immensely in terms of size of award, the type of activity undertaken, their level of ambition, and the extent to which they are run-of-the-mill or truly exploratory/ innovative. This means that evaluators are not comparing like with like when they are considering the range of projects and overall levels of success. A project scoring system was devised to help us with the task of assessing, on a consistent basis, the extent to which projects meet BIG's objectives.
- A3.28 Overall approach scoring against the four broad objectives for projects (see 1.4 above) i.e.:
- contribution to sustainable development (which has three elements)
 - environment
 - social
 - economic
 - contribution to social inclusion
 - contribution to social capital
 - support for local or national strategies.
- A3.29 Following an initial round of scoring, it was decided that it was impractical to score projects in terms of their contribution to local, regional, or national strategies (too numerous, too diverse, and in many case too imprecise to provide useful criteria). Instead, this was to be covered by a commentary in the final report of the evaluation.
- A3.30 The scored headings were as shown below:

Contribution to Sustainable Development (SD)				Contribution to Social Inclusion	Contribution to Social Capital	Overall score
Environment	Social	Economic	SD Overall			

- A3.31 There is an overlap between the social element of sustainable development and the contributions to social inclusion and social capital. In the social element of sustainable development, the scoring was of all social aspects of the project and their significance. We were looking at the evidence for measures like:
- health benefits
 - crime reduction/increased community safety
 - enhanced life skills
 - humanising and socialising impacts (for example, less anti-social behaviour)
 - educational benefits (including environmental education)
 - cultural benefits (events, activities, enjoyment)
 - building relationships (although this shades into social capital).

- A3.32 Social inclusion addressed the extent to which the project was targeted on deprived areas, and/or excluded or marginalised groups, the extent of their actual involvement, and the benefits to individuals from this inclusion.
- A3.33 Social capital addressed interactions and processes, the effect on the individual, organisation or steering group, and the extent to which involvement of beneficiaries resulted in changes to their lives.
- A3.34 Scoring of the economic element in sustainable development took into account both direct and indirect economic impacts of the project. Direct impacts included people acquiring new (marketable) skills, getting onto training courses or Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) schemes, becoming more employable, employment generation of the project itself, increases in income-generating activities of the organisation, and setting up social enterprises. Indirect economic benefits included people getting jobs elsewhere, improved market performance in an area (for example, in the housing market), removal of obstacles to economic activity, demonstration effect on other organisations, and spin-offs from the project.
- A3.35 A simple scoring system was used, based on a five-point scale as follows:
5 very significant impact or benefits
4 significant impact or benefits
3 some impact or benefits
2 little impact or benefits but not zero
1 no measurable impact or benefits.
- A3.36 This scoring is asymmetrical; 1 is effectively zero, 3 is not the half way mark but rather below, and 5 is for projects that really are outstanding. Attempts were made by some evaluation team members to introduce gradations (scoring individual elements, or whole projects, at 3.5 or 4+ for example). It was concluded, however, that this does not introduce more accuracy but asks for even finer judgments, increasing the subjectivity and giving a spurious accuracy, and this move was resisted.
- A3.37 Evaluators were required to arrive at an overall score for contribution to sustainable development. Whilst this clearly related to the scores for the individual elements, it did not need to be an arithmetic average, and required judgment on the part of the evaluator of the significance of the project's contribution to sustainable development.
- A3.38 An overall assessment of the project as a whole (across all three scored objectives) was also required. Again was an overall assessment of the project's significance, and not a simple arithmetic average. It is quite possible for a project to score some 4's or 3's in individual elements but still come out with a 5 overall. The converse is also true.
- A3.39 The scoring was of the project at the time of the final visit/interview. This assessment was not necessarily the same as what was on the application form, or had been observed at earlier visits.
- A3.40 Application of approach The concepts underpinning the scoring remain relatively imprecise and required exercise of judgment. The following approach was therefore adopted:
- a 'dry-run' was done with only a part of the case study sample at the end of year 3 of the evaluation; this revealed a strong level of support for the overall approach (see discussion below), but concern about variations between evaluators in its application
 - revised guidance to evaluators, followed by scoring of the whole sample
 - a moderation session to discuss common problems and agree the approach to them
 - production of moderated results.
- A3.41 Issues addressed during moderation Given the very great variation in projects, there were concerns about consistency of the scoring. During the moderation, therefore, the team agreed a number of principles.
- A3.42 Scoring was of the project as it was at the last visit/discussion. It was recognised that projects vary over time and may be good at completion and then go downhill, or go on from strength to strength. However, concerns about the future were not part of the scoring system, though

they are noted elsewhere in the evaluation. Hence, for example, the fact that a project is at risk (for example, from key people leaving) or where no viable business plan is in place and the project may collapse at any moment from lack of ongoing funding is not a factor for the scoring but for the wider evaluation.

- A3.43 A tendency to give low scores to small projects was identified, especially feasibility studies and other projects with no physical outcomes, like community audits. Whilst this is inevitable to some extent, it was agreed that, as far as possible, the size of the award (or the overall size of the project) should be ignored. The scoring is not a judgment about value for money, but only about the extent to which BIG's objectives have been met.
- A3.44 Similarly, it was recognised that, in some cases, very large projects may suffer from an 'expectation effect'. Because so much money has been spent (typically on large capital projects) there may be a tendency to mark them down if the contribution to Fund's objectives does not appear to be commensurably immense. The moderation session determined that this was inappropriate and that again, the question is about the extent to which BIG's objectives have been met.
- A3.45 Discussion A number of benefits from using the scoring system were identified by the evaluation team. It
- requires the evaluator to review findings on the performance of a project on a consistent basis; the process of doing this systematically helps to remove any personal preferences/bias on the part of the evaluator
 - makes each evaluator more consistent in their judgements, and this is then reinforced by 'moderating' the results
 - in consequence, gives a good overview of the performance of the programme against the evaluation themes. This can be used to observe programme wide trends e.g.:
 - the overall performance of the projects
 - performance in relation to the environment
 - how individual GSSC programmes (Wildspace, Better Play etc) performed against the evaluation themes.
- A3.46 There were also limitations:
- the scoring system relates to the evaluation themes – in this case reflecting the concerns of BIG. It does not reflect the objectives of any individual project, or how far these were achieved, and therefore has limitations at the individual project level. Hence, a project may have achieved everything it wanted and be a real success in those terms, but still not achieve high scores under this system. This limitation is a consequence of the fact that there was no consistent alignment of project objectives and Fund objectives, and the scoring system could be more useful at the individual project level in situations where this alignment was clearer
 - each project gets scored on its own merits, but when it comes to using these individual scores to look across the programme, it is clear that it is not comparing like with like. In particular, differences in timing mean that some projects are only recently finished whereas others have started to show signs of wear and tear.
- A3.47 Because the scoring is against BIG's objectives and not the extent to which they may have met their own objectives. It is quite possible for a project to have been a good project in its own right (and according to its own objectives) and still to have a low score against BIG's objectives. For this reason, results do not reveal project identities.

ANNEX 4 REVIEW OF PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH THE GSSC INITIATIVE

Data sources

- A4.1 This annex is concerned with projects – the types of projects funded, the size of the awards, and their overall location. The principal data sources for the analysis are as follows:
- for England, the Big Lottery Fund's MAGIC database (January 2006) which was assembled by BIG using data supplied by each of the English Award Partners (APs) and was the best data available for the analysis. Whilst some of the data was still estimated at that stage rather than being based on final returns, the overall picture given by the data is a good representation of the seven English programmes
 - for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, data supplied in summer 2006 by BIG which is variously dated and was assembled from the data bases of the respective APs.
- A4.2 Changes continue to be made to the numbers of projects and amounts awarded as final returns are received from Award Partners. These will not be of a magnitude to affect the findings on types and sizes of projects. It does, however, mean that there are minor differences in the data presented in this annex, and also between the annex and more recent summary data presented in the main text of the Final Report.

Funding and project numbers by country and by Award Partners

- A4.3 Allocation of money to Award Partners was done by BIG and was largely determined at the outset of the programme on the basis of:
- for the Award Partners in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, population size weighted for deprivation, as was the gross allocation to England
 - the aspiration to achieve a 75:25 split of funding between green spaces and sustainable development projects in England
 - the submissions made by the Award Partners to BIG, moderated by BIG's own priorities.
- A4.4 Table A4.1 below shows the numbers and value of the project awards by country.

Table A4.1: Value of awards to projects by country

Country	No of projects	% of GSSC projects	value of projects	% of total GSSC value
England	2,881	84.1%	£84,711,481	85.8
Northern Ireland	128	3.7%	£4,738,921	4.8
Scotland	77	2.2%	£2,907,874	2.9
Wales	341	10.0%	£6,387,640	6.5
TOTAL	3,427	100.0	£98,745,916	100.0

- A4.5 In England, seven Award Partners operated programmes, with the England total split unevenly between them. Across the ten programmes that made up the GSSC initiative as a whole, one programme (Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces) was dominant, receiving nearly 30% of the funding (see Table A4.2). The SEED and Doorstep Greens programmes received over 10% each and Better Play was just under 10%. Together, the Better Play programme and the Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces Programme were awarded nearly 40% of the overall funding, indicating the great importance that was attached to the play/sport agenda.

Table A4.2: Project spending by Award Partner¹

Award Partner and name of programme	Total Awards (£ 000's)	% of total value¹	Average per Project (£)	no of projects	% of projects
Barnardos: Better Play	£9,446.1	9.7	£41,983	225	6.6
BTCV: People's Places	£6,038.8	6.2	£ 8,172	739	21.6
Countryside Agency: Doorstep Greens - development awards - creation awards	£12,561.6	12.8	£26,557	473	13.8
English Nature: Wildspace	£7,204.4	7.4	£41,168	175	5.1
RSWT: SEED	£14,157.1	14.5	£26,611	532	15.5
Sport England: PF and CGS ² - Sport England - Learning through Landscapes	£28,274.8 £24,305.3 £3,969.5	28.9 24.9 4.1	£43,500 £76,915 £11,885	650 316 334	19.0 9.2 9.7
Sustrans: Green Routes, Safe Routes	£7,028.7	7.2	£80,790	87	2.5
ALL ENGLAND	£84,711.5	85.8	£29,403	2,881	84.1
NORTHERN IRELAND: CCG³	£4,738.9	4.8	£37,023	128	3.7
SCOTLAND: Fresh Futures⁴	£2,907.9	2.9	£37,765	77	2.2
WALES: Enfys⁵	£6,387.6	6.5	£18,732	341	10.0
All UK	£98,745.9	100.0	£28,814	3,427	100.0

¹ Values subject to change when all final returns made to BIG.

² Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces.

³ Creating Common Ground: Award Partner is a consortium led by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

⁴ Award Partner is also called Fresh Futures and is made up of Forward Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage.

⁵ Award Partner is a consortium led by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

A4.6 Size of programme was only one variable amongst the Award Partners. There were also significant variations in the number of projects funded by each Award Partner (see Table A4.2). The largest number of awards were made by BTCV, Sport England, RSWT and the Countryside Agency in England, and Enfys in Wales, with the other Award Partners having smaller numbers.

A4.7 The percentage share in terms of the number of projects differs from the value of awards. When the two are looked at together, the major role played by Sport England can be seen, with RSWT and the Countryside Agency still in the major league. BTCV's position is interesting, having made by far the largest number of awards with a relatively small programme in terms of monetary value. Sustrans's position is reversed, with only a small number of awards, and a medium-sized programme. Scotland made relatively few awards, and also had a small part of the funding.

Size of awards

A4.8 The average size of award ranged from over £80,000 in the case of Sustrans to just under £8,175 in the case of BTCV (see Table A4.2). Sport England, Barnardo's, and English Nature made awards averaging £40,000-45,000, while RSWT and the Countryside Agency made awards averaging £26,000-27,000. The average size of the awards was just under £19,000 in Wales, just over £37,000 in Northern Ireland, and nearly £38,000 in Scotland.

A4.9 To understand this further, award values were grouped into six size bands (see Table A4.3). The distribution of awards by size largely reflects the grant-giving policies and operational procedures of each Award Partner. For example, BTCV decided from the outset to make large numbers of small awards, and this is reflected in their figures, with almost all their 739 awards being under £10,000. By contrast almost two thirds of Sustrans's 87 awards were over £50,000, which reflects their capital-intensive nature.

Table A4.3: summary of award values by country and Award Partner

AP/Country	No. of awards	Less than £5,000	£5000-£9,999	£10,000-£19,999	£20,000-£49,999	£50000-£99,999	More than £100,000
Barnardos	225	8	16	22	97	76	6
BTCV	739	56	679	4	0	0	0
Countryside Agency	473	257	0	1	55	158	2
English Nature	175	5	22	32	36	78	2
RSWT	532	203	3	32	249	45	0
Sport England	650	5	25	352	104	91	73
- <i>Sport England</i>	316	2	25	53	79	84	73
- <i>Learning through Landscapes</i>	334	3	0	299	25	7	0
Sustrans	87	0	4	10	17	28	28
All England	2,881	534	749	453	558	476	111
Northern Ireland	128	33	9	9	40	37	0
Scotland (both schemes)	77	4	10	17	36	8	2
Wales (Enfys)	341	63	73	61	124	18	2
All UK	3,427	634	841	540	758	539	115

- A4.10 The only other award partner to distribute a significant number of awards over £100,000 was Sport England, with 11% of its awards in this size band – again reflecting the capital-intensive nature of some of Sport England’s projects. However, the most common size of Sport England award (54%) was in the £10,000-20,000 size band. More can be seen by looking at the breakdown of awards between Sport England itself, and its partner in the programme – Learning through Landscapes. Learning through Landscapes made small awards, the vast majority of which were for £10,000. Sport England’s own awards are focused on the large end, reflecting the fact that many are for land purchase or playing field improvements and, given that they also had the largest programme in value terms, these large playing fields projects are a significant feature in the GSSC initiative.
- A4.11 RSWT and the Countryside Agency both had large numbers of very small projects (under £5,000). The Countryside Agency operated a two-stage application process, giving small awards in the first instance for what was, effectively, a feasibility study. Being awarded funding at this early stage did not necessarily mean that a project progressed to the implementation stage. RSWT funded feasibility studies which tended to be small-sized and many small enabling awards. Both had relatively few small to middle-sized projects (£5,000-20,000), but a relatively large proportion of larger projects (over £20,000).
- A4.12 Barnardo’s and English Nature had a more even spread of awards across most size bands apart from the smallest and largest.
- A4.13 As already noted, Enfys in Wales tended towards the lower end of the scale in terms of awards, with very few awards above £50,000, whereas in Northern Ireland most awards were either small (under £10,000) or in the £20,000-50,000 and £50,000-100,000 range. More than half of the awards in Scotland were in these two ranges.
- A4.14 Taking the UK as a whole, almost 19% of the awards were under £5,000, almost 25% were in the range £5,000-10,000, whilst 16% were in the range £10,000-20,000. Just over 22% were in the range £20,000-50,000, and almost 16% in the range £50,000-100,000. 115 projects (3.4% of the total) were awarded over £100,000, and almost all of these were in England (and a fifth of them in one region, the North West) as shown in Table A4.4.

Table A4.4: Summary of award values by country and region

Region/Country	No. of Projects	% of total	Total Awarded (£'000)	% of total	Less than £5,000	£5000-£9,999	£10,000-£19,999	£20,000-£49,999	£50000-£99,999	More than £100,000
East Midlands	251	7.3	7,301.3	7.5	56	37	48	61	42	7
Eastern	252	7.4	6,209.8	6.3	66	57	45	31	49	4
London	335	9.8	10,422.5	10.7	40	107	56	70	47	15
North East	285	8.3	9,036.1	9.2	50	49	48	65	63	10
North West	396	11.6	12,899.7	13.2	53	100	78	70	70	25
South East	311	9.1	7,505.5	7.7	42	120	52	58	29	10
South West	420	12.3	12,036.5	12.3	98	116	45	80	66	15
West Midlands	253	7.4	8,923.9	9.1	49	59	39	45	48	13
Yorkshire and Humber	378	11.0	10,376.1	10.6	80	104	42	78	62	12
All England	2,881	84.1	84,711.5	86.6	534	749	453	558	476	111
Wales (Enfys)	341	10.1	6,387.6	6.5	63	73	61	124	18	2
Scotland	77	2.2	2,907.9	3.0	4	10	17	36	8	2
Northern Ireland	128	3.7	4,738,921	3.9	33	9	9	40	37	0
All UK	3,427	100	98,745.9	100.0	634	841	540	758	539	115

Types of project funded

A4.15 Project descriptions provided by applicants were used to develop a categorisation of project types for the whole initiative (see Table A4.5 below and on following page).

