

**EVALUATION OF THE  
TRANSFORMING YOUR SPACE  
PROGRAMME**

**FINAL FIRST YEAR REPORT**

**For**

**THE BIG LOTTERY FUND**

**By**

**SQW Limited**

**June 2005**

## Evaluation of the Transforming Your Space Programme

### Final First Year Report For The Big Lottery Fund

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#### **SQW Quality Statement**

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# 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 In 2004 SQW Ltd was appointed to undertake an evaluation of the Big Lottery Fund's Transforming Your Space (TYS) Programme. The evaluation is a three-year rolling research programme (2004-2007).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Big Lottery Fund on the first year's research and to highlight emerging findings from our evaluation activity. This report forms the first of three annual reports that will be produced.

## ***Aims and Objectives of the TYS Evaluation***

- 1.3 The focus of the Transforming Your Space initiative (TYS) is on enhancing the quality of life for local communities, to improve the appearance and amenities of local environments, and to develop community assets. The initiative was first set up under the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), although for clarity, we have used the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) throughout this report. TYS is being delivered in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the delivery mechanisms and priorities vary between countries.
- 1.4 Transforming Your Space (TYS) is part of the Big Lottery Fund's wider transforming communities initiative. Each of the four countries is running a TYS programme. The total budget for the programme across the UK is £46.5m, of which £36.6m has been allocated to England, £4.7m to Scotland, £3.1m to Wales and £2.1m to Northern Ireland.
- 1.5 The programme has 3 overall key aims:
- **(1) Enhancing the quality of life of local communities** by supporting projects that improve the quality of the local environment and are consistent with local and regional initiatives:
  - **(2) Improving the appearance and amenities of local environments** by awarding funds to projects able to transform public and green spaces that are important to local people; and
  - **(3) Increasing the development of community assets** through funding sustainable projects that demonstrate significant and meaningful engagement of the local community, or address community development support needs in order to include local people in decisions taken about the use of local spaces.

- 1.6 The purpose of the evaluation is to consider the lessons that can be learned from the TYS programme, which is seeking to deliver a complex mix of social and environmental outcomes. The findings of this research will provide an insight into the success of a wide range of different types of activity in achieving these outcomes. It is intended that the findings can be used to influence the design of future programmes.
- 1.7 Our evaluation for the Big Lottery Fund will focus on the impacts and outcomes for the environment, beneficiaries and communities, in order to assess:
- How far the programmes have succeeded in meeting their overall aims;
  - How successful selected individual projects are in delivering their own aims; and
  - Good practice in developing and running successful projects and programmes.

***Fieldwork Activity***

- 1.8 Our research activity to date has focused on a number of key activities:
- **Scoping stage** – the purpose of this exercise was to understand how the TYS programme has been designed and rolled-out in each of the countries. This consisted of a review of policy, monitoring and operational information related to the TYS programme in each of the four countries. This was followed-up by face-to-face or telephone interviews with key policy and operational contacts in each country.
  - **Case studies** – we have undertaken case studies of TYS activity in 18 locations across the four countries. This fieldwork took place between November 2004 and January 2005. The methodology used for case study selection is described later in this report.
  - **Beneficiary research** – we have gathered feedback from the beneficiaries of TYS activity in five case study areas. The approach to this activity has evolved - in agreement with the Big Lottery Fund – since the original proposal. Essentially, a more in-depth approach has been taken to working with beneficiaries in a smaller number of case study areas. This fieldwork was undertaken during January and February 2005.

## **Report Structure**

1.9 The remainder of this progress report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2: Scoping Activity** – feedback on our findings from the initial scoping stage, including a description of the way the programme has been developed and rolled out in each of the countries;
- **Chapter 3: Methodology** – describes the approach used to select case study areas, and to undertake research with beneficiaries.
- **Chapter 4: Early Findings** – we provide a brief synopsis of activities being delivered in the case study areas, and highlight emerging observations from the first year of the evaluation.
- **Chapter 5: Beneficiary Research** – findings of beneficiary research in the five case study areas.
- **Chapter 6: Conclusions and Next Steps** – in this section we draw together conclusions from the first year of research, and identify next steps in terms of taking the evaluation forward.

## 2 Scoping Activity

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### Introduction

- 2.1 During our initial discussions with the Big Lottery Fund on the proposed methodology, it was suggested that we might undertake early consultations with BIG's key policy and operational staff, with the purpose of understanding how the TYS programme has been developed and rolled-out in each of the countries. We undertook a series of 11 consultations prior to arranging case study visits. Below we provide brief descriptions of the TYS programme in each of the countries, based on these consultations.