Table A4.5: Project categories¹

Green space projects	
Community green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community gardens • Doorstep Greens • improvements to communal areas • small scale, local conservation projects (e.g. school ponds) • housing estate improvements
Woods and nature reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • projects targeted more at conserving land/wildlife than enhancing community life • woodlands and forests • wet lands/rivers/riverside areas
Green space access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pathways • improving access to established projects • establishment/ maintenance of signage/information boards etc • improving aesthetics of site (as distinct from improvements for conservation of wildlife) • development into a community/tourist-friendly site • website improvements
Sports and children's play projects	
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adult sports (competitive) • new playing fields • pitch drainage and improvement • assessments of pitch needs
Children and young people's play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play provision for young children • schemes to promote 'playing' • playgrounds and play areas for young people (e.g. school grounds, skate parks and Multi-Use Games Areas)

Table A4.5: Project categories (continued)

Sustainable lifestyles	
Healthy living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allotments • encouraging exercise • promotion of active lifestyles/food growing
Cycling routes and routes to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introducing new routes • assessing need for routes • safe access to schools and bridging gaps between communities
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training projects • school targeted programmes • projects to increase environmental awareness
Energy conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • energy alternatives/efficiency • countering CO2 production • reassessing energy sources/needs
Recycling, re-use and renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • re-use of resources – e.g. computers, bikes, glass • rejuvenating buildings and items (e.g. furniture) • composting • re-using nappies

A4.16 The categorisation is based around the most frequently occurring project types. In some instances, difficulties were experienced allocating projects to categories; e.g. it was difficult to determine projects at the boundaries of community greenspaces and wood/nature reserves, since many community spaces incorporated wildlife areas/features. Decisions centred around focus (in so far as it could be determined) i.e. was it a community space or a wildlife space? The 40 housing estates which got awards in Northern Ireland generally incorporated several elements (e.g. greenspace, play areas, sports facilities), and were also part of much larger regeneration programmes including housing improvements. These have been put in a category of their own (housing estate improvements) under the community green spaces heading.

A4.17 The distribution of projects by type across the whole GSSC programme is shown in Table A4.6. Just under a half of all projects are green space projects, with just over a quarter each for sports/children's play and for sustainable lifestyles.

Table A4.6: Numbers of projects delivered by project type (whole of GSSC programme)

Project category	No of projects	Total in category	% of total projects
Green space:			
• community green spaces	1,163		
• woods and nature reserves	238		
• green space access	251		
		1,652	48.2%
Sports and children's play:			
• sports	384		
• children and young people's play	518		
		902	26.3%
Sustainable lifestyles			
• healthy living	190		
• cycling and walking routes and routes to school	126		
• education	300		
• energy conservation	71		
• recycling, re-use and renewal	184		
		871	25.4%
TOTALS	3,425¹	3,425¹	100%

¹ Two English projects are omitted due to categorisation difficulties.

Types of project funded by country

A4.18 At the individual country level, this overall pattern is somewhat different.

Table A4.7: Project type by country

Project category	England ¹	%	Northern Ireland*	%	Scotland	%	Wales	%
Green space:	1,361	47.3	97	75.8	24	31.2	170	49.9
• community green spaces	953		90		13		107	
• woods and nature reserves	201		4		3		30	
• green space access	207		3		8		33	
Sports and children's play:	855	29.7	22	17.2		0	25	7.3
• sports	371		3		0		10	
• children and young people's play	484		19		0		15	
Sustainable lifestyles	663	23.0	9	7.0	53	68.8	146	42.8
• healthy living	142		3		7		38	
• cycling and walking routes /routes to school	114		1		6		5	
• education	247		2		6		45	
• energy conservation	38		1		11		21	
• recycling, re-use and restoration	122		2		23		37	
TOTALS	2,879¹	100	128	100	77	100	341	100

¹ Two English projects are omitted due to categorisation difficulties.

* excluding Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

A4.19 Northern Ireland is very heavily weighted towards green space, reflecting the importance of 'contested space' in the Northern Ireland social cohesion agenda. Projects addressing sustainable lifestyles are only 7% of the total, though some of the wider estate improvements funded by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive outside the GSSC programme, but alongside it, addressed issues such as fuel consumption through home insulation schemes.

A4.20 This position is reversed in Scotland where more than two thirds of the projects worked around the issue of creating more sustainable ways of living, with a particular focus on recycling and energy conservation. Scotland did not have a dedicated play stream in its programme.

A4.21 Wales was effectively split (roughly equally) between green space projects and sustainable lifestyles. The spread of project types in Wales was wider.

Geographical distribution of projects

A4.22 Within England, data is available which allows examination of the distribution of projects funded, and levels of deprivation. The starting point is that, of the total of £84.7m awarded through the seven Award Partners in England, just over 15% went to the North West, just under 15% to the South West, just over 12% to London and a similar proportion to Yorkshire and Humberside, just under 11% to the North East and slightly less to the West Midlands, just under 9% to the South East and the East Midlands, and just over 7% to the Eastern Region.

A4.23 The regional proportions of grants awarded do not closely reflect the extent of relative deprivation. The table below indicates the percentage share of each region in terms of deprivation, taking the population living in the most disadvantaged 20% of wards on the IMD as the indicator. If the regional proportion of the grant total is expressed as a ratio of the regional proportion of deprivation, we can see that some regions have had much more than their 'fair share' and others much less.

Table A4.8: distribution of awards to English regions and the regional incidence of deprivation

Region	% of Total Awards (£ value)	% of Deprivation	Ratio
East Midlands	8.6	7.2	1.2
Eastern	7.3	3.5	2.1
London	12.3	19.9	0.6
North East	10.7	9.8	1.1
North West	15.2	22.4	0.7
South East	8.9	4.4	2.0
South West	14.2	4.2	3.4
West Midlands	10.5	14.2	0.7
Yorkshire and Humber	12.2	14.4	0.9
England	100.0	100.0	1.0

A4.24 The most over-funded region (on this measure) was the South West, with a ratio of 3.4 (in other words, this region received 3.4 times as much grant money as its proportion of deprivation would have indicated). Other regions where funding exceeded deprivation were Eastern (2.1 times), South Eastern (2.0 times), East Midlands (1.2 times), and North Eastern (1.1 times).

A4.25 Other regions had less than their entitlement. Yorkshire and Humberside received 90% of what they would have had on deprivation grounds, the North West and the West Midlands only 70%, and London 60%.

Recipients of awards

A4.26 Organisations that received awards were categorised according to type as follows:

- intermediaries – organisations like Groundwork, some of the award partners themselves (e.g. BTCV)
- local authorities – County, District, and Unitary Authorities, town, community, and parish councils, regeneration partnerships etc.
- schools
- voluntary organisations, which ranged from nationally-based charities to local neighbourhood groups.

A4.27 Data on recipients was taken from the Magic database (by organisation name). In most cases, the appropriate category was clear from the name of the recipient organisation, but there were a few cases where 'best guesses' had to be made. An additional problem was that local partnerships or bodies are sometimes set up by local authorities and others to be eligible to receive awards on behalf of others, in which case it is not always possible to be sure that the recipient organisation is the one actually benefiting from the award. However, the analysis summarised below provides a reasonably accurate and representative overview of the recipients.

A4.28 In the UK as a whole, 63.7% of awards went to voluntary sector organisations, 19.9% to local authorities, 12.2% to schools, and 4.2% to intermediaries. So just under two thirds of projects receiving awards were from voluntary sector organisations.

A4.29 The picture was rather different if the value of awards is used as an indicator. By value, only 48.3% of awards nationwide went to voluntary organisations, 38.0% went to local authorities, 5.9% went to schools, and 7.8% went to intermediaries. This is essentially because many of the larger awards, especially those made by Sport England and Sustrans, went to local authorities.

A4.30 There were interesting differences between regions and countries in terms of the distribution of awards. The list in the table below ranks the regions and countries in terms of the proportion of money going to the voluntary sector:

Table 4.9: Regions and countries by % of funds going to the voluntary sector

Region/Country	% projects to voluntary sector	% money to voluntary sector
Scotland SCPF	100.0	100.0
Northern Ireland	88.0	46.2
Wales	78.0	74.5
London	72.0	60.2
East Midlands	55.4	58.0
Yorks and Humber	71.7	57.1
South West	69.0	50.3
Scotland OGP	90.6	47.1
Eastern	61.0	43.8
South East	61.9	42.3
West Midlands	58.5	37.4
North West	53.5	35.3
North East	45.1	28.8
England average	64.5	45.9
UK average	63.7	48.3

A4.31 Some of the programmes (Northern Ireland grant scheme, Scotland Sustainable Communities Programme Fund) were exclusively voluntary sector-based, whereas others made awards to a mix of recipients. In Wales, more than three quarters of the awards and almost three quarters of the money went to voluntary sector organisations. In four English regions, more than half of the money went to voluntary sector organisations (London, East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside, and the South West). In the other five English regions, and in the Scotland Open Grant Programme (OGP) programme, the proportion was less than half, and much less than half in the West Midlands, the North West, and the North East.

A4.32 In the latter three regions, the proportion of money going to local authorities was particularly high (over 60% in the North East). It was also high in the South East. To a considerable extent, this reflects the pattern of distribution of larger awards made to local authorities by Sport England and Sustrans, although it may also reflect the relative weakness on the voluntary sector in some of these areas.

Distribution of awards by Award Partner

A4.33 In Northern Ireland, outside the estate improvement programme run by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), all the awards went to voluntary sector; the same was true of the Scottish SCPF programme. The vast majority of awards made by Barnados and BTCV also went to voluntary sector organisations, as did most of the awards made under the Enfys programme in Wales. On the other hand, most of the awards made by Sustrans went to local authorities or intermediaries, and most of the awards by Sport England went to local authorities or schools. Schools received most of their funding from Sport England, but also from BTCV and RSWT.

A4.34 The other award partners showed a more mixed distribution, with many awards going to local authorities as well as voluntary sector organisations. Local authorities received most of their money as a result of awards by Sport England, Sustrans, the Countryside Agency, English Nature, and to a lesser extent the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.

ANNEX 5 THE CASE STUDY SAMPLE USED IN EVALUATION OF GSSC

Project name and funding	Brief description of project	Approach to targeting deprivation
Better Play: Barnardos		
Amara-Chi Project value: £33,500 Award value: £21,900	Two play workers delivered a wide range of after school activities for about 70 6-16 year olds from urban backgrounds. Story telling, residentials, dance, drama, singing, cooking and video making have been used, often with an African cultural theme.	Project is located in a relatively deprived part of Derby and has been targeted at its BME community through primary schools.
Daisy Links Project value: £60,200 Award value: £58,000	Project Worker for two years to work with mainstream play providers and other leisure/recreational facilities to improve access for and understanding of children with special needs. Providing assistance to extend specialist provision and develop new play opportunities.	Working in a deprived area (Scunthorpe) and with children with special needs.
Environmental Play Days Project value: £15,600 Award value: £12,600	Provided for about 65 days of Groundwork staff time to organise 16 play days in Bestwood Country Park for children from relatively deprived areas in Nottingham where there is no or very limited access to the natural environment. Children have taken part in den building, cooking, drama and horse riding activities.	Targeted children in deprived parts of Nottingham but also their local play leaders and volunteer helpers.
Free-wheeling Project value: £37,600 Award value: £20,900	To set up week-long holiday play schemes and encourage parents to set up longer-term play provision structures in those areas where response was most positive in 2002.	Targeted on isolated villages with limited local services but area is not highly deprived, although some of the towns have pockets of severe deprivation. Focus on poor access to services,
Kids Out Project value: £89,000 Award value: £89,000	Preparation of district-wide Play Strategy and Action Plan, plus building the partnership for its implementation. Includes local authority, play sector, pre-school learning alliance, schools, police, PCT, parents, and children.	Strategy is based around children and their needs, with play a critical element in social inclusion for all children. Target is a need group (children). Not in an area with significant deprivation.
Oasis Environmental Play Project value: £80,500 Award value: £60,000	Funding of staff to run a year-round Environmental Play Project (EPP) for primary school aged children based in the Oasis Nature Garden in Lambeth/Stockwell. Focuses on more informal types of play based around nature and the environment where children learn through experience and personal discovery.	High levels of deprivation and social exclusion, low school attainment and high youth crime rates. EPP seeks to address this by providing an opportunity to raise the aspirations and experiences of local children.
Play Credit Project value: £78,000 Award value: £70,000	Funding to Groundwork West Durham (GWD) to appoint a Landscape Architect to work with communities in four target areas. Assisted them in developing and implementing proposals for innovative play facilities. Also aimed to reduce long-term maintenance costs and liabilities.	Addressing deprivation is one of GWD core aims. Project ran in top IMD wards in target areas. Was reactive rather than proactive. Gave priority to deprived communities – especially if accentuated by rurality.
Saturday Club Project value: £14,700 Award value: £8,700	Inclusive play service for children aged 3-12 for up to two hours each Saturday. Provides an organised and varied programme of activities for disabled and able children within a safe environment. Run by qualified play staff working within a quality framework which recognises the particular needs of children with learning disabilities.	Targets children with learning disabilities district wide and their parents/carers. Limited attempt to involve other children. No targeting in relation to area deprivation.
Triple A Play Project value: £>750,000 Award value: £59,800	Development of new adventure playground with a new building for services for children and young people. Employment of play worker to promote and develop access to play. Links being made to other local service providers e.g. Sure Start, Women's Centre. Also promotion of play across Borough.	Based round children's needs. In/ adjacent to very deprived housing estates (one in most disadvantaged 1% of wards in England on IMD 2000).
Wild about Play Project value: £60,000 Award value: £58,500	Full-time play worker employed to develop activities to bring about 2,000 children into parks and open spaces to enjoy play in natural environments. Has created new WATCH groups and contributed to local play strategy development.	Used local play strategy to identify need for outdoor play opportunities and knowledge of most deprived wards in Stoke-on-Trent. Found that location of activities greatly affects who participates.

Project name and funding	Brief description of project	Approach to targeting deprivation
Creating Common Ground: the Creating Common Ground Consortium		
Ashfield Gardens Project value: £131,000 Award value: £50,000	A run-down housing estate in Fintona near Omagh. The Project Plan includes major improvements to the housing as well as environmental works. BIG-funded component comprises environmental improvements (planting, landscaping, gateways) and the provision of new play and sports facilities.	In a remote rural location south of Omagh which scores highly in terms of multiple deprivation and unemployment. Targeted as one of the most disadvantaged 40 estates in Northern Ireland in terms of deprivation. History of neglect.
Carnary Cares Project value: £19,000 Award value: £11,100	Environmental regeneration (woodland planting, wildflower meadow, community garden, walking trail) and community safety improvements for elderly people have been completed.	Used participation in the Sustainable Northern Ireland Programme to prepare a Sustainable Community Plan. This identified the needs of the elderly, young people and young women.
Cocrain Housing Estate Project value: £400,000 Award value: £50,000	CCG umbrella scheme estate. Environmental improvements include gateway features, sports pitches, community garden, removal of graffiti, flags and painted kerbstones.	Included in CCG because assessed to be amongst top 40 deprived housing estates in Northern Ireland.
Mourneberg Project value: £37,800 Award value: £30,600	Regeneration (through tree planting and other planting) of rough ground around the football pitch at Castleberg High School and new access so that area can be used by the community for recreation and outdoor events. Disabled access will enable use by adults with a learning disability from nearby Outreach Centre.	Castleberg is a remote rural location in the far west of Northern Ireland with significant unemployment and deprivation. The project has also tied in work with adults with a learning disability.
Glasvey Housing Estate Project value: £1.8m Award value: £50,000	CCG umbrella scheme estate on the edge of West Belfast. Provided for bulb planting, CCTV installations in elderly peoples' homes, subway mural and community garden – all as part of a large package of improvements to the estate. Major capacity building benefits for paid workers and volunteers.	Included in CCG because assessed to be amongst top 40 deprived housing estates in Northern Ireland.
Glenfield Housing Estate Project value: £479,000 Award value: £50,000	CCG umbrella scheme estate on the edge of Carrick Fergus. Provided for gateway features, soft landscaping improvements, community composting scheme as part of much wider programme of environmental, safety and health initiatives.	Included in CCG because assessed to be amongst top 40 deprived housing estates in Northern Ireland.
Milling in the 21st century Project value: £7,000 Award value: £6,000	Mural project to reflect the history and individuals involved in the local linen making industry, at Conway Mill, Belfast. Small group of disaffected young people worked with a community artist to research, design and create the mural.	Area of high employment and sectarian tensions. Mural is physically located on the peace line.
Riverview RA Project value: £3,500 Award value: £3,500	Community Audit of the area covered by the Riverview Residents Association (800 households).	Highly deprived area of Londonderry, cross-community project.
The Traffic Garden Project value: £29,100 Award value: £24,900	Renovation of an existing green space on the Strathfoyle Estate and creation of new outdoor activity area for young people (originally, to be a BMX track and improved football pitch, but a cycle proficiency route was created instead). Worked with other more proactive measures, to reduce vandalism and juvenile crime.	Strathfoyle Estate characterised by high unemployment, high proportion of single families, and relatively high levels of deprivation. Isolated and remote from the city centre and lacking in services.
Seacourt Housing Estate Project value: £200,000 Award value: £50,000	Children's play area, soft landscaping improvements, community growing scheme, have all been completed and the creation of a multi-use sports area has been progressed. Major capacity building benefits for paid workers and volunteers and major social capital benefits for local residents have resulted.	Included in CCG because assessed to be amongst top 40 deprived housing estates in Northern Ireland.