### **TYS England (£36.6m)**

*Consultees included: Catherine Haynes (Deputy Head of Programmes), Helen Bolton (Programme Manager) and Beatrice Andrews (Senior Policy Adviser) - all from the Big Lottery Fund*

- 2.2 The TYS programme came from Round 3 policy directions that focused on quality of life. In England a decision was made to link the TYS programme to the Fair Share programme; this prioritised funding to local authority areas which historically had received proportionally lower amounts of Lottery funding.
- 2.3 A key element of the TYS programme in England has been its broad reach which has meant that a wide spectrum of projects has been eligible for funding. There has perhaps been less tailoring of specific priorities or requirements in the way that is apparent in the other countries, e.g. match funding is a requirement in Scotland. However, there has been a focus on prioritising activity in the most deprived parts of local authority areas, and ensuring strong evidence of community consultation in working-up proposals. Projects were required to fall under the generic priorities covering the programme as a whole, as described in 1.5.
- 2.4 TYS funding in England was pre-allocated to each of the 51 local authority areas. The amount of funding they received was weighted to reflect deprivation and population numbers in the borough. Each local authority was then sent a letter that confirmed their allocation of the TYS monies and was asked to nominate a lead organisation. In all but one case the local authority has chosen to take the lead on TYS activity in their area. Funding allocations ranged from £200,000 to £2.3m, and all local authorities were expected to put forward a portfolio of at least two to three projects.

- 2.5 A two-stage process was undertaken before funding was formally approved. The first stage required local authorities to provide a strategic overview of how they would meet objectives and to provide an outline of projects, explaining how they would meet local priorities. Local strategic partnerships were also required to endorse the projects proposals. There were a series of – what was formerly NOF - committee meetings to consider the stage 1 applications, with a number of relevant experts sitting on these committees. These were commented on and applicants were then given a further six months to develop their proposals.
- 2.6 Local authorities were offered 5% of their allocation of funding in order to work-up their plans. Although a number of local authorities used this development funding, most used existing resources for this activity, and used the full TYS grant for project activity.
- 2.7 Local authorities utilised a number of different approaches to working up proposals. Whilst some had specific projects in mind and developed these, others held an open call for projects in their area which resulted in local prioritisation and agreement of projects that would form the local authority's package of activities. In other cases, local authorities defined broad priorities for spending TYS funding, and have used funding to deliver small grants to local groups that bid into the pot of funding. The most common types of activity for which funding was sought are parks and green spaces improvements, skate parks and community centres/facilities.
- 2.8 The second stage applications were assessed and signed off by the TYS Head of Programme, ensuring that applications had met the required criteria and had addressed any issues raised at stage one of the application process.

***TYS Wales (£3.1m)***

*Consultees included: Catherine Haynes (Deputy Head of Programmes) and Jeanie Gray (Policy Officer) – Big Lottery Fund*

- 2.9 When TYS started there were perceived to be a wide range of possible policy directions to refine and focus the programme in Wales. A consultation process was undertaken to inform programme development.
- 2.10 Feedback from the consultations was that a focus on sustainable development was important. This related in part to the Welsh Assembly's duty relating to sustainable development. At the same time, Community Strategy Partnerships were influential in developing programme policies. There are 22 partnerships covering local authority areas. The Partnerships have been formed to meet a legal duty on local authorities in Wales, to prepare community strategies for

promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.

2.11 Geographical spread was ensured by working through the 22 Community Strategy Partnerships. Each of the 22 Partnerships was encouraged to develop and submit one 'winning' project. Notional budgetary allocations to the Partnerships were made, based on population, social demography and a minimum grant level of £100,000.

2.12 The great majority of the 22 projects appears to be undertaking 'green space' activities. For example, eco-trails, encouraging wildlife, environmental improvements and improvements to allotments. Some projects relate to facilities in more isolated areas, such as mobile shops.

2.13 The process by which projects were developed was as follows:

- Each Community Strategy Partnership (or its equivalent) was asked to facilitate one application from their area, nominating a lead organisation.
- Partnerships tended to adopt the approach of an 'open call' for projects. This necessitated a sub-process to generate and then select projects.
- Partnerships asked for guidance and selection criteria, and BIG made a presentation to some Partnerships to explain the guidance. In some instances, partnerships shared their selection criteria.
- The original closing date for applications was April 2003, but a second deadline (September 2003) was introduced, as some Partnerships seemed to have difficulty in working up project proposals. Committee meetings were held to make awards in July and September 2003.
- Appraisals were undertaken by Case Managers in London in liaison with staff in the Wales office, and recommendations were made as to whether funding should be approved. Decisions were then made by the TYS Wales Committee, which includes representatives from leading environmental organisations.

2.14 All funding in Wales has now been approved and allocated, however, at the time of our consultations it was observed that a small number of projects were still at the very early stages of implementation.

***TYS Scotland (£4.7m)***

*Consultees included: Bill Band (National Strategy Manger, Scottish Natural Heritage), Ian Roxburgh (Grant Scheme Manager, Fresh Futures Partnership), and Neil Ritch (Programme Manager), Tom Black (Policy Officer) and Lesley Scott (Case Manager) from the Big Lottery Fund*

- 2.15 TYS in Scotland is seen as the successor to the Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities (GSSC) Initiative. This was managed by Fresh Futures Partnership (FFP) which was subsequently approached by the Big Lottery Fund, and asked to put in a bid to run the TYS programme.
- 2.16 FFP is therefore, in the Fund's terminology, the award partner for TYS. Fresh Futures Partnerships is a partnership between Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Forward Scotland (FS). As award partner, the development, management and delivery of the Programme in Scotland has been delegated to FFP. The Fund has not done this in other countries. FFP has a team of staff based in Glasgow which is jointly managed by SNH and FS and the management group is led by representatives of both agencies.
- 2.17 The key element of the Scottish TYS programme is 'Environmental Justice', which arises out of the Scottish Executive's Partnership Agreement, and is a key policy driver in Scotland. This highlights the fact that the most disadvantaged people in Scotland also typically live in some of the worst environments. Thus, TYS focuses on the most disadvantaged areas in Scotland.
- 2.18 In addition to the three key priorities outlined in the initial TYS policy guidance, FFP identified a further five sub-priorities for action which the majority of successful projects should address:
- Improving local environments
  - Public green and open spaces
  - Local access
  - Community gardens
  - Making community assets more sustainable
- 2.19 In Scotland, the main focus has been on the use of space and the relationships that different communities have with a diverse range of spaces (urban, mountain, rural, water etc.). Approximately, half the projects focus on public open spaces, and the other half focus on scheme such as local access, community gardens, and making community assets more sustainable..
- 2.20 The programme is Scotland-wide but 75% of the money is to be used in the most deprived quartile of areas, as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). These are also the areas least likely to have green space. The breadth of projects is wide ranging: many focus on practical issues such as new/improved footpaths and cycle paths, but the programme also seeks innovative work in terms of sustainability and community engagement. Projects

are encouraged to be partnership-based, as this improves networks and the potential for continuation once funding ends.

- 2.21 TYS was launched in Scotland in 2003 to an audience of about 300 people. By March 2005, FFP had made eight quarterly rounds of funding, resulting in awards to 78 successful projects, seven or eight of which were deemed to be fully completed. The final round of awards will be made in May 2005.
- 2.22 On average, each round has administered about £600k worth of assistance and there is still £900k<sup>1</sup> remaining in the pot. FFP has received approximately 52 applications per round, and an average of eight projects have been successful in each round. All FFP monies have to be spent by March 2007 and so all projects need to be cleared by September 2006. The minimum grant available in Scotland is £20k and the maximum is £300k.
- 2.23 Once an application is received, the FFP staff assess each project and rate each as high, medium, or low or reject. There is an eight week lead-in time between applications being received and recommendation going before the awards panel. Recommendations and reports are forwarded to the Panel who make the final decision. The Panel is composed of volunteers from a wide range of organisations and led by two Chairs who share the post.
- 2.24 The overall leverage ratio target is 70:30 (other funds:TYS) although this is interpreted flexibly. The average achieved is around 82:18 as there is a great deal of 'in kind' contribution input from community groups and volunteers. Once funding is awarded there is a six month grace period between offer and acceptance of the award.
- 2.25 Marketing is done through Councils for Voluntary Services (CVS), local authorities, SNH, Scottish Sustainability Network newsletters, press releases - especially in areas where take-up has been lower than anticipated, for example, Angus. There is perhaps a need to target marketing more specifically at smaller community-led groups. It is likely that smaller groups have less capacity and expertise in preparing funding bids, and are less able to provide match funding. However, as demand has been so great, marketing strategy has not been a priority for action by FFP.

### **TYS NI (£2.1m)**

*Consultees included: James Devlin and Kerri Logan – Big Lottery Fund*

- 2.26 All funding for the TYS programme in NI is now committed. The start of the programme in October 2002 was preceded by a wide-ranging consultation exercise which lasted for 18 months. The consultations provided an opportunity to involve relevant stakeholders as well as successful and unsuccessful applicants to other funding initiatives. The general consensus

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<sup>1</sup> At time of consultation – September 2004

of these meetings was that the priorities should be kept as open as possible to enable flexibility in funding a wide range of projects.

- 2.27 The applications for TYS funding in Northern Ireland were all submitted during February 2003, with decisions on funding being made in June of the same year. The panel was made up of a number of organisations, e.g. Groundwork, Business in the Community, and Northern Ireland Environmental Link, as well as a number of departmental observers. The process is viewed as having worked well in practice. A professional press team publicised the initiative through newspapers, TV and radio. In addition, a number of seminars and workshops were held to publicise the programme.
- 2.28 No conflict was found between the environmental and human aspects driving the programme:- it was possible in most cases to fund projects which achieved benefits in both areas. Often improving the local environment in a community has positive effect on the social fabric and vice versa – improvement in quality of life was the overriding priority when allocating resources. Match funding was also desirable but more important was some evidence of partnership working and ‘buy in’ on the part of the local community.
- 2.29 In all, 14 projects were funded. There were 42 applications in total of which 36 were eligible. The perception is that applications were generally of a very high quality, and had further funding been available they would easily have been able to allocate it.
- 2.30 A good geographical spread was achieved but this was seen as coincidental. Some regard was given to achieving a reasonable split between urban and rural. Consideration was also given to ensuring a spread of activity across Northern Ireland’s communities.