Project name and funding	Brief description of project	Approach to targeting deprivation
Doorstep Greens; Countryside Agency		
Aston DG Project value: £71,400 Award value: £50,000	Creation of a new, multifunctional recreational space in the village of Aston on Clun, next to the existing Village Hall, including a knock-about sports area, picnic area, children's play area.	High level of rural deprivation claimed, high level of social inclusion achieved; well-used scheme.
Ashton DG Project value: £202,800 Award value: £52,000	Provision of attractive local greenspace for young children, local residents and the elderly at the heart of a housing renewal area, offering informal play and gathering opportunities. The project is community driven, delivered in partnership with the local authority.	Addresses severe area deprivation and a number of key target groups – young children and their parents, the elderly and increasingly local ethnic minority residents.
Four Greens DG Project value: £155,100 Award value: £108,600	Aims to really 'make a difference' for the residents of Longley Housing Estate through transformation of two semi-derelict areas into spaces which look good and provide opportunities for informal recreation and use by local schools. Aim is to improve community safety and help make the estate one where people want to live.	Targeting area of severe deprivation, plus key target groups – children, unemployed.
Friendship DG Project value: £66,000 Award value: £51,400	Creation of DG on an area of waste space adjacent to a community centre. Includes a football kick about area, play for smaller children, sitting out space, wild garden and woodland area, area for blind and partially sighted people, with wheel chair access, and security arrangements. Links to wider vision of re-energising community centre and creating a better place for children and young people.	Located in a ward which is in most disadvantaged 10% nationally based on IMD, and in most disadvantaged 2% in SW. Neglected area which has had little regeneration funding. Regarded as a 'sink estate'. Initiative comes from within the community as part of aspiration to "turn the area around".
Gamesley DG Project value: £92,100 Award value: £50,700	A project to create a pleasant area for informal recreation and young children's play, with associated educational and health benefits, and links to wider regeneration activities and adjacent amenities (i.e. Transpennine Trail, Melandra Castle Roman remains/Ancient Monument.	A Manchester overspill estate. Most deprived ward in High Peak – top 10% IMD. Isolation, vandalism, drug dealing, alcohol-related problems and high unemployment. Many residents claim benefits; poor health and no open space.
Kirby Thore DG Project value: £171,000 Award value: £118,000	Main aim was to create landscaped area (with provision for all ages) in the centre of the village through the restoration of a neglected and derelict area of land and demolition of old buildings. Project also hoped to contribute to regeneration of the village and improve community spirit.	One of the most deprived wards in Eden District. Area of village where project was undertaken has a mixed community with high proportion of ethnic minorities and single parent families.
Mapesbury Dell Project value: c£210,000 Award value: £52,000	Improvement of existing open space to create opportunities for all ages. Includes sitting out area, children's play space, large sculpture, pond, extensive planting.	In a mixed area with wide range of housing types. Project is focused on whole community, and on getting active participation from all ages and all members of the diverse community.
Oak Road DG Project value: £124,000 Award value: £87,000	Creation of a new urban greenspace on a deprived estate in Tunbridge Wells, on a vandalised area used for car-burning and by drug users. Project includes a small children's play area; a large adventure playground adjacent was funded as a separate project.	One of the most disadvantaged estates in the SE on IMD; history of neglect by local council; scheme has begun to turn area around, people now eager to move in; property values rising.
Surtees DG Project value: £110,000 award value: £35000	To re-develop an open field close to the village of Ferryhill Station to create recreation/play facilities for all age groups. Additional benefit of improving the visual appearance of a run down area of informal green space to create a facility that would benefit all the village.	Not a deprived ward but is a deprived area. Suffered from pit closures and effort now going into regeneration of area. Project is part of programme of environmental improvement.
Wickins Pl. DG Project value: £66,400 Award value: £50,400	Improvement of existing open space to create a sitting out and children's play space area, plus skate boarding area.	Former mining settlement in rural area. Legacy of dependency culture. Very poor services, including public transport. High levels of deprivation.

Project name and funding	Brief description of project	Approach to targeting deprivation
Enfys: Welsh Council for Voluntary Action <i>et al</i>		
Computers in the Community Project value: £57,800 Award value: £25,000	Provision of refurbished computers and IT support for community groups and disadvantaged individuals in the community. Indivisible part of a much wider project which began as recycling of redundant IT equipment, but now includes community group and home support, opportunities for volunteering, training for disadvantaged adults (23 into employment over eight years) and more.	Money used to target and support disadvantaged individuals (e.g. housebound) and less able community groups on their home territory in order to supply IT equipment and reduce user fears (break down the digital divide).
Explore Project value: £90,000 Award value: £35,100	To create a stimulating, challenging, and secure play environment for special needs children aged 3-19. Ysgol Cedewain is a long-established (40 years) Powys Education Committee School for pupils who have learning disabilities. The school has 56 pupils, 50% of whom are autistic and seven of whom are wheelchair users.	In one of the most deprived wards in Wales. Targets a special needs group. The school is the "local" school for severe learning difficulties children for north Powys. (one of the largest catchment areas in England and Wales).
Local Food: Local People Project value: £4,400 Award value: £4,410	Feasibility study to establish the viability of community allotment schemes in Wrexham and Flintshire, building on previous initiatives developed by voluntary and public sector partners.	Targeted on deprived estates in Wrexham which is itself an area of high deprivation.
Mynydd Llandegai Project value: £89,000 Award value: £25,000	A sustainable recreational and leisure area, and a new wildlife habitat, for the local community to use and enjoy. Includes a new football pitch and a community garden with seating and picnic area. Aims to engage young people in implementation (skills development) and to promote greater use of the existing community centre	Targeted on North Wales slate mining villages which have high levels of deprivation although Mynydd Llandegai has also attracted wealthy incomers.
Penllwyn Walkway Project value: £75,000 Award value: £25,000	A spine route through a housing estate as part of wider improvements to public realm (play space, lighting, shopping area, estate entrance etc) done as part of major regeneration work (funded by others). Provides safe links for housing with community, shopping and recreational facilities.	Severely deprived, isolated housing estate. In a Communities First ward (most disadvantaged 10% in terms of IMD for Wales). Community involvement in developing the strategy for the estate, of which this is one project.
Pontbren Project value: £208,500 Award value: £95,500	Pontbren is a group of ten farms west of Llanfair Caereinion which have come together to pursue more sustainable livestock farming and develop additional activities including small woodland management, timber products, composting and tourism.	Targeted on an isolated rural community that has experienced loss of income and de-population.
Talywain Church Centre Project value: £8,100 Award value: £7,100	Feasibility study for conversion of unused church to community use. Aim was to create a community resource to help secure long-term viability of VCS and serve local community and renovation of grade 2 listed building, creation of community greenspace, and a heritage/ tourism attraction. Study showed costs (£650,000) beyond resources of group and decision taken not to proceed.	At time of application, ward was a Communities First ward (most disadvantaged 10% in terms of IMD for Wales). Project was for whole community, though some activities within the proposed community centre would have been targeted at specific users.
Secret Gardens Project value: £5,500 Award value: £5,000	Feasibility study for development of unused areas of concrete into garden courtyards for patient, staff and visitor use at hospital for patients with mental illness and disabilities. Included patient involvement in design. Has had major impact on patient capabilities and led to expansion in scope/ locations of activities for them.	Target groups are patients, staff and visitors, with an emphasis on creating attractive spaces for family visitors including children, and on raising patient/staff morale.
Tyddyn Mon Project value: £20,300 Award value: £20,300	Improved access to fields on a small farm used as a training centre for people with learning difficulties. Enables clients to work outdoors in wet weather and better visitor access. New gates and interpretation boards. Part of a wider enhancement scheme, including artworks.	Targeted on special needs group in remote area of Anglesey (Ynys Mon); project has gone from strength to strength and added new facilities.
Ynni Fory Project value: £249,000 Award value: £25,000	Demonstration of renewable energy installations. Technical/ financial/ planning support three major projects: a farmers co-op growing bio-mass; an energy use reduction scheme on a deprived housing estate and a visitor trail of exemplar renewable energy projects.	Target was environmental. Social focus has grown. Eco-centre now works with deprived communities. Strong interest in integrated rural development.

Project name and funding	Brief description of project	Approach to targeting deprivation
Fresh Futures: Scottish Natural Heritage and Forward Scotland		
Canmore Back Green Project value: £20,600 Award value: £5,300	A project to investigate the feasibility of applying a 'community backyard model' to improve and maintain the amenity of backcourts of Canmore stock in Gorgie/Dalry, via a scoping study and community consultation exercise. Implementation now proceeding.	Tenants on low income and/or have special needs. 60-65% on housing benefit. Set within a wider area of deprivation.
Duntocher Burn Path Project value: £87,000 Award value: £10,000	Creation/restoration of a 2.2 km path to create a recreational/educational/health resource in Clydebank in Glasgow. Creates new access links between local communities. Some works were undertaken through an ILM scheme providing work experience and training for local unemployed people.	In a deprived area and the path would create access links between communities in three Social Inclusion Partnerships. Not targeted at specific groups but meant to benefit all people in the locality.
Eco Footprint Project value: £31,250 Award value: £17,300	Project to establish an eco-footprint for the Brechin area. Engaged people at a very local level. School children filled in questionnaire with help of parent/guardian about travel, energy use, water, shopping, waste and local environment. Anticipated long-term impacts on environmental behaviour through raised awareness.	A whole population exercise, with school children as the mechanism for receipt of information. Awareness raising with that group seen as seed corn for better environmental practice.
Energy Advice Project value: £2,050,000 Award value: £48,500	Aim was to address the problem of fuel poverty in rural south west Scotland. Project employed one person to train local volunteers in four Rural Community Council areas. Volunteers would then go into communities to provide energy efficiency advice and offer grants for practical energy efficiency measures.	Recognises that rural communities are poorer than their urban counterparts due to higher fuel costs, remoteness, low paid employment, additional travel costs and lack of competition in the local stores.
Falkirk Green Travel Plan Project value: £200,400 Award value: £40,000	A three-year project, employing a Green Travel Plan Officer, to raise awareness of and develop/ implement green travel plans at a number of council, hospital and private sector sites in Falkirk, with the aims of reducing the impact of travel/transport on the environment and increasing the use of more sustainable transport options.	40% of households in area do not own a car. Poor public transport information at key destination sites. Catchment area includes significant poverty and former mining communities.
Furniture Re-use Project value: £88,700 Award value: £5,400	A project to increase the re-use of furniture, appliances, paint and other household items in Edinburgh through the running of a publicity campaign, the development of various pilot schemes (e.g. appliance testing) and the advancing of networking.	Delivers furniture to deprived areas because of nature of client group – recent homeless, e.g. Muirhouse, Westerhails, Pilton. This includes Social Inclusive Partnership (SIP) areas – these are ever-changing/evolving.
Hidden Gardens Project value: £640,000 Award value: £47,100	Artist-led environmental regeneration project, led by a national arts charity which worked closely with communities in south Glasgow to create Scotland's first 'contemporary sacred gardens', by transforming a derelict site. Aim of the Garden is to celebrate the diverse cultures and faiths of the city's population.	Deprivation not really seen as an issue. Project more concerned with promoting local ownership and building bridges between different sections of the community.
Kintry Environment Team Project value: £212,000 Award value: £20,300	Run by Housing Partnership on outskirts of Edinburgh. Funded the appointment of a 'training co-ordinator' to run a two-year ILM project by providing/ organising training and work experience for 16 long-term unemployed / returnees to the labour market. Training focussed on landscaping and site management work on a local housing estate.	The most deprived ward outside west/central Scotland. Unemployment double Edinburgh average. Available jobs have low status and require little or no skills and experience.
No Waste Gardening Project value: £26,700 Award value: £5,500	To reduce garden and household waste going to landfill by improving recycling of garden waste. Gave practical advice (talks, demos, workshops, advisory booklet) and provided composting bins to households within five communities in the Borders. Aim was to educate/inform and stimulate interest in taking practical steps to recycle.	Target area mixed and criteria for selection did not include deprivation. However, 'rurality' a form of deprivation in terms of the services and facilities that rural communities have easy access to.

Project name and funding	Brief description of project	Approach to targeting deprivation
Fresh Futures: Scottish Natural Heritage and Forward Scotland (continued)		
Perth and Kinross Schools Project value: £90,700 Award value: £37,500	Environmental education, focussing on principles of sustainable development and Local Agenda 21. Took a proactive approach to promotion of EcoSchools to deliver the SD agenda by appointment of advisors to provide schools with guidance across the seven EcoSchools topics: travel; school grounds; litter; waste minimisation; water; energy, healthy living.	Deprivation not an issue in this project. Project applies to the whole of Perth and Kinross. The aim is that all schools, wherever they are, should become EcoSchools.
Green Routes, Safe Routes: Sustrans		
Beverley Project value: £213,000 Award value: £30,000	Development of new walking and cycling routes in and around Beverley designed to encourage access by sustainable means to local parks and green spaces, schools, town centre, rail and bus stations.	None.
Blackpool Project value: £650,000 Award value: £100,000	The development and extension of a network for pedestrians and cyclists in Blackpool, involving the creation of a linear route with links from the eastern boundary of Blackpool to the town centre via Herons Road and Stanley Park, and a promenade route.	Routes pass through/close to some severely deprived areas. Project also aimed at those without car access; those vulnerable on busy roads, e.g. children, elderly, disabled.
Kidderminster to Stourport Project value: £300,000 Award value: £70,000	Canal towing path improvements to encourage walking and cycling between the two towns. Links onto Route 45 of National Cycle Network.	Kidderminster is a deprived area and wards beside the canal are the most deprived in the town.
Triangle Project Project value: £496,000 Award value: £75,000	Based in three Districts in North Tyneside. Aim to create a high quality environment to encourage walking and cycling through the creation of new routes, and the upgrading of existing routes to provide sustainable access to shops, schools, green spaces, parks and centres of employment.	All wards in the target areas are deprived but this was not a factor in their selection – most of North Tyneside is deprived according to the IMD. Areas selected for opportunities they offer to promote walking and cycling.
Vivaldi Project value: >£9 million Award value:	Part of a European demonstration project of 'clean urban transport initiatives'. Includes extension to cycle way and creation of a Home Zone. Has involved extensive work with residents (e.g. planning and design) to get ownership by them of the process and product.	Deprivation is seen very much in transport terms, addressing transport inequality. The Home Zone is in a very deprived inner city community (most disadvantaged 10% IMD2000).
Welwyn Corridor Project value: £300,000+ Award value: £30,000	Development of routes and greenways to create areas of high quality environment which help promote walking and cycling. Links town and country and to national cycle network. Includes activities to promote use of routeways and raise awareness about health benefits of walking/ cycling and importance of using sustainable transport.	Environmental project with the whole population as the target. One link designed to go through most deprived ward in the town, and development work includes school children and their parents from this ward.
People's Places: British Trust for Conservation Volunteers		
Bethel Chapel Project value: £6,509 Award value: £6,500	Soft landscaping works to the surrounds of a new community building attached to the Chapel. Especially beneficial for nursery school children.	Lye is the second highest deprived ward on Dudley Borough. High level of unemployment.
Brook Meadow Project value: £7,100 Award value: £7,100	Wildlife survey, and improving access and interpretation in a well-used local conservation area in Emsworth.	None.