### **Monitoring**

- 2.31 Initially all TYS funded projects – with the exception of Scotland – were monitored by case officers at the Big Lottery Fund’s headquarters in London. Monitoring for Wales and Northern Ireland was devolved to these countries in September 2004. In all countries, projects have a named case manager whom they can contact with any queries. Feedback from the case studies suggests that this approach has been beneficial, many project officers reported that they felt more comfortable in making contact with the Big Lottery Fund to discuss concerns, than they would have done in contacting other funders. A number of lead partners – particularly in England – indicated that the Big Lottery Fund had been flexible in their approach when they had made contact with a view to making minor amendments to their portfolio of projects.
- 2.32 In Scotland the monitoring of projects is devolved to the Fresh Futures Partnership (FFP). FFP provide quarterly monitoring data and compliance reports to the Big Lottery Fund. In

addition, the Fund undertakes an annual compliance visit to FFP and, as part of this, at minimum, two projects are selected for visits from staff at the Fund.

- 2.33 Projects in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are required to complete a formal annual monitoring return outlining their progress. The monitoring procedures in England have been in place for over a year, while monitoring forms for Wales and Northern Ireland were only agreed in the latter part of 2004. In addition to the monitoring forms completed by the project, the case managers also have regular telephone contact with projects to get updates on progress. In each of the three countries a regular programme of project visits is taking place, or is planned, over the lifetime of the TYS Programme.

## 3 Methodology

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### Introduction

- 3.1 In this section we set our approach to undertaking case study visits, and the rationale behind the selection of case study areas to be covered during the lifetime of the TYS evaluation. We also outline the methodological approaches we have adopted for the beneficiary research.

### Case study sampling

- 3.2 Two cohorts of case studies of TYS funded projects are to be undertaken throughout the lifetime of the evaluation: the first cohort in year 1 (2004-2005) of our study, the second cohort is to be assessed in year 2 (2005-2006). In order to understand the impacts of projects over time and test issues of sustainability we plan to re-contact cohort 1 in each of the subsequent years of the study (contacted three times in total), and cohort 2 in the last year of the study (to be contacted twice in total).
- 3.3 Each case study will initially be visited in person. The subsequent follow-up contact with project managers and key partners will usually be through telephone consultations. All visits to the first cohort of case studies have now been completed.
- 3.4 The arrangements for delivery of projects varies across each country, with all of the English lead partners managing two or more projects. In the other countries, lead organisations are usually only managing one project. The focus of TYS spend has been on England, but the evaluation seeks to ensure good coverage of activity in the other countries so that we have sufficient information to draw UK-wide conclusions. The following breakdown of case studies by country was agreed with the Big Lottery Fund at the inception stage.
- **England:** seven local authorities per year – up to two-to-three projects covered from each local authority’s package of projects.
  - **Northern Ireland:** three lead partners per year – one project visit in each (three case studies)
  - **Scotland:** four lead partners per year – one project visit in each (four case studies)
  - **Wales:** four lead partners per year – one project visit in each (four case studies)

3.5 In the table below we list the case study areas that were chosen for the first cohort. Further detail on the rationale behind the case study selection can be found in Annex A, alongside a brief description of the projects that were visited as case studies. The topic guides used during project visits can be found in Annex B.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Case Study</b>	<b>TYS Funding</b>
England (local authority areas)	Pendle	£456,411
	Blackpool	£738,465
	Sandwell	£1,978,138
	Peterborough	£361,818
	Waltham Forest	£625,768
	Stockton-on-Tees	£944,610
	Swindon	£256,535
Wales	North Sirhowy Valley Community Ranger (Caerphilly)	£181,847
	North Grangetown Community Environmental Project (Cardiff)	£215,601
	Space 4 Youth (Wrexham)	£124,430
	Woodlands for Communities (Flintshire)	£116,857
Northern Ireland	The Woodland Trust (NI wide)	£115,901
	Ulster Wildlife Trust (West Belfast)	£199,957
	Burnside Community Group (Newtown Abbey)	£118,000
Scotland	North Ayr Community Gardens (North Ayr)	£70,000
	Beardmore Park (Glasgow)	£150,000
	Moray Mountain Biking (Morayshire)	£47,500
	Salsburgh Moss Scenic Walkway (Salsburgh)	£42,769

3.6 The cohort 1 case study visits were undertaken between October and December 2004. Our first point of contact was BIG's operations staff, who provided background information on projects, for example, progress reports. We then made contact with project managers in the organisations delivering TYS Funded activity to ask them to participate in the research. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland there was usually a central contact person leading on projects. The situation in England was slightly more complex in that each local authority is running several projects. In England we made contact with the lead officer within the local authority to discuss their portfolio of projects. We then agreed the two or three of their projects that would be the focus for our case study activity, and made contact with the relevant project managers delivering these activities.

3.7 In preparing for the project visits we worked with project managers to identify the most appropriate individuals and organisations that we would need to meet with as part of the case study research. Typical case study visits included consultations with project managers, project staff, partner organisations, volunteers, and beneficiaries, where this was possible.

Approximately one day was spent undertaking fieldwork in each case study area. Case studies were subsequently written up and agreed with project managers.

### **Beneficiary research**

- 3.8 The focus of TYS is on ‘enhancing the quality of life for local communities, to improve the appearance and amenities of local environments, and to develop community assets’. In seeking to provide a forward-thinking evaluation for the client, we proposed at an early stage in the research, to involve project beneficiaries (see below) in evaluating the impact of the initiative. We originally planned up to a day of beneficiary feedback for each of 18 projects as part of the case study visits. Following discussion with the Big Lottery Fund, it was agreed that we would take a more intensive look at a smaller number of case studies, as detailed below.

### ***Case study selection***

- 3.9 It was agreed with the Big Lottery Fund that we would use five case studies in Year One of the evaluation, to explore and report on community issues arising from beneficiary feedback. This consisted of one case study from each country involved with the funding stream, with the exception of England which has two case studies, reflecting the higher level of funding. Two-to-three days were allocated for each case study and, in addition, consultants frequently took the opportunity to speak to project beneficiaries on an informal basis during case study visits.

- 3.10 Proposed projects were selected from Cohort One (i.e. the first year of evaluation) for the beneficiary study are as follows:

- England            The Paston Fair Share project, Peterborough
- England            The Solarium, Blackpool
- Wales                North Sirhowy Valley Community Ranger, Caerphilly
- Scotland            North Ayr Community Gardens Initiative, South Ayrshire
- N. Ireland          Bog Meadows, Falls Road, West Belfast

- 3.11 The projects listed above were carefully selected to provide a variety of environments, in order to cover a cross-section of the activities funded by through TYS. These include projects focused on:

- **Environmental** improvement, and environmental demonstration activities

- **Social** impacts – e.g. to provide meeting space and/or improve community health
- Direct **Economic** benefits – e.g. to provide space for business start-ups
- **Physical** (built environment) improvements – e.g. conversion of a building / new building.

3.12 The projects we selected range – in terms of grant size – from about £80,000 to £200,000. They also demonstrated a range of potential and predicted beneficiaries, both direct and indirect, from young to old, and from local beneficiaries to interest groups from further afield.

#### ***What is a beneficiary?***

3.13 Given the variety of projects the TYS funding covers, the definition of beneficiary varies quite significantly between case studies. We made a two-fold distinction:

- *Direct* – a direct beneficiary sets out to enjoy the benefits of the project. This may range from re-routing their walk to work to pass through an improved park, to members of a ‘green gym’ getting involved in conservation activities and other types of volunteer. This group includes, but is not limited to, a sub-category we might term ‘enthusiasts’.
- *Indirect* – indirect beneficiaries include those in the wider community who unintentionally experience a higher quality of life owing to the project activities, such as better views of the surrounding landscape, cleaner air in the local environment, or lower crime rates on local estates.

3.14 Potential beneficiaries are not necessarily restricted to ‘local’ residents; in many cases special interest groups and others may travel in to access the new or improved amenity. While focusing on feedback from the local community, we therefore also sought to gain feedback from beneficiaries from further afield (such as, wildlife groups), which may form additional ‘communities’.

3.15 We aimed to examine different *perceptions* of the project benefits, through performing a ‘cross-check’ between what those closely involved with the programme (e.g. project planners, builders) perceive to be the benefits for the community and the perceptions both of direct project beneficiaries, and of the wider community (indirect beneficiaries).

3.16 It was also important to capture the ‘negatives’ and lessons learned (how could things have been done better or be improved), as well as the positives and views on opportunities for future improvements; not only from the projects, but also from the perspectives of beneficiaries.

- 3.17 Beneficiary feedback case studies took place during January and February 2005, after the initial case study visits. The initial visits provided some preliminary thoughts from people involved with the project on how to access the views of beneficiaries. Consultants were asked to introduce some of our ideas for undertaking beneficiary feedback to the project managers for the case study areas, and to look to bolster and improve these ideas with the thoughts and ideas of those closest to the project.
- 3.18 We used largely qualitative data collection techniques, varying the techniques used with the type of project, and its aims. This allowed us to be innovative in our approach and to access the most appropriate and highest quality information, while potentially enhancing the impact of the project itself. We set out to *measure the change* related to the impact of the programme, and how projects are *getting the community(ies) involved*. In this respect we focused on direct beneficiaries, while also seeking to understand and explain the indirect impacts of the project.

### **Issues explored**

- 3.19 The range of issues we explored included:

#### ***The Application Process***

- Level of community involvement in defining priorities / in design of project

#### ***Project Delivery***

- Local communities' involvement in delivery of activities (including the specific aspects of the project with whom beneficiaries are involved)
- Whether this has been achieved primarily through pro-active engagement from the project itself, or results from direct interest from the community

#### ***Project outputs and impacts***

- What are the main outputs and outcomes? (Including: community, social, economic, and health impacts; impacts on general quality of life; did these differ from those anticipated at the start?)
- Who are the beneficiaries of the project, e.g. user types, numbers, direct/indirect beneficiaries (and what was the original target group?)
- Have particular types of beneficiary been targeted – and if so, why? Do they reflect the wider local community?