Project name and funding	Brief description of project	Approach to targeting deprivation
People's Places: British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (continued)		
Buried Treasure Project value: £15,500 Award value: £9,500	Improvements to external courtyards in former school building now available for community use. Project is integral part of rapidly growing initiative to address the needs of the most excluded, to create training and work opportunities, and to improve the wider environment. Distinctiveness of this project within the wider scheme hard to disentangle and benefits relate to wider project.	Located in huge area of social housing affected by severe deprivation and under-investment. Project specifically targets the most needy in the community including residents of women's refuge, disaffected youth, long-term unemployed, those with health problems.
Collingwood Close Project value: £9,900 Award value: £9,600	Improvement of a strip of land adjacent to a bus station to compensate for loss of an amenity space to the bus station. Created a habitat for wildlife. Being planted using native shrubs, creating wildlife habitats, and using a solar powered drinking fountain.	Environmental project. Located in a deprived ward in a relatively affluent London Borough. Space accessible by residents of areas of social housing, including people living in flats who formerly used the space lost to the bus station.
Duke of Edinburgh Project value: £8,600 Award value: £7,400	Uplands Community Technology College (Wadhurst) have just completed a £200,000 scheme to create disabled access and the Duke of Edinburgh Award project enabled young people on the scheme to work with people with disabilities to create a garden in front of the College.	Working with a deprived group (people with disabilities).
Eccles Fold Sitting Out Project value: £8,500 Award value: £8,200	Improvements to two sitting out areas at a day, residential, and respite care centre for the elderly and disabled. Tidying/planting done by young people from local special needs school in lieu of work experience.	Targets the elderly (particularly with dementia) and physically handicapped. Means of implementation has significantly benefited special needs young people and brought unexpected social benefits for the target group.
Garston Adventure Play Project value: £9,900 Award value: £9,900	Creation of a garden area, including sensory garden, where young people and members of the community can plant and grow vegetables and fruit. To provide produce from this area for the playground centre kitchen, while learning about the environment and food growing. Providing a place for young and old to meet and socialise, sharing ideas and knowledge.	Targets severe area deprivation (IMD 86) and key children/young people, and to lesser extent elderly, target groups. In Health and Education Action Zones.
Gin Pit Village Project value: £8,200 Award value: £7,800	Project aimed to target environmental change in a former pit village, by tackling the restoration of the village's woodland surroundings. Included rubbish clearance, planting, improved access and habitat management. Villagers hoped that other benefits would flow from project; e.g. engagement and education of children; reduction in dumping and vandalism; revival of community pride and spirit.	Project does not by own admission address any specifically marginalised group – it is targeted at whole community. No significant area deprivation in IMD terms. Former pit village.
Kurdish Community Centre Project value: £10,000 Award value: £9,500	Creation of a community garden from a piece of neglected land adjacent to the community centre. Garden reflects the culture and nature of the countries that Kurdish refugees have come from. Aims to attract wildlife. Work undertaken through Probation Service. Garden accessible to wider community.	Located in an area of very high deprivation (IMD 2004). The project specifically targets Kurdish refugees, and most members of the organisation live in poverty.
Mile Cross Gardens Project value: £8,700 Award value: £8,700	Aim was to engage the community in the restoration of the Milecross Gardens – former Victorian Gardens at the entrance to a Council Estate on the outskirts of Norwich. Project which focussed on landscaping work was led by a 'Friends of..' group which was also involved in training activities and community events.	Milecross is one of the most deprived wards in the country, 'Friends of..' group sought to involve the community in the restoration works and in taking 'ownership' of the Gardens – both for its upkeep and for community events.

Project name and funding	Brief description of project	Approach to targeting deprivation
People's Places: British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (continued)		
Newcastle Society for the Blind Project value: £8,900 Award value: £8,900	To run a series of one-day outings for visually impaired people to places in the north east with an environmental theme. These provided an opportunity for participants to socialise and get out and meet people. It was also intended to broaden their horizons, to give them more confidence and provide them with experiences that sighted people take for granted.	Project was focussed on the needs and interests of visually impaired people, largely irrespective of other aspects of deprivation. Participants came from a range of different ethnic origins, although the majority are white. Other aspects of deprivation were not a material factor.
Scotswood Community Garden Project value: £9,900 Award value: £9,900	The Scotswood Natural Community Garden has been developed since 1996 on the site of the playing fields of a former school. The aim of this project was to make garden more accessible, with the focus on improving the paths so that they would be wheelchair-accessible and would also provide better access routes through the Garden for other visitors.	The catchment for the Garden is an area of Newcastle with a high proportion of deprived communities - although it is recognised that many visitors are from other, more affluent areas of the city.
Sustainability Trust Project value: £11,900 Award value: £9,500	Improvements to old woodland area to create open air classroom, put in access paths, and provide eco-toilets. Management of woodland to remove exotics and secure for long-term community use. Addresses lack of opportunities for environment-based activity in area and provides a location for practical conservation/learning.	In most disadvantaged area of deprivation in County. Objective 1 area. Project targets children and young people first, and the local community second. Deprivation not an explicit target. Engaging people excluded from events which charge is a priority.
<i>Teenage Parents</i> Project value: £5,900 Award value: £5,500	Project run by Sheffield City Council and others as part of a Young People's Centre for parents and their children, offering training/support. Outdoor area created as an adjunct to Centre and provides outside play/ meeting space in a non-threatening environment. Also space for parents to meet, interact and develop parenting skills.	Area ranked top 20% of wards for deprivation. Has highest rate of mental ill health in Sheffield and has no accessible space within two miles. Project targets a disadvantaged group and their children.
Waterloo Road Project value: £10,200 Award value: £4,800	Creation of a community garden on derelict allotment land, to enable the old/infirm, and the wider local community to enjoy and use the site, and to offer an opportunity for adults with learning difficulties and local school children to engage in beneficial activities.	Does not address area deprivation, although in an Single Regeneration Budget 5 area. Looking to target the elderly and disabled, people with learning difficulties and children.
Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces: Sport England and Learning through Landscapes		
Colley Park Project value: £115,500 Award value: £83,700	A Sport England (SE) project to increase recreational and play opportunities at Colley Park for the local community, through drainage improvements, access controls and enhancement of games/meeting area provision.	Colley Park is in 43 rd most deprived ward (Southey Green) in country (IMD 2000); Objective 1 and SRB area; Health Action Zone (HAZ); Education Action Zone. Targeting young people.
Community Play Centres Project value: £290,100 Award value: £233,200	A SE project to create three 'community play centres' to serve disadvantaged communities in Skelmersdale. The centres offer a range of facilities shaped by young people locally and will provide the basis for a variety of sports development and life-skill building activities.	Targets both demonstrably deprived areas and key children/youth target groups.
Downlands School Project value: £154,100 Award value: £101,000	A SE project which created 7.5 acres of new, additional playing fields from former agricultural land (excludes acquisition costs) for use for football, rugby, hockey, rounders and athletics. Some community use (by cricket club) in summer when school not taking place. School has gone on to create new indoor sports centre.	Located in relatively prosperous commuter belt town. Very high achieving school academically. Were very few pitches in area and County strategy was basis of bid.

Project name and funding	Brief description of project	Approach to targeting deprivation
Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces: Sport England and Learning through Landscapes		
Leicestershire PF Strategy Project value: not known Award value: £15,300	Preparation of Playing Fields Strategy for all authorities within Leicestershire, including Leicester City Council.	Focus is on identifying deficiency in playing fields.
N. Somerset Council Project value: £513,000 Award value: £487,600	A SE project to improve existing playing fields to enable use throughout the season and to meet the Council's policy objective of raising quality of existing pitches rather than increasing quantity.	Playing fields serve a wide area, but can be accessed by residents from two wards in most disadvantaged 10% nationally. No targeting by ethnicity, disability or age (special needs catered for).
Wheels Park Project value: £51,000 Award value: £15,000	Creation of skate park, plus football goal. Provides a place for diversionary activity. Young people had idea themselves and brought it to the Council through a Youth Worker. Raised over 10% of total money themselves. Close working with other partners e.g. local police.	Area of social housing within prosperous town. Short of activities for young people, and this project targeted at meeting their needs. Focus on engaging those at risk of anti-social behaviour.
Widdrington Station Project value: £76,000 Award value: £50,000 (Total Project = £350,000)	A SE project which aimed to create a Community Park from an old play area and piece of waste ground, which were unkempt, unsightly and little used. The project comprised several components with funding received from four GSSC schemes. SE funding supported the restoration of a multi-use hard court/games area and provision of a skateboard bowl, two youth shelters and a kick wall.	Deprivation is not seen as a particularly relevant issue in that the Project does not fall within a deprived ward. It was just intended to benefit the whole community within the village. It is meant to be a resource for everyone whether they are deprived or not.
Burlington School Project value: £38,800 Award value: £25,000	A Learning through Landscapes (LtL) project which transformed a stark playground into a series of safe, attractive and varied activity areas for play, learning and interaction, involving a wide cross section of the local community.	Does not target area deprivation but does address issues of rural isolation. Focuses also on key children/young people target groups and has been of some benefit to elderly and disabled.
Exeter Junior School Project value: £12,500 Award value: £10,000	An LtL project to improve school playground, employ a part-time supervisor to promote creative play, and create an outdoor classroom. Part of bigger initiative to bring the school up to date, improve behaviour, and enhance the learning environment.	Located in an area of severe deprivation (judged by IMD2000), and in a school where educational achievements were in the bottom 5% of the County's primary schools.
Mill Hill Nursery Project value: £20,700 Award value: £10,000	An LtL project which with improved the range of outdoor play and learning facilities for children attending the Mill Hill Nursery in Sunderland. Two main aspects funded by the LtL grant were equipment for developing children's gross motor skills area and equipment for creative play, role play and drama etc.	Whole area is disadvantaged. Planning of the project took account of the needs of special needs children in the nursery but the aim was to meet the needs of all children.
SEED: Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts		
Bridle Gate Project value: £71,600 Award value: £41,484	Provision of training in conservation skills for about 40 people with learning disabilities focused on the creation and management of willow coppice. Involves about six volunteers in supervising clients.	Targeted individuals with learning disabilities who are unemployed.
Burnley Community Farm Project value: £49,600 Award value: £39,600	A project to facilitate the establishment of a new Community Farm in Burnley, using a Development Worker to take forward the recommendations of a feasibility study to develop the farm concept into a viable concern; to consult the local people, support volunteers and committee activities, and to negotiate and submit funding bids as appropriate.	Daneshouse is the most deprived ward in Burnley. "Extremely deprived area with multiple problems." Projects aims to target area and children, young people, elderly and minority ethnic population.

Project name and funding	Brief description of project	Approach to targeting deprivation
SEED: Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts (continued)		
Community Energy Support Project value: £100,000+ Award value: £50,000	Environmental programme offering advice, support and training to community-based organisations about the provision of energy efficiency measures and fuel cost advice for houses affected by fuel poverty. Has led on to creation of new social enterprises to delivery energy efficiency measures and provide training and job opportunities.	Has targeted areas and households in Birmingham affected by disadvantage. Has also provided skills development and job opportunities for the unemployed.
Hebden Car Share Project value: £9,000 Award value: £5,000	The project aimed to research and generate a business plan, marketing strategy and appropriate working systems in connection with the establishment of a not-for-profit transport initiative in and around Hebden Royd. The initiative was aimed at providing efficient, low-cost car sharing for the local community. Has led on to a fully fledged car share scheme.	Project did not address area deprivation as officially defined but project application made strong case for project area as an area of rural deprivation. Project also unexpectedly benefited on elderly community.
Local Food for Local People Project value: £50,000 Award value: £40,000	Project run by a local environmental charity. Had three objectives: getting local food producers to work together and make their businesses more viable; to increase sale of locally produced and organic food (e.g. by promoting box schemes); and to promote and provide information on local food issues and its availability (e.g. by producing a Local Food Directory).	Focus on deprivation is that poor people and people in rural areas have little access to high quality food. Also elderly and disabled have limited mobility for shopping. Aims to improve access to quality local and organic food – and help to improve health.
Free Form Arts Project value: £1.1 million Award value: £75,000	Established to produce landscaping and building materials (e.g. paving, tiles and bricks) on a small scale from 100% recycled glass; aesthetic issues of primary concern. Addresses use of such materials for community regeneration, e.g. in development of community gardens and housing estates -particularly within deprived areas.	Hackney very deprived area. Project engages with community and makes recycling relevant - creating something out of waste and handing it back to the community.
Furniture Now Project value: £111,400 Award value: £42,800	Provided access for about 24 mental health service users to an upholstery training programme.	Targeted this group of typically excluded people in a rural area via local mental health service providers. Target group suffers from high unemployment.
RuralEnergy Trust Project value: £112,100 Award value: £50,000	Pilot/feasibility study to test and develop the market for renewable energy using locally grown biomass. Creates farm diversification opportunities, new jobs and increased incomes within rural communities and sustainable source of energy. Introduces relevant new technology to UK from Scandinavia.	Project targets declining farm incomes and former farm employees who would be forced out of rural areas unless alternative employment opportunities can be found.
Radford Mill Project value: £46,800 Award value: £5,000	Feasibility study looking at renovation of old mill and its use by small scale local enterprises. Linked to organic farm providing opportunities for horticultural therapy. Feasibility study did not achieve intended outcomes and, following further work, decision made not to proceed.	Project located in an area of relative rural disadvantage. If it had proceeded, would have included opportunities for inclusion of adults with learning difficulties.
TABIC Project value: £98,100 Award value: £50,000	Community-focussed biodiversity project that expands on previous successful biodiversity work. Works with communities across Derbyshire to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity, and provide opportunities to become involved in biodiversity enhancement activities.	Project looking to work in more deprived mining/industrial areas (Chesterfield, Bolsover, Derby) and isolated rural areas. Also to target mental health group.
Wildspace: English Nature		
Amber Valley Natural Connections Project value: £62,900 Award value: £24,200	Employment of part-time Community Liaison Officer (CLO), establishment of new Local Nature Reserve (LNR) at Belper Park, and engagement of local communities in existing LNRs by developing high quality interactive projects, making available interpretive material and improving access. Local interest harnessed through existing Friends groups, plus establishment of new (and now very active) group for the Park.	The aim of the project is to target all local people. Within this overall objective, there is some targeting of socially excluded young people.

Project name and funding	Brief description of project	Approach to targeting deprivation
Wildspace: English Nature (continued)		
Cambridge Wildspace Project value: £150,000 Award value: £76,000	Aimed to engage community in enjoying and managing the LNRs within Cambridge City. Delivery to be effected through the formation of 'Friends' groups for each of eight LNRs. Also wanted to get local schools involved in education projects on the LNRs. Long-term aim to get Friends groups to take over management.	Aimed at all of people of Cambridge and more specifically at people living in close proximity to the LNRs. Most LNRs are not in deprived areas.
Doncaster Project value: £39,700 Award value: £29,800	Employment of Community Liaison Officer for two years at LNR near Doncaster, owned/managed by Doncaster MBC. Development of activities and events, publicity and promotion. Also had a Wildspace capital grant of £18,000 in 2001, some of which used by CLO for publicity/promotion.	Targeted on Doncaster which ranks highly on deprivation indices and specifically on a number of neighbouring estates which are amongst the most disadvantaged in the area.
Goytside Meadows Project value: £40,000 Award value: £25,000	Purchase of 4.5 hectares of land to complete land assembly and create an LNR at a County Wildlife site. Appropriate management regime has been introduced, public access created for community and visitors, and interpretive material provided.	Target was environmental, and creation of an opportunity for the whole community. No explicit targeting of disadvantaged.
Bolton LNRs Project value: £169,700 Award value: £61,200	Developed by Lancashire Wildlife Trust. Aims to enable improvement/designation of four LNRs in Bolton to provide a range of opportunities accessible to local communities. Project objectives sit clearly within urban wildlife agenda, and focus on habitat management, community participation, awareness raising, education.	Application cites Bolton-wide deprivation figures and high ethnic population. Also refers to targeting of children, youth, the unemployed and the elderly.
Lincolnshire Wildlincs Project Project value: £145,900 Award value: £78,000	Employment of a CLO to prioritise 17 possible LNR sites in County and designate up to nine new ones. Working through/with local people and community groups, with aim of encouraging them to take an active role in the development and management of the LNRs.	Addresses the very low level of LNRs in the County. Considers deprivation in terms of poor access to areas of nature conservation interest.
Middlesbrough Project value: £137,200 Award value: £58,000	A project combining environmental benefit with community gain. Project aimed to provide local access to natural areas, in places where half the households don't have use of a car, while pursuing a more broadly based community development agenda.	Located in one of the ten most deprived local authority areas in England. Targeted areas of deprivation and a range of key target groups – e.g. children, youth, people with learning difficulties, ethnic groups, offenders.
North Somerset Project value: £10,000 Award value: £10,000	Revenue funding for activities on existing LNRs. Woodland activities with local schools over a period of two years using an approach that had been developed through earlier pilot studies. Links to national curriculum.	Have targeted those communities and schools in borough that fall within the most disadvantaged 10% in terms of IMD2000.
Wormwood Scrubs Project value: £43,600 Award value: £32,000	Designation of first LNR in this London Borough and employment of part-time Nature Conservation Manager to work in partnership with Council and local community. Management scheme prepared and community involvement in biodiversity issues being developed.	Biodiversity-led, plus targeting of local communities and schools. Adjacent to a very deprived housing estate (most disadvantaged 10% of wards on IMD2000). Developing links to prison; hopes to provide opportunities for conservation work by prisoners.
Hurcott Pool LNR Project value: £37,800 Award value: £25,000	Physical access improvements (car park, tarmac paths, boundary treatments), interpretation and conservation works to a newly acquired LNR on the edge of Kidderminster.	Within about 1 km of three deprived estates within Kidderminster.

ANNEX 6

SCORINGS FROM THE CASE STUDY EVALUATIONS

The following pages contain the scorings of the case studies. A five point scale as follows:

- 5 very significant impact or benefits
- 4 significant impact or benefits
- 3 some impact or benefits
- 2 little impact or benefits but not zero
- 1 no measurable impact or benefits.

Further details are contained in Annex 2.

Note: the projects below are not listed alphabetically, and therefore cannot be cross referenced to Annex 5.

	Sustainable Development: Environmental	Sustainable Development: Social	Sustainable Development: Economic	Overall Contribution to sustainable development	Contribution to social inclusion	Contribution to development of social capital	Overall Score
Better Play (Barnardos)							
B1	2	5	1	3	5	4	4
B2	1	3	3	2	5	4	3
B3	1	4	2	2	3	3	3
B4	2	4	2	3	5	3	4
B5	3	4	2	3	4	4	4
B6	2	3	1	2	5	2	3
B7	3	5	3	4	4	5	4
B8	1	4	2	2	3	3	3
B9	4	5	4	5	5	4	5
B10	1	3	2	2	3	2	2
Creating Common Ground (Northern Ireland Housing)							
Ni1	2	3	1	2	3	2	2
Ni2	3	3	1	3	3	3	3
Ni3	2	4	2	3	3	3	3
Ni4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
Ni5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
Ni6	4	4	2	4	4	4	4
Ni7	5	5	4	5	5	5	5
Ni8	3	3	2	3	3	2	3
Ni9	3	3	1	2	3	2	2
Ni10	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Doorstep Greens (Countryside Agency)							
CA1	4	4	4	4	5	4	4
CA2	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
CA3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4
CA4	4	3	2	3	4	4	4
CA5	3	4	1	3	4	2	3
CA6	4	4	1	3	3	2	3
CA7	5	4	3	4	4	4	4
CA8	4	3	1	3	3	2	3
CA9	3	5	2	3	5	2	3
CA10	5	5	2	4	3	4	4
Enfys (Wales Council for Voluntary Action et al)							
W1	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
W2	4	3	1	3	3	3	3
W3	4	3	3	4	3	4	4
W4	3	3	2	3	5	4	4
W5	4	4	3	4	5	4	5
W6	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
W7	1	3	1	2	5	2	3
W8	1	1	1	1	2	4	3
W9	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
W10	3	2	1	2	5	2	3

	Sustainable Development: Environmental	Sustainable Development: Social	Sustainable Development: Economic	Overall Contribution to sustainable development	Contribution to social inclusion	Contribution to development of social capital	Overall Score
Fresh Futures (Scottish Natural Heritage and Fresh Futures)							
S1	5	5	3	4	5	4	5
S2	5	4	4	4	2	4	4
S3	4	2	2	3	3	3	3
S4	3	1	2	2	3	1	2
S5	3	2	3	3	1	2	2
S6	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
S7	3	4	1	2	2	3	3
S8	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
S9	3	4	4	4	2	5	4
S10	4	3	3	4	2	4	4
Green Routes, Safe Routes (Sustrans)							
Su1	3	3	2	3	3	1	3
Su2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3
Su3	4	2	1	2	1	2	2
Su4	4	5	4	4	3	1	4
Su5	4	4	2	3	3	4	3
Su6	4	4	2	3	4	3	4
People's Places (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and English Nature)							
BT1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
BT2	1	5	1	3	5	3	3
BT3	3	4	1	3	4	2	3
BT4	3	5	3	4	4	3	4
BT5	3	2	1	2	2	1	2
BT6	4	4	2	4	5	3	4
BT7	5	5	2	4	2	5	4
BT8	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
BT9	2	3	2	2	3	3	3
BT10	4	5	1	3	4	2	4
BT11	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
BT12	3	4	1	3	3	3	3
BT13	3	2	1	2	3	2	2
BT14	3	3	1	2	2	1	2
BT15	5	5	2	3	5	3	4
Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces Programme (Sport England and Children's Play Council)							
SE1	2	4	1	2	3	1	3
SE2	1	4	1	3	3	3	3
SE3	4	3	2	3	3	3	3
SE4	3	4	1	3	5	3	4
SE5	4	3	2	3	4	3	3
SE6	1	4	1	3	1	2	2
SE7	1	5	1	3	5	4	4
SE8	2	5	1	3	5	2	4
SE9	3	4	1	3	4	5	4
SE10	5	5	4	5	3	4	4

	Sustainable Development: Environmental	Sustainable Development: Social	Sustainable Development: Economic	Overall Contribution to sustainable development	Contribution to social inclusion	Contribution to development of social capital	Overall Score
SEED (Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts)							
R1	3	3	3	3	2	4	3
R2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
R3	4	4	2	3	3	3	3
R4	4	3	4	4	3	2	3
R5	1	2	1	1	3	3	2
R6	4	4	4	4	5	5	4
R7	2	3	2	2	4	3	3
R8	1	3	1	1	2	2	2
R9	5	5	5	5	4	4	5
R10	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Wildspace (English Nature)							
EN1	5	4	2	4	4	3	4
EN2	5	5	3	4	5	5	5
EN3	3	3	1	3	4	3	3
EN4	4	3	1	3	2	4	4
EN5	4	4	2	3	4	3	4
EN6	4	4	2	4	3	4	4
EN7	3	3	3	3	4	2	3
EN8	3	3	1	3	3	2	3
EN9	5	2	2	2	2	1	2
EN10	3	2	1	2	1	2	2

ANNEX 7 THE AWARD PARTNERS

The appointed Award Partners

- A7.1 Eleven Award Partners (APs) were appointed to deliver the Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities programme. Only ten are relevant to this evaluation, the Scottish Land Fund being evaluated elsewhere.
- A7.2 They vary widely (see Table A7.1 on the following page for full details):
- three (Countryside Agency, English Nature, Sustrans) are single organisations; two of these are government environmental agencies (non-departmental public bodies [NDPBs]) and one a national charity
 - two are pairs of organisations, with a lead organisation, and a second providing supporting policy guidance. In one instance both are charities (Barnardo's and the Children's Play Council) and, in the other, the lead is a charity, with support from an NDPB (the British Trust of Conservation Volunteers [BTCV] and English Nature)
 - five are consortia, with the number of members ranging from two to twelve; these are variously made up of public sector and charitable organisations.
- A7.3 Their remits range from environmental protection to advocacy in the field of social policy. Some have a proven track record in organising and delivering programmes of this kind, some a network of contacts with grass roots organisations and skills in working at that level, and others research-based knowledge which enables innovative programmes to be delivered.

Objectives and scope of programmes

- A7.4 Each AP ran its own programme. These varied in terms of value of programme, size of awards, and numbers of projects (see Table A7.2), and more detail in Annex 4.

Table A7.2: Scheme details

Name of scheme/ Open grant or umbrella	Name of Award partner	Value of awards (£ million)	Average value of awards	Projects awarded
Better Play <i>Open grant</i>	Barnardos	£9.45	£41,983	225
Creating Common Ground <i>Umbrella and open grant</i>	Northern Ireland Housing Executive and others	£4.74	£37,023	128
Doorstep Greens <i>Open grant</i>	Countryside Agency	£12.56	£26,557	473
Enfys <i>Open grant</i>	Wales Council for Voluntary Action and others	£6.39	£18,732	341
Fresh Futures <i>Umbrella and open grant</i>	Scottish Natural Heritage and Fresh Futures	£2.91	£37,765	77
Green Routes, Safe Routes <i>Umbrella</i>	Sustrans	£7.03	£80,790	87
People's Places <i>Open grant</i>	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and English Nature	£6.04	£8,172	739
Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces <i>Umbrella</i>	Sport England and Children's Play Council	£28.27	£43,500	650
SEED <i>Open grant</i>	Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts	£14.16	£26,611	532
Wildspace <i>Open grant</i>	English Nature	£7.2	£41,168	175

Source: New Opportunities Fund and information from Award Partners.

Table A7.1: Programmes and Award Partners

Name of programme	Award Partners	Types of organisation
Better Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> led by Barnardo's Children's Play Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National charity campaigning for children, young people and families, delivering a wide range of programmes and projects. Campaigning and advocacy charity to raise awareness of the importance of play in children's and family life.
Creating Common Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> led by Northern Ireland Housing Executive Community Relations Council Groundwork NI Northern Ireland Office Community Foundation for Northern Ireland Dept for Social Development Dept for Agriculture and Rural Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for housing research, responses to housing need, and the development of housing standards in social housing Charity seeking to promote diversity, equity and interdependence between all communities in Northern Ireland Environmental charity building sustainable communities through joint environmental action Leads development of Community Safety Partnerships. Charity working to support people, strengthen communities and build peace in the divided communities of Northern Ireland Government Department Government Department
Doorstep Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countryside Agency (now Natural England) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government agency for the English countryside
Enfys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> led by Welsh Council for Voluntary Action Prince's Trust Cymru Environment Agency Wales Environment Wales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Umbrella organisation and voice for voluntary sector organisations in Wales Charity working primarily with young people Government agency responsible for protecting and improving the environment in Wales Umbrella for environmental charities and lobby groups
Fresh Futures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward Scotland Scottish Natural Heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charitable company concerned with promotion of sustainable development through practical projects and influencing policy Government Agency responsible for conserving Scotland's wildlife, habitats and landscapes and helping people to enjoy and understand them
Green Routes, Safe Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustrans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National charity which lobbies and works for environmentally sustainable transport alternatives to use of the car
People's Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> led by British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) English Nature (advisory capacity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National charity which promotes action to improve the environment for local communities through volunteering and training schemes Government Agency for conservation of biodiversity and geological/ geomorphological heritage
Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> led by Sport England Learning through Landscapes National Playing Fields Association Children's Play Council Institute of Groundsmen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDPB for the development of sport and active recreation Campaigning charity which provides advice and projects with respect to enhanced use and management of school grounds National charity responsible for acquiring, protecting and improving playing fields, playgrounds and play space see Better Play Represents all involved in the management of sports pitches, landscape and amenity facilities in the UK
SEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> led by Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts Bio-Regional Development Group Energy Saving Trust Council for Environmental Education Waste Watch Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens Community Recycling Network Soil Association CREATE UK Sustrans the Wildlife Trusts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National charity promoting conservation. Includes 47 local wildlife trusts and over 100 urban wildlife groups Organisation demonstrating potential to reduce ecological footprint to sustainable levels in a wide range of areas A non-profit company set up by Government and energy companies to work for the sustainable and efficient use of energy Membership organisation committed to environmental education and education for sustainable development Charity promoting waste reduction, reuse and recycling Charity to support, promote and represent groups engaged in community-led development of open space through locally managed farming and gardening Membership organisation promoting community-based sustainable waste management Campaigns for organic food/ farming and sustainable forestry. Works for more sustainable uses of energy see Green Routes, Safe Routes Working with local communities to protect wildlife in all habitats
Wildspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Nature (now 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Agency for conservation and enhancement of

Natural England) biodiversity and geological/geomorphological heritage

A7.5 Table A7.3 sets out the objectives for each programme.

Table A7.3: Programme objectives

Name	Objectives
Better Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce stimulating opportunities for children to play safely within their neighbourhood • offer opportunities for community members to take part in providing good play opportunities for their children • enhance the health and safety of children in disadvantaged neighbourhoods • address the play needs of particularly disadvantaged groups within neighbourhoods • share and disseminate the experience with the programme and externally
Creating Common Ground	<p>Environmental improvements in 40 targeted disadvantaged communities to address key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environmental regeneration • community safety • neighbourhood renewal • community diversity • building community infrastructure <p>plus grants to secure local improvements through environmental projects</p>
Doorstep Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enable 200 communities in urban and rural England to plan, design, create and manage their own multi-purpose green spaces • develop safe access to and from these spaces and, wherever possible, to link them to other community facilities, green areas and the wider countryside • target communities which are socially and economically disadvantaged and which have poor access to local open space • support communities through capacity building, training, and appropriate application and implementation processes
Enfys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • securing better use of green spaces - 100 improved or created • improving enjoyment of green spaces and understanding of related environmental issues • better community involvement in sustainable development • supporting and enabling volunteers
Fresh Futures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver working projects that demonstrate sustainable development, with a focus on better green spaces and more sustainable practices in waste, energy and travel • increase the level of engagement of communities in these activities • give priority to disadvantaged communities
Green Routes, Safe Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating routes to green spaces • creating routes which are green spaces • creating routes which integrate with other forms of sustainable transport • involving the community • supporting smaller sustainable transport initiatives e.g. safe routes to school
People's Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help local communities create or improve green spaces which demonstrate some form of environmental benefit • demonstrate wider community benefits, e.g. through empowerment of under-represented groups, increased community activity and provision of new community resources
Playing Fields and City Green Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect and improve playing fields and open space, including purchase of new space, bringing disused space back into use, improving condition of pitches and playing field strategies • offer funding to schools to improve use, design and management of playing fields • develop innovative community play projects for children and young people
SEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop local economic development activity and community enterprises • facilitate training and development of skills focussing on sustainable development activity • promote the sustainable use/ reuse of resources and effect change in consumption/ lifestyles • encourage projects which promote the conservation and improvement of biodiversity at the community level • support projects which provide learning opportunities and promote community involvement on local sustainable development issues
Wildspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the number of local nature reserves (LNRs) in England by 200, and realise their potential for wildlife and the community by enhancing the quality of experience of users • enable the employment of community liaison officers to facilitate community-led management and development of LNRs • promote the use of LNRs for environmental education

Approaches to delivery of the programme

Open grant schemes and umbrella schemes

A7.6 Some APs operated open grant schemes, and others umbrella schemes which solicited applications from appropriate organisations.

Programme management

A7.7 All the APs established a small, centralised core team, of between three and five people, located within the offices of the lead organisation to manage delivery of the programme. These teams typically sought out applicants (umbrella schemes), fielded initial enquiries from potential applicants, managed the flow of information to and from applicants, liaised and reported to BIG, appointed and coordinated the activities of their project enablers, coordinated and administered the work of their programme boards and panels, and controlled publicity and public relations.

A7.8 The central core teams were supported in a number of ways. Many of the English APs had regional offices which were able to help with the task of promoting the programme through appropriate local channels. Where there were consortia, there was a network of technical know how to draw on. In addition, a body of project support workers (or enablers) has been required, who have come from internal staff specially trained for the purpose, the regional offices, external sub-consultants, or a mix of all of these.

Support for projects

A7.9 A key feature of the programme was support for projects, both at the pre-application stage and during project implementation. Approaches varied, particularly between grant and umbrella schemes, but they are all predicated on a belief that support for project applicants produces more and better applications and better quality projects. Details of project support are set out in Table A7.4 on the following page.

A7.10 Numbers of project support staff varied significantly between APs, depending on the number/nature of projects being funded. Some appointed 40 or more enablers, each carrying a portfolio of several projects. Others managed with between eight and ten. Utilising existing regional and area staff proved to be both practical and successful for several APs.

A7.11 In the event, most project enablers had to become project assessors and monitors as well, but this did not seem to create any problems for them or the grantees. Some Award Partners judged that they did not fully appreciate the breadth of the roles played by their enablers, and therefore did not allocate sufficient time for this in their original budgets. Five half days was insufficient to travel to and support even relatively small-scale projects of £50,000. The pressures were greatest at the pre-application stage and then later during the monitoring stage prior to signing off. Some believe that they should have allocated more time to fewer project enablers, as they would have been able to achieve a higher quality of support to projects and a more efficient method for project assessment and signing off than has been the case. Somewhere between 10 and 20 enablers appears to have been appropriate for the majority of Award Partners dealing with a few hundred projects over a 3-5 year period.

A7.12 Award Partners made use of enablers from amongst their partner organisations, and see the benefits of doing this again, providing that everyone is trained to use the same approach. Some saw the benefit of developing a national register of project enablers who share the same set of generic skills, but also have their own individual set of specialist skills and knowledge on, for example, play, nature conservation and other issues, to which programme managers can signpost projects. Some Award Partners judged that up to 75% of the enablers and assessors they used are now operating as self-employed consultants.

A7.13 Projects were asked about support from the APs. Need for support varied with the type of applicant. Thus, for example:

- some applicants, for example local authority or experienced voluntary sector partners, had extensive knowledge of how to make bids, plus back-up support from within their own organisation; they needed little or no support over the application itself, though they did need specialist technical support on some aspects from their APs

- at the other end of the spectrum, some applicants were making their first funding bid, and had little relevant knowledge on a range of operational (keeping records, making claims, building up the basis of the cost of the bid) and technical (lease arrangements, maintenance of play equipment, health and safety) issues; these applicants needed support throughout the process.