- Have beneficiaries (groups of people, and/or numbers) changed over time?
- How do perceived project benefits compare with the stated aims of the Transforming Your Space (TYS) funding stream?
- How do benefits reported by the project leader differ from those reported by beneficiaries?

3.20 It is also noted that most projects will already have a system of monitoring and evaluation, which is likely to include some degree of tracking project beneficiaries. It was important for us to ascertain at an early stage what data had already collected to avoid wasted effort in ‘double-counting’ as well as ‘consultation fatigue’. This gave rise to an opportunity: a key aim in performing this evaluation was to add value to projects where possible, both through further engaging (potential and actual) beneficiaries, and through feeding back useful information to project staff, particularly where information gaps exist.

#### ***Selection issues***

3.21 For the beneficiary research we consciously looked for interesting rather than ‘typical’ projects, as the case studies were chosen to provide a representative view of programme activity. The subset of beneficiary projects was, however, chosen to span a range of different types of project, and different forms of beneficiary involvement. They were also selected with regard to their potential to develop over the lifetime of TYS funding and the evaluation exercise. Overall, there is probably a disproportionate emphasis on good projects. This has allowed us to maximise the opportunities for general programme learning – the central aim of this evaluation.

## 4 Early Findings: TYS after the first year

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### Introduction

- 4.1 The purpose of this section is to provide a brief synopsis of activities being delivered in the case study areas, and highlight findings and emerging observations from the first year of the evaluation. Throughout this section we draw upon examples from specific projects to provide a flavour of the breadth of activity that has been funded through the TYS programme.
- 4.2 It should be noted that a number of projects visited this year are still in the relatively early stages of development, with most activity – and spend - planned for the next two-to-three years. Taken together with the multiple objectives for TYS set out in Section Two, this means that interpreting the information, and drawing together conclusions on the impact and outcomes of activity to date is far from straightforward. However, as noted earlier, the longitudinal element to this evaluation allows us to revisit projects over time to understand the sustainability of any early impacts identified, as well as understanding how impacts and outcomes might develop or evolve over time.

### *Strategic fit of project activity with aims and objectives of TYS programme*

- 4.3 The aims and objectives of the TYS programme are broad, encompassing actions to enhance quality of life, improve the appearance and amenities of local environments, and increase community assets. The evidence from the case study visits is that the activities being funded through TYS are consistent with the aims and objectives of the programme. Early analysis of case study findings suggests that the majority of projects are focusing their effort on achieving at least one of the following types of benefits:
- **Environmental** – particularly, improving/developing green spaces, enhancing the image of local areas, and encouraging usage of local green spaces.
  - **Social/community** – there appears to be particular emphasis on activities providing new and improved community facilities, e.g. playgrounds. There is a strong emphasis for some projects on developing community capacity, e.g. through Friends Groups or volunteering opportunities. In addition, a number of projects are delivering youth diversionary activities, aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.
  - **Health** – a number of projects have a strong focus on ‘healthy living’, such as the development of facilities to encourage participation in exercise, and healthy eating, e.g. allotments.

**Community involvement**

- 4.4 Early evidence suggests community involvement with TYS activity has been strong and is aligned with the programme’s objective to fund projects that demonstrate significant and meaningful engagement of the local community, or support local people in taking decision about the use of local spaces. All projects were required to demonstrate evidence of community consultation during the application process. The extent of community consultation, varies, perhaps to a surprising extent, between countries and between projects within countries.
- 4.5 The TYS *England* programme is being led in all but one case by a local authority. In some instances the local authority’s proposals for projects were based on priorities that had already been identified (usually through consultation mechanisms), other local authorities conducted an ‘open call’ for projects and prioritised these for inclusion in their portfolio of projects. This provided local authorities with the opportunity to support local community groups to access funding that would not have been available through mainstream council resources. In many cases we found there has been a ‘champion’ within the local authority that has identified TYS funding as a reasonably flexible pot of funding that allowed the authority, to begin projects that may not otherwise have been possible, or certainly not as quickly. It is noted that the nature and extent of community involvement has varied between areas.

<b>Community Involvement in Designing TYS Project Portfolios (England)</b>
<b><i>Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council</i></b>
<p>This West Midlands local authority was awarded TYS funding amounting to £1,945,783. A two-stage approach was developed to agreeing a portfolio of projects to be funded under the TYS programme. At the time of the application, Sandwell MBC had recently established ‘Town Teams’ which have close links with local community groups and individuals, in each of the borough’s six towns. The Town Teams undertook research into the priorities of the communities in each of the towns. This involved consultation with local people and stakeholders. From these they drew up a list of possible projects for their areas.</p> <p>The local authority then selected a portfolio of projects from those submitted by each of the six Town Teams. The aim was to select projects which fitted closely with the objectives of the Sandwell Partnership, reflected a locally identified need, and which provided a ‘good spread’ of projects across the borough.</p> <p>TYS funding has also been used to pay for two project manager posts to oversee the day-to-day management of the portfolio of projects. They play a key role in supporting project managers, and in ensuring that views of local people are considered and incorporated in project design and delivery.</p>
<b><i>Swindon</i></b>
<p>Swindon received a TYS allocation of £256,535. A decision was made to target the funding at deprived parts of the borough. The local authority then sought to promote TYS funding in these areas as part of an open call for projects. This included contacting elected Members and council officers attending Neighbourhood Safety Team (NeST) and other local community meetings, in order to promote the TYS programme and encourage expressions</p>

of interest for funding from within the local community. In some cases there were already project ideas in place and TYS provided an opportunity to make an application to fund these. Council officers were encouraged to support local groups in submitting expressions of interest.

A total of fifteen expressions of interest were received, from a range of sources, e.g. Neighbourhood Safety Team, Parks and East Walcott Neighbourhood Renewal Board and the community development team. These covered a wide range of different types of activity. These were prioritised to form Swindon's portfolio of projects and submitted to NOF for final approval. The expressions of interest were scored by local Councillors and council officers. In order to be selected, projects needed to demonstrate both evidence of local need, and consultation in developing the project idea.

- 4.6 As in England, the funding for *Wales* was pre-allocated by local authority area. In all but one instance the local authority held an 'open call' for projects, for example through the local Community Strategy Partnership (CSP).. A project was then prioritised and formed the basis of the TYS funding bid. There is limited evidence of community consultation in developing projects at the 'open call' stage and they appear to have had a strong local authority steer. At the project implementation stage there is stronger evidence of community involvement. The projects in *Wales* appear to have been successful in developing links with mainstream service providers as part of their activity.
- 4.7 The open bidding process in *Scotland* has resulted in applications from a wide-range of sources. Of the four projects we visited this year, only one – Smarter Salsburgh – had originated directly from a local community organisation. The other three projects stemmed from national organisations: British Trust Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Greenspace Trust and Forest Enterprise. These organisations are well established, and as such appear to have the capacity, contacts and knowledge to put funding applications together, and drive forward activity.
- 4.8 The extent to which the demand for activity originated in, and been driven from, the local community is not always clear. But in all cases there is evidence of a substantial amount of 'hands on' community input being invested in implementing the projects, for example, young people volunteering to build bike trails as part of the Moray Mountain Bike project.
- 4.9 *Northern Ireland* also held an 'open call' for projects in order to allocate TYS funding. The proposals for projects we visited in Northern Ireland this year all stemmed from partnership bids. Only one of the three projects visited involved a local authority as a partner and this was linked in the bid with a local community group. The other two projects were led by partnerships of local voluntary/community organisations, and national voluntary organisations. All three projects were able to demonstrate good evidence of community consultation from the process of submitting proposals through to the implementation of activity.

## Community Involvement in Project Delivery

### ***North Ayr Community Gardens, Scotland***

TYS Funding was awarded to BTCV to deliver a community gardens project. The North Ayr Community Gardens Steering Committee was established to encourage residents to volunteer in a programme of environmental improvements. The project aims to address concerns raised by the council and local communities about unsafe gardens and open space.

Local Street Committees have been acting as a means of communicating the aims of the project to other residents, as well as assisting as volunteers on the various events. Open day 'taster' events have allowed people of all ages and abilities to 'come and have a go' at environmentally based challenges, games and activities. There has been a good response, from all age groups, and across the whole community. Local schools have also been drafted in to assist, ensuring there is a strong educational aspect to the project.

Volunteers have also been actively encouraged to participate in the project, including social housing tenants with homes requiring garden maintenance, and individuals keen to lend a hand with improving open green spaces. An important success of the project has been the high number (30-35 people) now involved in attending meetings, compared with the 4 people who came to the inaugural meeting.

### ***Northern Ireland Community Wood Warden Scheme, Northern Ireland***

The Community Warden Scheme is a partnership between the Woodland Trust and Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland (CVNI). The aim is to encourage individuals to become environmental champions for the woodland.

The Woodland Trust is a conservation charity that aims to protect and enhance native and broadleaved trees throughout the UK. It has 52 sites across Northern Ireland and would like to see individuals and communities taking on greater ownership of their local woodland. The project seeks to promote this by training and supporting a network of voluntary Wood Wardens across Northern Ireland. Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland is providing all of the training and support required.

The project has made good progress in recruitment, with over 40 applications for the nine posts of (voluntary) Woodland Warden. Entry into the Scheme can be categorised on three levels

- 1) at a basic level their role involves 'keeping an eye' on the wooded area and filling out a monthly report detailing an actual or potential problems.
- 2) more pro-active wardens will report and also perform a certain amount of maintenance and repair
- 3) as well as reporting, maintaining and repairing the area, the most active participants will make efforts to involve their wider community, and would be encouraged and supported to undertake formal training, e.g. in woodcraft, conservancy techniques, to help them perform their role more effectively.