Table A7.4: Delivery of support for projects¹

Name	Pre application support	Post application support
Better Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telephone service for potential applicants to discuss eligibility and refine their ideas • information giving through printed word and website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one-day training event for all projects with contribution to their travel costs; covering project management, long-term funding etc. • networking and sharing through annual regional events focussing on key issues • quarterly review of project finances, with pre-emptive support if required
Creating Common Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information giving through printed word • consortium enquiry line • support from partner organisations if needed • assessment visit by field officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular face-to-face contact with field officer and monitoring visits • advice from consortium team
Doorstep Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information giving through print and website • simple way in to programme via tear off postcard to register interest • follow up telephone call and visit for all potential projects • advice notes on key issues such as other funding and advice sources • telephone support for unsuccessful bids as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • availability of support workers • bespoke training on identified needs e.g. capacity building, briefing paid advisors • legal advisory services and negotiation of land tenure arrangements • signposting to specialist help • help for groups relating to constitution etc • fund raising support work • external support worker if needed • monthly bulletin
Enfys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information giving through print and website • telephone advice on eligibility etc. • support from development officers of partner organisations on specific topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project support varying in intensity and timing with nature of project and the organisation giving the support • trouble-shooting support if required
Fresh Futures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information giving through printed word • for open grant scheme, grants officers provide limited advice and assistance, targeted at those who most need it • for umbrella projects, project officers help with development work; applications will be helped to refocus applications if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open grant scheme provides limited post-application support – most targeted on those who most need support • umbrella scheme offers on-going advice through a dedicated support worker, iterative and evolutionary approach to project development and implementation
Green Routes, Safe Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information giving • regional managers help nurture projects through the development stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • umbrella scheme and minimal post application support required
People's Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information giving through print and website • telephone support from People's Places unit • allocation of mentor to groups wishing to make an application • meeting with mentor to explain process and help with completing application if required • advice on related issues e.g. other funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • web site • on-going support from mentor • opportunity to develop relevant skills e.g. about tools and equipment, community mentoring, insurance etc. • increased support for projects slow to start or slow to progress
Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information giving through print and website • project visit to provide support and advice through application process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support and monitoring visits from mentors • increased support for projects slow to start or slow to progress • free membership of one partner organisation for three year

SEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • info giving through printed word and website • funding seminars and workshops to groups • support on making the application • advice on self checking of eligibility • green housekeeping and business plan templates • support on rejected applications to sign-posting elsewhere or aid resubmission • signposting of project to appropriate consortium partner for support if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written, web site and telephone guidance on matters such as completing claims forms and progress reports • sign-posting of project to appropriate consortium partners for support if needed • increased support for projects slow to start or slow to progress
Wildspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information giving through written word and web-site • grants team willing to comment on draft applications • guidance from area team on project development (telephone and face-to-face) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written and web site guidance on range of issues e.g. publicity, making claims etc • telephone help line • involvement of area team if required • networking to spread good practice • newsletter.

1 Some mechanisms were introduced mid-way in the relevant programme in response to emerging experience.

A7.14 Taking pre-application support first, applicants from the projects we visited to two of the programmes generally felt that they did not need help pre-application. One of these was a grant scheme (run by English Nature) and one an umbrella scheme (run by Sustrans). Both these programmes were dominated by local authority applicants, or others acting on the Local Authority's behalf. All the remaining ones saw value in pre-application support, though the extent varied with the applicant.

A7.15 Performance from the APs was variable. Four were regarded as good by the projects we talked to, with particular reference being made to opportunities to get support either direct or over the telephone, but well tailored to individual needs. Comment was made at the community group level that, whilst one of these Award Partners was very good at personal contact, the volume and technical nature of their written support material was off-putting. External evaluation of the People's Place programme (BTCV) has shown that small groups would have welcomed even more support at the pre-application stage. They find form-filling and the whole process daunting.

A7.16 The remainder showed a more mixed response, with some positive and some negative responses. One was described, at one stage, as poor, but later improved its performance, and one was described as 'unhelpful', with none of its projects regarding it well in this respect.

A7.17 Post-application support again showed variable performance. All APs who were good at the pre-application stage were also good after the award had been made. Of the two not called on for pre-application support, one was seen as good in the post-application phase, with particular mention made of the quality of its technical support, and the other was seen as not very good, with particular mention made of its lack of expertise in relevant areas, particularly with respect to working with the community. One of the Award Partners regarded negatively at the pre-application stage was regarded very well with respect to its post-application support, with particular mention of the extent to which it promoted networking and exchange of ideas/ good practice. For the remainder the picture was mixed, with some negative comments and some good ones.

A7.18 A number of key strands have emerged from what the projects have had to say:

- for community groups, the mentor or supporter role is greatly valued and, when it works well, it can help groups to achieve much more than they would have done on their own at this stage in their development
- Award Partners provide support much more successfully in person than by the written word, and their ability to do this marks out one of the principal values of using the Award Partner route
- the corollary of this is that where project support is provided but does not work well, it is perceived very badly by project participants. In particular, when supporters are not able to

answer questions and they have to be referred elsewhere, it is seen as a waste of time and effort.

- A7.19 Particularly negative perceptions have arisen with respect to one Award Partner that recovered the costs of project support from the projects themselves. Whilst this arrangement was made quite clear to projects at the application stage, it seems that many did not read the small print, and came to regard the charges as a 'tax' on their project.

Did different types of Award Partner influence delivery of the programme?

- A7.20 Single Award Partners (Barnardo's, BTCV, Countryside Agency, English Nature, Sustrans)
The single Award Partners (apart from BTCV) tended to take a risk-averse approach to the design of their programmes, expanding tried and tested processes, albeit targeted at new audiences. Three (Barnardo's, Countryside Agency and English Nature) embraced the challenge to involve communities and tackle the social inclusion agenda. BTCV were already experienced in this arena. Their programme involved delivery of a relatively high number of grants to inexperienced groups. A high level of face-to-face project support was considered essential, but this carried with it a high risk in terms of management and project support costs.
- A7.21 All the single APs made good use of people from a wide range of external organisations who gave their time to helping the AP design elements of the programme, prepare advisory materials, and contribute to grant and advisory panels. Some of these external organisations also provided additional human resources to meet the project support demands.
- A7.22 English Consortia (Sport England, RSWT) Sport England was required to enter into formal contractual relationships with a number of partner organisations identified by BIG. This added risk and uncertainty to the delivery of the programme, but also generated useful learning. Sport England has been able to use the programme to explore development of its role in delivering sport and informal recreation through play, and by providing grants at the community level, in addition to using its traditional route of offering capital based grants through top-down umbrella schemes.
- A7.23 RSWT greatly valued the work of its consortium, not least because their highly innovative and wide ranging scheme was thereby underpinned by relevant expertise, which could not have been supplied from RSWT alone.
- A7.24 Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (Fresh Futures, Enfys, Creating Common Ground)
Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales all took the consortium route. In part this is a reflection of the fact that each got a relatively small amount of money, and a wide spread of individual programmes would have been unrealistic. Furthermore we suspect that there is better knowledge of other organisations, their capabilities and their networks than in England, and that coming together on a collaborative basis is seen as a normal way of working, though we do not have hard evidence to support this view.
- A7.25 These consortia developed ambitious, integrated programmes, supported by the expertise (and additional human/financial resources) of their partners. This enabled efficient use of resources. It helped to build understanding amongst the consortium partners and led to a high frequency of joint working on new programmes.
- A7.26 Public sector and voluntary sector We could find no obvious difference between how the public sector led APs and consortia delivered their programmes, compared to the voluntary sector led APs and consortia. Relevant previous experience and confidence appears to be the more significant factor, allied to the level of competence in the lead APs programme management team and the best performing combinations are found across both sectors.
- A7.27 The nature of the target groups is more important in determining approaches to delivery of programmes than the sector of the AP. Programmes substantially targeted at the most

disadvantaged and/or inexperienced applicants have generally delivered substantial amounts of project support and over a five-year rather than a three-year period.

Performance of the Award Partners

A7.28 An effective approach will deliver the objectives of the funding organisation. In the information that it supplied for potential Award Partners (January 2000), NOF set out its key objectives, and stated it would support sustainable projects that:

- improve the quality of life for people throughout the UK
- address the needs of those who are most disadvantaged in society
- encourage community involvement, and
- complement relevant local and national strategies and programmes.

A7.29 These remain consistent with the principles and values of the Big Lottery Fund.

A7.30 Quality of life is a reflection of BIG's commitment to sustainable development. The needs of the most disadvantaged reflect BIG's aspirations for tackling social inclusion. Encouraging community involvement considers the creation of social capital. Finally, complementing relevant strategies and programmes is important to BIG because it assesses both the relevance of the programme and the additionality deriving from projects for the other programmes to which they can be related. Award Partners cited a range of connections into the urban renewal, health, green space, biodiversity and renewable energy agendas, in their submissions. All four of NOF's objectives for GSSC were reflected in the list of criteria that potential Award Partners were told would be used to assess their bids, so their importance was clear to the Partners from the outset.

Improving quality of life

A7.31 NOF was looking for 'a balance between the social, environmental and economic benefits' (Information for Award Partners, January 2000), an aspect which the evaluation treated as integration. Full integration, however, was not a feature of most of the programmes. Three Award Partners, had a sufficient spread of objectives and of projects to indicate a commitment to helping deliver the sustainable development agenda through the programme. Others had a more narrow focus. BIG's perspective is that it is content to have achieved a degree of integration across the initiative as a whole, rather than within the individual programmes.

A7.32 Perhaps the most important question revolves around the extent to which the Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities initiative has stimulated attempts to achieve so-called 'win-win-win' solutions. This is what is meant when BIG is talking about a balance between social, environmental and economic benefits. The use of project eligibility and evaluation criteria was examined for evidence of such integration (see Table A7.5), and it appears that there was little substantial commitment to achieving all three parts of the sustainable development agenda, with the best prospects coming from programmes which were about sustainable development. Eligibility criteria are potentially a powerful tool to use because they can ensure that projects meet certain requirements, whereas the assessment criteria are only one part of a bigger assessment package, and can be subsumed within wider considerations.

Table A6.5: Use of criteria in the assessment process to achieve win:win:win¹

Name	Eligibility or assessment	Criteria
Better Play	Eligibility	• all criteria are social with a focus on children's play
Creating Common Ground	Eligibility	• projects must address a minimum of two out of environmental regeneration, community safety, neighbourhood renewal, communal diversity, intermediate funding, and best practice, of which environmental regeneration must be one

Doorstep Greens	Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver environmental gain (through provision of new/improved green space with areas of natural planting), and • ensure open accessibility and involvement of the community
Enfys	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help understand, improve, use and enjoy the local environment • protect the environment (maintain environmental integrity) • make a long-term contribution to the local economy • address social inclusion
Fresh Futures	Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • projects should address long-term sustainability issues in terms of their contribution to the local economy, social inclusion and protecting the environment
Green Routes, Safe Routes	Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all criteria relate to creation of routes or sustainable transport initiatives, plus community involvement
People's Places	Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • projects must bring tangible environmental and social benefits
Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces	Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all relevant criteria relate to provision of physical space and ways of working/targeting
SEED	Eligibility	<p>must be at least one of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stimulate local economic development activity and the development of community enterprises • facilitate training and development of skills focussing on sustainable development activity • promote sustainable use and reuse of resources and effect changes in consumption and lifestyles • encourage projects which promote the conservation and improvement of biodiversity at a community level • support projects which provide learning opportunities and promote community involvement on local sustainable development issues
Wildspace	Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • biodiversity gains • improvements to access for all • potential local community benefits

1 Excludes criteria relating to practical aspects of project delivery (e.g. requirements for partnership working).

- A7.33 Taking the three strands separately, when asked, eight of the Award Partners identified their contributions to the environmental aspects of the agenda as very strong. Three ran a programme with a primary focus on green space and three included a significant green space component within their wider programmes. In combination, these bring a substantial contribution to new and improved green spaces ranging from local space, space of nature conservation interest or biodiversity value, innovation in interpretation of local nature reserves, and environmental clear ups. Associated environmental benefits were large and included better management of the space for biodiversity and improved visual impact.
- A7.34 Three Award Partners contributed across a much wider environmental agenda including sustainable land management, waste and energy projects. Two of these were in the category of running a significant green space component as well (see previous paragraph), but one had a programme rooted in a broad sustainable development agenda and which brought wide ranging environmental benefits including addressing energy efficiency, environmental education, waste, and biodiversity. One Award Partner brought environmental benefits for air pollution and atmospheric stability through a programme focussed on cycling and walking as alternative forms of transport to the private car.
- A7.35 One Award Partner did not attempt to address the environmental agenda as its primary objective. However, it contributed to the liveability agenda by helping to create neighbourhoods with better access to play facilities.
- A7.36 Whilst all the other Award Partners delivered the environmental agenda they also considered that they were delivering the social strand of sustainable development. Social benefits were a critical part of their programmes, and projects were expected to bring social gains.
- A7.37 Direct economic benefits from the programme were the least developed, with some Award Partners having no ambition to achieve economic gains. Even for the Award Partners most

evidently contributing to all aspects of the sustainable development agenda, this was the weakest area. Seven of the ten, however, reported evidence of indirect benefits, particularly with respect to training and skills development. Three of these have at least some projects which targeted economic benefits. These included direct training for employment, rural diversification, addressing poverty, and using local products and suppliers.

Addressing disadvantage

- A7.38 BIG did not guide Award Partners over how to target disadvantage, leaving it up to them to decide what they should do to achieve the overall objective. Consequently, Award Partners were able to view the issue from a variety of perspectives, reflecting the overall priorities of their different organisations.
- A7.39 Most used the Index of Multiple Deprivation (or its equivalent) to provide an initial understanding of deprivation. The level of measurement set for projects includes those in the most disadvantaged 20%, 25%, 30% and 50% of wards, but no one appears to have used the criteria as a determining component in eligibility. In choosing projects, those located in areas of deprivation had certain priority. This was simple where projects were in specific, contained locations, for example a pocket park. It became more complicated where the project involved a linear feature such as a routeway, a multiplicity of sites (some affected by deprivation and some not), or a major facility which attracted people from a wider area than the surrounding community. The issue was one of judgement when it came to project selection.
- A7.40 Some Award Partners tried to target specific groups such as Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups and those with disabilities. This met with some success. One Award Partner, for example, reports that 10% of its awards were to BME groups, and another estimated it at between 5 and 10%. There was a recognition however, that such targeting required extensive development work before groups were in a position to deliver services. It involved, variously, capacity building, nurturing abilities to apply for funding, assisting with the development of relevant skills, for example for writing bids. In the case of groups working with clients with mental health difficulties, there was a need for extra flexibility as these individuals may need to withdraw their involvement in a project for periods of time when they are unwell. It pointed to the need for longer periods for development work and appropriate levels of funding for pre-application support.
- A7.41 A number of Award Partners pointed out that deprivation is not solely a social issue. Poor environmental quality or inadequate access to green space was seen also to be a factor in deprivation. This argument was also applied with respect to access to facilities such as play and sports. The particular emphasis in their approach reflected their organisation's aspirations.
- A7.42 The resulting picture reflected a lack of coherence in overall thinking and approach, rather than the systematic programme approach which might have been expected. However, the evidence from the projects was that tackling deprivation (in the wider, rather than the IMD sense) emerged as a strong, though inconsistent, feature. Whilst not all the projects engaged with the disadvantage agenda, the majority did to some extent, and there was evidence of success in reaching out to groups with no previous experience of funding applications or significant joint action. More could have been achieved if requirements had been made clearer to the Partners from the outset.
- A7.43 Examples of ways that they have sought to identify and support groups from disadvantaged communities (of area or interest) are shown in Table A7.6.

Table A7.6: Illustration of ways Award Partners have targeted disadvantage

Approach	Ways of targeting
Active use of IMD data as a criterion in project selection	Ensuring that projects fall within certain categories of deprivation, either on the overall Index, or with respect to relevant domains

Use of local indicators to inform the picture presented by IMD data	Supplementing basic deprivation data with qualitative pictures. For example, in rural areas this might emphasise lack of access to local play space or amenity space, or social and economic problems arising from employment and housing issues relevant to former agricultural workers
Use of established networks to target specific groups	Building on the knowledge and experience of specialist organisations in order to use their networks
Sharing of experience and giving information on good practice	Events organised by Award Partners to bring together project participants and share experiences, and to provide supporting information e.g. with respect to future funding sources
Getting projects to define how they are disadvantaged	Requesting groups not located within the top IMD wards to define their disadvantage. Important for rural groups and those on poor housing estates within otherwise affluent wards

Community involvement

- A7.44 Involving communities was critical to the GSSC initiative. There was evidence both from their objectives and their eligibility criteria that all Award Partners took this on board, and involving communities has been a key characteristic of programmes. Only one Award Partner appeared to be different, and this particular Award Partner did not agree with our assessment. This Award Partner was much less successful than others in generating community involvement in the planning and implementation of most of the green space projects it funded. However, it did experiment with what it describes as a “bottom-up approach” to grant making, and at the end of its programme was keen to ensure that it develops its own capacity to work with communities in this way in the future.
- A7.45 There was some evidence that community involvement has increased in importance over the life of the initiative as Award Partners and, where appropriate, their Grants Panels came to see the benefits of working in this way.
- A7.46 It needs also to be observed that successful outcomes in this respect were frequently in the hands of the projects. An Award Partner may look for projects that show commitment to community engagement, and can provide support, but cannot in the end ensure that projects on the ground achieve the expectations that the Award Partner had of them.

Links to strategies and programmes

- A7.47 In many ways this objective of BIG is one to consider in respect of the whole initiative rather than individual programmes. In particular, the bottom-up approach of many of the schemes means that clear links to strategies were not necessarily easy to make. However, there were multiple examples of ways that the programmes were both working at a number of levels, and, in some ways more interestingly, are helping to shape policies, programmes and delivery for the future. These include:
- through the provision of new local space of various kinds, multiple contributions to local strategies such as Biodiversity Action Plans and Community Strategies
 - through the provision of additional playing fields, contributions to local authority and wider sports strategies
 - through the development of strategic responses as part of funded projects, development of play strategies, playing field strategies, and strategic approaches to high quality play facilities
 - through demonstration of workable ways of involving local communities in long-term maintenance, contributions to the wider national debate on how to achieve high quality maintenance of green space
 - through evidence to a Select Committee, input to the national debate on obesity
 - through lessons learned as a result of the programme, promotion of a new approach to sustainable towns and urban living, now being funded through pilot projects by the Department for transport (DfT) but involving a wider agenda including health, transportation and community development

- use of experience gained to contribute to new lottery programmes (e.g. waste) (WCVA, RSNC) or the framing of potential programmes (e.g. evidence to the Dobson Review on play which is hoped will turn into a programme to be funded by the Big Lottery Fund)
- taking short term contract staff funded to deliver a GSSC programme onto the permanent local authority payroll in order to work on a range of different types of green space project with communities, thereby increasing the capability of the authority.

The Award Partner perspective

- A7.48 Impacts on their own objectives The principal driver for an organisation to be an AP was that it enables delivery of their own objectives. All Award Partners reported a positive impact:
- for three APs, there was affirmation of their objectives and resulting ways of working
 - for the remaining seven, it was an energiser, helping to move along new agendas.
- A7.49 A particular feature of the energised APs was the extent to which participation in the GSSC initiative moved their thinking/working towards a greater people focus. This did not weaken commitment to environmental objectives, but led to increased awareness that social and environmental objectives can go hand-in-hand. One AP stands out because the impact has been profound and has led to a realignment of thinking and of objectives. The organisation moved from a focus on what they delivered to a focus on what communities need. Their Corporate Plan now fully reflects this. Being an AP enabled the organisation to equip itself for current policy agendas, and this has already been translated into new areas of work.
- A7.50 Influencing external policy Involvement in the GSSC programme potentially provided a routeway to influencing the green space agenda. The Countryside Agency consolidated its position in this area, advising CABE Space, and contributing to the development of a learning network and guidance on best practice for groups wishing to set up the equivalents of Doorstep Greens. Sustrans was able to influence the development of policy on two Department for Transport initiatives, and has given evidence to the Select Committee on Obesity.
- A7.51 New programmes Participating in the GSSC programme led to the development of skills and experience on which partner organisations expected to capitalise. A number of APs developed new programmes, building on their experience of GSSC. Many are involved in consortia currently bidding for a new round of funding.
- A7.52 Raising the profile of the organisation In the competitive world of charities and NDPBs, good profile and external positioning is all important. For many APs, involvement in GSSC helped raise their profile, including with Government departments. Many of the gains were peculiar to the specific characteristics of the grant maker. Thus, for example, for the Countryside Agency, involvement in GSSC helped with the development of its 'know how: show how' approach. It was able to demonstrate mechanisms for tying communities into legal frameworks, for example, and to demonstrate approaches to getting communities to bring forward their own green space projects. This would not have been possible without GSSC because it is only a small grant making organisation in its own right.
- A7.53 Benefits of networking All APs agreed about the benefit of raising their profile with other APs. Sharing knowledge was part of this, and the development of understanding between the 30 organisations. This is likely to have lasting effects in strengthening APs confidence to work in partnership with others in future, especially on innovative programmes which build on the strengths and specialisms of each, taking them into new and challenging areas of policy and geography.
- A7.54 The partnership process allowed organisations to make unique contributions to the delivery of their particular programme. Small organisations found influential roles from which they would have been excluded without adoption of a collaborative approach. Thus, for example, Learning through Landscapes developed the community and young people's play evaluation framework for their consortium, and the Community Relations Council has provided training for all field staff on community cohesion issues in the Creating Common Ground consortium.

- A7.55 There was a lingering disappointment amongst APs in England that more benefit could have accrued from networking, had the opportunity been taken. Offers of help from those with experience of managing large grant programmes could have been taken up by the more inexperienced APs, but were not.
- A7.56 Administrative overload Inherent in a delegated initiative of this kind was a tension between BIG's need to be satisfied on progress and the APs desire for autonomy. The selection process for the APs was rigorous, and many felt this should have enabled a relatively 'hands-off' approach from BIG. There was a persistent concern over reporting requirements, in some instances reinforced by a sense amongst APs that arrangements were not consistent, with some case managers having more requirements than others.
- A7.57 Changes BIG made to reporting requirements part way through the programme, particularly on the need to measure who was benefiting from projects, created a major burden for many APs. Reporting forms had to be altered and projects had to be given guidance on how to measure beneficiaries. This added to the management burden and pressure on the overhead.
- A7.58 When compounded with the fact that problems were being experienced with BIG's data capture system and that this did not collect or generate information that the Award Partners could use to improve the delivery and outcomes of the initiative as a whole, it has to be concluded that this is a major element of the initiative that should be reviewed by BIG in future programmes.
- A7.59 Timing and length of the programme Gearing up to deliver major funding programmes places significant operational stresses on those organisations handling the applications for funding. There was a general view from APs that a longer lead-in time was required between approval of bids and programme start. Several emphasised how valuable it would have been to have had a dedicated member of staff employed for 6-12 months prior to the start of the formal contract with BIG, to design the scheme and ensure that all the systems, back-when up information and application paper work was in place prior to the launch.
- A7.60 There is some sense amongst APs that three-year programmes to deliver projects with disadvantaged communities are too short and have disadvantaged both APs and beneficiaries. It took time for inexperienced community groups to build up their understanding and confidence to be able to complete a quality project application, deliver their project and cope with the delays that occur. Most APs believe that a five-year programme or longer would be more appropriate. Where a lot of development work is required, even five-year programmes may be too short.
- A7.61 Funding of overheads and project support The biggest single concern amongst APs was overheads and the funding of project support work. The percentage of total programme costs required to fund the management or overhead of each programme varied between APs. BIG aimed originally to encourage Award Partners to keep this to around 10% of total costs, including costs of project support.
- A7.62 However,
- the number and value of projects to be administered varied enormously between APs
 - flow of applications varied over time, with peaks in some programmes that required the drafting in of additional human resources to help the core team process them (notably year 2 of the three-year programmes and post announcement of a closure date on the five-year programmes)
 - unexpected costs arose e.g. programme systems and information had to be changed due to problems created by demand and by incomplete design and testing of the programmes' and BIG's systems prior to launch.

A7.63 Administrative costs were not the only uncertainty. Type of project support made a significant difference to spend on overheads. It was costly to build community capacity from scratch. Costs escalated when the number of such projects to be funded ran into several hundred, or there were complex issues to be resolved during project delivery, no matter who was managing the programme (public or NGO sector).

A7.64 APs found additional funds to help cover overheads and project support from a number of different sources:

- time of people on programme boards, advisory panels and selection panels was largely given freely and would otherwise have cost in the region of £50,000 per AP; this saved on overheads, and core teams found their contributions invaluable, not least for the independent contribution they made to strategic development of programmes and project selection
- several APs raised additional funds (from within their own resources or those of their partner organisations) to meet the costs of project support
- one AP raised money through charges to grantees e.g. for visits from enablers; this was both unpopular with grantees, who did not properly understand it, and counter-productive for the AP because the costs of collection of these small sums were greater than the money raised.

A7.65 Much depends on the scale and characteristics of the programme. All APs would prefer funders to separate out administrative costs and project support (as in the Transforming Your Waste initiative).

Attitude to risk

A7.66 All APs took on the risks of working with communities, at least to some extent. Some stepped out of their 'comfort zone' in committing themselves to responding to community-led demand, rather than targeting funds using the top-down approach they had used in the past.

A7.67 Some took a risk-averse approach in designing their schemes to deliver a very simple form of project support, which (by their own admission) could not be defined in any way as community development or capacity building, so as to be certain of delivering their programmes within the overhead. Others ran high risks delivering a substantive level of project support to a large number of projects.

A7.68 All Award Partners considered that the risks they ran were worth it because the initiative reached into disadvantaged communities that BIG alone might not have reached, and because of the positive impacts the programmes had on their own organisations' strategies and processes.

ANNEX 8 THE INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMMES IN THE GSSC INITIATIVE

BETTER PLAY PROGRAMME, ENGLAND	
Award Partner	Barnardos, with the Children's Play Council
Value of awards	£9.7 million
No of projects	225
Key characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an open grant scheme with a strong social focus, which funded play projects from a wide range of applicants in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors • GSSC funding was the stimulus for many of the projects • award sizes concentrated in the £20,000-100,000 range • principally revenue projects with a process focus – engaging children, young people, and their parents in play provision; providing training, building confidence, attracting resources • many projects involved the appointment of play workers to promote innovative indoor and outdoor play • some capital projects for new play spaces and enhanced facilities • funding for preparation of some play strategies as platform for future investments • approach to delivery clearly articulated from outset; only limited project support; good opportunities for networking • combined focus on areas affected by deprivation and the target group of children and young people, including those with behavioural, emotional and physical disabilities • a narrowly focused programme; case study projects show a very strong and consistent performance with respect to social inclusion and social aspects of sustainable development, but limited contributions with respect to environment and economy

CREATING COMMON GROUND PROGRAMME, NORTHERN IRELAND	
Award Partner	Led by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, with the Community Relations Council, Groundwork Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Office, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, Dept for Social Development, Dept for Agriculture and Rural Development
Value of awards	£4.74 million
No of projects	40 housing estates (umbrella scheme); 145 awards made in total within this scheme 88 other projects (open grants programme)
Key characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an umbrella scheme funded environmental works on housing estates; these typically included work to green areas (e.g. paths, tree planting, play space) to soften often harsh environments; scheme was part of much wider estate intervention, also including community capacity building, community safety, community relations, community infrastructure, and housing improvements • an open grant programme funded environmental projects which were principally green space projects, but also included some recycling, community horticulture, community artworks, and outdoor activity areas • estate awards ranged between £20,000 and £75,000; open grants typically between £3,000 and £50,000 • mix of both capital and revenue funding reflects the substantial commitment to community involvement in all the awards made • high levels of support from development workers (enablers) • very strong focus on deprivation in umbrella scheme – estates were the most disadvantaged 40 in Northern Ireland; projects also in areas of deprivation, plus frequently targeted a need group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • case studies show a good performance with respect to social inclusion but less good overall with respect to social capital, reflecting the very difficult context of Northern Ireland • at their very best, the Housing Estate projects showed significant integration of environmental and social benefit and good inclusion and capacity building • strong partnership approach and good model for future working
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DOORSTEP GREENS PROGRAMME, ENGLAND	
Award Partner	Countryside Agency (now Natural England)
Value of awards	£11.4 million
No of projects	473 in total; 197 were full creation grants
Key characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programme of new or improved local green spaces • BIG funding made these projects happen • implemented via a two-one stage process, with an initial project preparation stage (to assess feasibility), and a follow-on detailed creation stage for viable and achievable projects • funding principally for capital works, typically including new or improved paths, sitting out areas, planting, lighting, opportunities for children and young people's play, and provision for wildlife; some support also for land acquisition • community consultation and engagement (i.e. process elements) as critical components of the programme • strong support through advisors to enable communities to achieve their objectives; wide ranging technical support also available • consistently positive feedback from the community about the support • links to the economic agenda through project training and capacity building, and approaches to long-term maintenance, despite programme's environmental and social focus • notable for the consistently high performance of its case study projects, demonstrating very strong links between quality environmental and social outcomes

ENFYNS PROGRAMME, WALES	
Award Partner	Led by Welsh Council for Voluntary Action, with The Prince's Trust Cymru, Environment Agency Wales, Environment Wales
Value of awards	£6.39 million
No of projects	341
Key characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open grants scheme principally focused on sustainable development and green space projects, with a small number of play and sports schemes • programme well aligned to agenda of National Assembly of Wales • a big range in value size from under £500 to £100,000; typically, projects are in the £20,000-50,000 range • lottery funding was very important in making these projects happen • projects showed a very wide range of types from sustainable management of upland areas to a number of very interesting feasibility studies • wide range of technical support available to projects through the partners in the consortium • case study projects show a very good performance with respect to social inclusion; projects well targeted; also good with respect to social capital • evidence of integration across the whole sustainable development agenda from some projects • overall performance shows a number of exceedingly good projects; if feasibility studies excluded, performance is outstanding

FRESH FUTURES PROGRAMME, SCOTLAND	
Award Partner	Forward Scotland with Scottish Natural Heritage
Value of awards	£2.91 million (excludes Scottish Land Fund)
No of projects	77
Key characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part umbrella scheme and part open grants, which delivered an environmental programme well aligned to Scottish agendas • range in values from £3,000 - 66,000 with projects typically being in the £20,000 – 50,000 range; additionally, two very large awards were made of over £100,000 • funding used for a wide range of sustainable development projects including feasibility studies, demonstration projects, education. Green space projects were frequently innovative, reflecting local circumstances • the lottery funding was less influential in bringing projects forward than elsewhere • the umbrella scheme was characterised by high levels of support from dedicated staff, tailored to the needs of applicants • the case study projects show a very wide spread of achievement with both high and low overall performance. The environmental performance was especially strong, with strong links to social benefits • strong evidence of initiatives leading on to new things (feasibility studies, demonstration projects)

GREEN ROUTES, SAFE ROUTES PROGRAMME, ENGLAND	
Award Partner	Sustrans
Value of awards	£7.05 million
No of projects	87
Key characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sustainable transport programme • umbrella scheme providing capital intensive grants for local authority applicants or their agents • funding mainly focussed on new links in green transport routes (bike and walking); opportunity also taken to test out new ideas e.g. Home Zone, walking-only route • projects were predominantly large and very large; with 28 being over £100,000 • characteristically, these projects had cocktail funding; role of Lottery funding in projects was low, and funding level from other partners was very high; overall the programme attracted a further £25.8 million (nearly four times as much again) principally from LA capital budgets • case study projects showed good environmental performance, with some also having good links to the social aspects of sustainable development (schools, health, etc); contributions to social inclusion and social capital were weaker, but this was inherent in the nature of the programme • the programme contributed to a strengthening of the cycling agenda, e.g. through its contributions to health

PEOPLE'S PLACES PROGRAMME, ENGLAND	
Award Partner	Led by British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), with English Nature (advisory capacity)
Value of awards	£5.98 million
No of projects	739
Key characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a people-focussed, open grants programme which made a large number of very small awards, with only four out of 739 exceeding £10,000 • focus for awards was grass roots community organisations, wanting to do local environmental improvements, particularly those with no previous experience of grant making and project implementation • there were significant levels of face-to-face support • disadvantage was an important factor when making awards • knowingly took risks when making awards to inexperienced groups, and the patchy performance was anticipated • the case study projects showed a very good overall performance with respect to the social aspects of sustainable development and reasonable performance regarding social inclusion • performance with respect to social capital was weak overall, perhaps reflecting the small size of the awards and the relatively short period for their implementation • overall, the programme provided very interesting demonstrations of success achieved with very small amounts of money

PLAYING FIELDS AND COMMUNITY GREEN SPACES, ENGLAND	
Award Partner	Led by Sport England, with Learning through Landscapes, National Playing Fields Association, Children's Play Council, Institute of Groundsmen
Value of awards	£28.46 million
No of projects	650
Key characteristics	<p>A varied programme with two separate delivery partners - Sport England (SE) and Learning through Landscapes (LtL) - and four separate components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • playing pitch strategies which helped local authorities and their partners plan and bid better for open space and pitches (total value £0.7 million), run by SE • improving playing fields which went to achieving good quality spaces with a good mix of facilities; included some land purchase (total value £19.6million), run by SE • catering for young people's play which provided opportunities for more innovative play for young people (total value £4.1 million), run by SE • school playground improvements which enhanced play opportunities through a range of provision and increased access for children with disabilities (total value £4.0 million), run by LtL <p>The evaluation showed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the playing field component strongly dominated the programme (more than double the value of the other three combined). Because of its size it also strongly dominated the whole GSSC initiative, representing more than 20% of all awards made • other than the strategies component, the SE programme was heavily weighted to large size capital spend projects; 84 projects were between £50,000 and £100,000, and 73 exceeded £100,000 • the LtL component made many small awards, the vast majority in the £10,000-20,000 range) • all components were effective at attracting in partnership funding (a total of £12.7 million) • the greater strengths in this programme are with respect to the social aspects of sustainable development, reflecting the health benefits from sport and the opportunities of diversionary activity from MUGAS and skate parks

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the contribution to social inclusion is good, often because of a strong focus on young people rather than deprivation. The development of social capital is generally weak, though a skate park and a school playground project stand out amongst the case studies as demonstrations of good practice • overall, few extremes in the performance other than with respect to the economic agenda which was weak, in common with most other programmes
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SEED PROGRAMME, ENGLAND	
Award Partner	Led by Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts, with Bio-Regional Development Group, Energy Saving Trust, Council for Environmental Education, Waste Watch, Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, Community Recycling Network, Soil Association, CREATE UK, Sustrans, the Wildlife Trusts
Value of awards	£14.16 million
No of projects	532
Key characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sustainable development programme, which included feasibility, demonstration, education and training work, funded a wide range of waste, food, transport and energy projects • open grant programme, principally funded voluntary sector and not-for-profit organisations, but included a small number of local authority awards • chose to fund a mix of very small awards (less than £5,000) and larger awards principally in the £20,000-50,000 category • for most of the projects, additionality of BIG funding was high • programme showed that it is possible to combine practical sustainable development with effective targeting of disadvantaged communities • case study projects demonstrated an integrated approach, with a particularly strong performance with respect to economy and environment; links were also made to the social agenda.

WILDSpace PROGRAMME, ENGLAND	
Award Partner	English Nature (now Natural England)
Value of awards	£5.83 million
No of projects	175
Key characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open grants scheme funding projects from local authority applicants and people acting on their behalf • principal focus was on creation and/or improvement of Local Nature Reserves • project values show a substantial range; there is a weighting towards those in the middle range £10,000 – £100,000 • BIG funding was key to setting up these projects • much of the funding was to support employment of community liaison officers to facilitate declaration of local nature reserves, promote their use by disadvantaged groups, and help with the formation of 'Friends of' Groups • some capital spend on land purchase and on facilities ancillary to LNRs (footpaths, etc.) • case study projects demonstrate good environmental performance, and a number have also made good contributions to the social agenda. Economic performance tended to be weaker.

ANNEX 9 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN FUNDING ENDS?

Understanding project sustainability

A9.1 In the discussion that follows, project sustainability is seen to have a number of components:

- *for capital works:* Where a project has involved significant capital expenditure, project sustainability when funding ends is taken to include having in place effective mechanisms that enable survival of the physical components of the project. Put slightly differently, this means there is an ability for the project to function after initial support mechanisms are withdrawn. It involves timescale issues that vary with the type of funding and the scale of investment. Maintenance of small-scale capital works on a leased piece of land will not be expected to have the same life span as major investment in a new green space or cycle route.
- *for revenue funded projects:* Where a project has had revenue funding, project sustainability is taken to include on-going provision of the services or activities being provided, either in direct continuity or through consequential operation of a similar service or activity by others. This might include, for example mainstreaming through public sector services or alterations to the model of provision to suit the requirements of a different funder, but with similar broad outcomes.
- *for all projects:* Whether capital or revenue, there was an expectation that communities would be genuinely involved in designing and delivering projects and in ensuring their sustainability. Project sustainability therefore also has connotations in terms of maintaining the benefits from community engagement (capacity building and social capital).

A9.2 Project sustainability makes no reference to the concept of environmental sustainability and the terms are not used interchangeably.

Maintaining investment in green spaces

A9.3 'Green space' is used here to include play space, sitting out space, playing fields and games areas, and green transport routeways. In any consideration of project sustainability and green space schemes, the quality of aftercare is especially relevant. Green space resulting from the GSSC initiative has joined a whole range of new and improved spaces recently funded through multiple mechanisms, including other lottery programmes. Management and maintenance of all this green space is of great current concern. In a recent report²⁰, CABE Space said that new ways are needed to pay for the long-term management and maintenance of parks in order to sustain the improvements seen over recent years. They warn that, without this funding, parks run the risk of a decline in quality. There is widespread recognition that it would be a sad irony if high quality new spaces, some delivered through painstaking efforts by local communities, commenced the downward spiral that leaves them in need of renovation.

A9.4 The evaluation can offer an overview of where projects are getting to. We have sufficiently up-to-date information on the condition of 56 of the case study green space projects to comment. Of these, just over 70% were being well looked after and were in good condition, 20% showed significant signs of deterioration due to wear and tear, and 9% were being seriously neglected. The amount of time that has elapsed since completion varies, so this gives no more than an indication. However, with nearly one third showing cause for concern, the conclusion can be drawn that maintenance will be a problem for these new green spaces, as for many others. One Award Partner has postulated a possible loss rate from their new green spaces of around 10% due to lack of care, but that would be an optimistic level if the pattern so far observed is a fair one.

²⁰ Paying for Parks, CABE Space, October 2006.

- A9.5 A review of the case studies has shown that there were three dominant approaches to management and maintenance of the green space, though these are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They are reliance on local authority maintenance budgets, community involvement in maintenance, and engaging help from others.
- A9.6 Interestingly, judged by the case studies, there is no single route to success. Very good maintenance standards were achieved through a number of different routes, including local authorities on their own, communities working on their own, and a mix of approaches. Similarly, projects that are giving cause for concern are not confined to a single maintenance and care route. Using CABE Space's recent terminology, there is no such thing as 'one size fits all'.

Reliance on local authority budgets for green space maintenance

- A9.7 Local authority resources (money, staff, equipment, contractors) were the most important maintenance mechanism employed in the case studies, being used in whole or in part in just under two thirds of green space case studies (excludes Northern Ireland). All of the Sustrans projects relied wholly on local authority maintenance, though some of it was sub-contracted to relevant partners. Eight of the Sport England projects relied solely on local authority or schools maintenance budgets. To a significant extent this reflected the applicants for these awards. Local authority maintenance was also important in English Nature's Wildspace programme, although only two out nine relevant projects relied wholly on local authority partners. An approach commonly adopted in Wildspace is to use a mix of community and local authority resources to undertake different aspects, often with the local authority taking responsibility for grass cutting, but two Wildspace projects were wholly maintained in other ways. Other programmes depended on a rich mix of approaches. We estimate that between 15% and 20% of the GSSC green space projects are solely dependent on the efforts of their local communities.
- A9.8 There was evidence from the case studies of problems over quality of local authority care:
- local authorities reported that they have not been provided with additional resources for the care of the spaces, with consequent stretching of budgets
 - routine maintenance was not tackling problems as they emerged, and they were left to get worse. This was exacerbated where spaces included unconventional features which presented greater care challenges, for example community art
 - maintenance staff were sometimes reported to have rigid operational practices with respect to maintenance, for example with insufficient account being given to the differing needs that arise where space is being managed for wildlife. Whilst individual operatives can be willing to learn from community groups and their leaders about more appropriate procedures, translating this into a consistent approach and wider good practice at any single site was proving to be a problem, particularly when the local authority is making use of external contractors, and it was a strongly negative feature for community groups who were working alongside local authorities
 - local authority maintenance is a 'silo' activity, rarely done in ways which contribute to community cohesion and social capital; contracts are let, and community engagement is not part of the thinking, so there is no re-investment in the community care aspects through local authority maintenance budgets.

Community involvement in maintenance

- A9.9 There is evidence from the case studies that a combination of local authority and community maintenance can be very powerful. Some of the very successful Learning through Landscapes school playgrounds projects achieved an effective 'mix and match'. Maintenance of hard surfaces, play equipment and grassed areas was done using school budgets. But members of the community of all ages were involved in caring for planted areas, looking after demonstration allotments, and a wide range of other things, with benefits for the school in

terms of improving community relations, building confidence with young children under school age, and extending the school curriculum.

- A9.10 Public sector/community maintenance partnerships typically involved the local authority in taking responsibility for those aspects normally handled under maintenance contracts, with the smaller and more fiddly jobs being done by groups. There were many good examples of this from amongst the case studies.
- A9.11 The Wildspace programme extended this approach. Its focus on Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) had the great advantage that, once a site has been declared an LNR, its future is much more secure. Wildspace promoted involvement of community volunteers in the management of LNRs through organisations such as 'Friends of...' and the County Wildlife Trusts. This was facilitated through 'community liaison officers' funded through Wildspace, who worked to engage 'Friends' in long-term maintenance as part of their enjoyment of the LNR. Case study visits showed how much local communities valued their Wildspace, and how committed enthusiasts welcomed opportunities to be involved. We also found considerable concerns amongst these enthusiasts about their ability to maintain a significant role, and an acute awareness of the sheer scale of the task in hand. This can be due to a range of reasons including different priorities, difficulties attracting new members, costs of the works, and the sheer scale of the task.
- A9.12 From the outset, some groups began with the idea that they would undertake maintenance without external support, and they continued to do so. At its best, this approach can achieve very significant results, both in terms of standards of care and in terms of on-going investment in capacity building and development of social capital.
- A9.13 Devolving care of green spaces to the community also produced ineffective and demoralising results. More often than not, this arose when people had insufficient involvement in developing or implementing the plans for an area, and felt little ownership of what had been created. At worst, people felt that the project had been dumped on them. In such cases, there was little interest in looking after it. In some instances the task was clearly beyond the resources of the group doing the maintenance, both in terms of manpower and financial resources, with the whole investment consequently at risk.
- A9.14 Overall, the strong message emerging from the evaluation is that it is difficult for communities to maintain their involvement over time without some form of external support.

Ongoing support from the Award Partners for communities and their greenspace

- A9.15 A variety of support mechanisms were used by Award Partners during project implementation phase. These included newsletters, training opportunities, and opportunities for networking. They were important in helping the groups to complete their projects, and were intended to build their capacity for the post implementation period. Only two Award Partners put real effort into keeping support going once projects were complete, and it is interesting to note that both are independent government agencies where the GSSC initiative has been an important mechanism for helping to deliver their own objectives (Doorstep Greens and Wildspace programmes).
- A9.16 The Countryside Agency (now incorporated within Natural England) took a particular interest in long-term sustainability of Doorstep Greens, and used earlier experience of Millennium Greens to shape its activity. The aim was to ensure that Doorstep Greens were looked after and well used for decades to come. The issue of maintenance was addressed up front, with an expectation that all Doorstep Greens would have in place an initial three-year maintenance plan at completion, plus arrangements for its delivery. In practice, extended timescales for project delivery eroded the opportunity to do this. The potential for an endowment approach was also explored, but was not progressed during the lifetime of GSSC.
- A9.17 The programme's advisors encouraged groups to forward plan for the post-completion period. A number of ongoing strands were evident as the programme drew to a close:

- experimenting with continuing sources of advice, for example through the Green Space Learning Network
- creating opportunities for networking as a way to learn and share from each other, and disseminate good practice
- encouraging groups to apply for Green Flag and Green Pennant awards so as to instil a sense of pride and ensure a quality site.

A9.18 The Green Pennant Award is a national award that recognises high quality green spaces in England and Wales that are managed by voluntary and community groups. It is part of the Civic Trust's Green Flag Award scheme, the national standard for quality parks and green spaces. All Doorstep Greens were encouraged to meet the standard and apply for the annual award. So far, 14 have won a Green Flag or Green Pennant Award, and the case studies showed that more intend to apply.

A9.19 It is too soon to know if support provided through the Doorstep Green programme will produce significantly better results in terms of project sustainability – both in a physical sense and in terms of the social capital that has been built. This is an issue which needs to be revisited when a greater period of time has elapsed.

A9.20 English Nature's Wildspace programme also encouraged projects to look to the future. In recognition of the ending of Wildspace money, the Derbyshire team at English Nature (now Natural England) explored ways to continue to support Friends Groups. With two major Wildspace projects in the county on multiple LNR sites, each with Friends Groups established or in an embryonic stage, it was important that they didn't collapse. This created the impetus to get together all the Groups on LNRs in Derbyshire (both new and existing) and help them to make links with each other. As a result, a Forum was established to facilitate communication and to stimulate and coordinate interest in the use and management of local LNRs.

A9.21 A Derbyshire Biodiversity Newsletter is also now produced, aimed at anyone with an interest in biodiversity, with a page on LNRs. They also have a dedicated member of staff available by phone to help Friends groups, for example with management advice, information on sources of funding, and help in making contacts with local experts. The aim is not to do hand holding, but to build the capacity of groups so that they have confidence and knowledge to do the management themselves, and share their experience with each other.

Engaging help from others in the maintenance of greenspace

A9.22 A substantial addition to community effort has been achieved where projects were able to make use of an external source of labour. Typically this involved some form of social enterprise or, in at least one case, the Probation Service. Such approaches have the advantage that they also bring wider social benefits – again addressing disadvantage and/or developing social capital. The approach has been well demonstrated at the Ashton West End Doorstep Green where some of the Council's grant contribution was used to pay for post-completion maintenance in the short term. It is intended that the social enterprise which undertook this initial work, and which is expected to become self financing, will look after the area in the longer term.

Rolling forward the process projects

A9.23 Project sustainability has different connotations for projects we have described as process. The majority (24) are projects around sustainable development, with a strong emphasis on feasibility studies, demonstration projects, projects to lever out changes in the behaviour or resources of others, and education projects. There are also revenue projects based around play (as opposed to new playgrounds) and revenue projects with a green space focus (14 projects). Table A9.1 shows what has happened to them since the funding ended.

Table A9.1: Case study revenue projects after GSSC funding has ended

<u>Type of project</u>	<u>No of proje</u>
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	cts in category
<i>Sustainable development projects (24 projects)</i>	
- mainstreamed by local authority	2
- projects now run by private sector	2
- projects which are self financing	1
- projects which are well financed: going from strength to strength	3
- projects which have attracted new money and are continuing as before	4
- projects which have reduced their activity due to reduced funding	5
- closed, but the lessons have been taken on and used in new ways	2
- projects with no further activity/closed	2
- feasibility studies which didn't proceed	3
<i>Play projects and green space projects (14 projects)</i>	
- mainstreamed by the local authority	1
- project activity supported by private sector	1
- projects which are well financed: going from strength to strength	1
- projects which have reduced their activity due to reduced funding	2
- project activity ended, but lessons/experience being used in new ways	2
- projects with no further activity/closed	5
- strategies: no further work	2

- A9.24 40% of the projects can be said to have been in good financial health when the funding ceased, with activity continuing at previous or increased levels. Intuitively we had expected that mainstreaming by relevant local authorities would be an important component in this, but in practice fewer than 10% were fully maintained in this way. As many were run by, or supported by, the private sector as by local authorities. There is a marked difference between the sustainable development projects, and revenue funded projects associated with play or green space. The play sector experienced significant difficulty in attracting new funding, with only three out of 14 projects in good health.
- A9.25 30% of projects had closed. Some were actual closures, whilst others were either feasibility studies or strategies which required no further work. Again the play sector was badly hit. One half of the play projects did not continue after their GSSC funding had ceased, of which more than one third were projects which closed/did no further activity. In comparison, fewer than 10% of the sustainable development projects completely ceased. Amongst both play projects and sustainable development projects are ones which stopped the activity as funded by GSSC, but have been able to transfer the experience gained to reshaped initiatives which have attracted some funding.
- A9.26 The remaining projects are those which are struggling. They have reduced their activity as a result of reduced funding, but are managing to keep going with pots of money from mixed sources including their local authorities, charges they can make, and other small awards. A number of the sustainable development projects are looking towards at least partial self financing, but this will require a considerable period of time and continued investment meanwhile.
- A9.27 The situation for the play sector is interesting. The end of the Better Play programme coincided with a time when there was no other Lottery funding available for play. This has now changed and at least one of the closed projects is hoping that funding from the Children's Play programme will enable them to re-open. Meanwhile, however, some very good projects are adversely affected and, at worst, closed. Amongst the sustainable development projects, the pattern is more varied, but it is notable that the energy projects have had significant difficulties with their funding, with valuable activity either curtailed or lost.
- A9.28 A peculiarity of the pattern of closures and significantly reduced activity is that there is no straightforward correlation with quality. The very weakly performing projects are amongst those that have either closed or significantly reduced, which is to be expected. But some of the very best projects (both play and sustainable development) have experienced significant difficulties with funding and are either currently closed or reduced.