In the areas where Wardens have been appointed there is evidence of increased interest and appreciation of the benefits of woodland, amongst local communities. The Wardens also organise local community participation in national seed gathering, and tree planting events.

#### **Space 4 Youth Wrexham, Wales**

Wrexham Council are the lead partner for this project. The project is based around the development of diversionary 'play-ground' facilities for older youths to meet and play. The project also involves staff employed to engage youths in the design and construction of these facilities.

The project focuses on two geographical areas, the Caia estate in a deprived part of Wrexham, and the large rural village of Chirk. Entirely new consultation is being undertaken in the village of Chirk where there is no history of active capacity building and consultation with the local community. This has involved posters, distribution of leaflets and consultation events.

On the Caia Estate there is a long history of community consultation through the existing local partnership. In the development of the project, the council were able to utilise the existing community infrastructure and awareness of community priorities. In addition, new innovative approaches to consultation have been used on the estate. Young people were not only asked about the activities they would like to see, they have also been asked to help design and build them. There is a particular focus on those known to be at risk of causing nuisance and crime. This is based on the premise that vandalism rates will be lower where young people have been involved in the development of facilities and have a sense of 'ownership'

#### **Evidence of impacts**

- 4.10 In almost all instances project activity is still underway, and in many cases is still at the early stages. However, projects were asked to identify early impacts they might be experiencing. We describe the impacts identified by the projects, and through our beneficiary research under a series of headings: environmental, social-community, health and economic.

##### **(1) Environmental impacts**

- 4.11 Improving the appearance and amenities of local environments is an objective of the TYS programme. Tackling environmental issues was a primary feature of all of the projects that we visited. Whilst a number have very specific environmental aims, for example, maintenance of woodlands, the majority have more generic aims which were based around improving the attractiveness of the local environment to encourage greater usage of green spaces.
- 4.12 There is evidence that projects are making links with wider local and regional environmental initiatives. In many cases projects are being led by local/national environmental groups, for example, BTCV, or Environment Departments of local authorities. This helps to ensure linkages with the wider environmental agenda.
- 4.13 Many projects are still in the early stages of development, and as a result the full impact of environmental interventions is difficult to assess. However, there is already visible evidence of activity targeted at improving the environment in local communities. Furthermore, there is

encouraging evidence that projects are building the long term capacity of local communities to play a meaningful role in securing environmental improvements, for example, encouragement of volunteering and Friends Group type activity, rather than simply consulting on priorities and trying to deliver benefits for local people, without involving them in the implementation activity.

<b>Environmental impacts</b>
<p><b><i>Smarter Salsburgh, Scotland</i></b></p> <p>Salsburgh village is situated half way between Glasgow and Edinburgh on the M8 motorway Salsburgh Moss is a raised peat bog and considered by local people and environmentalists to be one of the village's major assets. A local group – Smarter Salsburgh – applied for TYS funding in 2003 to create a scenic walkway at Salsburgh Moss.</p> <p>The TYS grant of £42,769 is being used to improve access to Salsburgh Moss so that local residents, schools and other groups can take advantage of this local amenity. The Moss has been mismanaged over a number of years and substantial remedial work is needed to raise the water table in order to increase bio-diversity. The existing path has been eroded by quad bikes and a significant amount of damage has been done to walls, ditches, flora and fauna..</p> <p>The Smarter Salsburgh group hope to install 4 steel gates at the entrance to the route to deter bikers from using the Moss and causing damage. As well as upgrading the 1 km footpath, work will also include seating, signage planting and wildlife interpretation. A survey of the Moss and monitoring systems will be undertaken by an ecological officer.</p> <p>At the time of our visit work had only recently begun on preparing the site. However, it is anticipated that the project will have a number of beneficial environmental impacts. We will monitor progress against these in future years of the evaluation.</p>
<p><b><i>London Borough of Waltham Forest, Friends Group Project</i></b></p> <p>The local authority's Green Spaces Group undertook a Best Value review shortly before TYS monies became available. One of the issues that was raised through the review was the limited involvement of local people in the delivery of services. TYS funding was seen as an opportunity to promote Friends Groups across the borough to "champion" green spaces and facilitate environmental improvements, and also to provide specific pots of funding for groups in deprived areas to deliver projects and activities, e.g. installation of new playground equipment.</p> <p>Some of the TYS funding (£390,000) is used employ Hornbeam (a local environmental group) and BTCV to act as facilitators for the Friends Groups and to support those with access to TYS project funding in identifying the improvements they want to make to the open spaces and playgrounds. The facilitation support on offer is wide, and groups can get access to support with volunteering, fundraising, setting up bank accounts, and other professional services.</p> <p>It is still relatively early days for the project. However, much activity has got underway, e.g. clean-up days to remove litter and graffiti from parks, and bulb planting. There is also evidence of some early impacts of activity in some parks, e.g. Stoneydown Park has seen a decrease in vandalism and litter being dropped. If this were to be replicated across parks and open spaces in the borough it may have long-term implications for council maintenance budgets, such as reducing the overall costs.</p>

**Blackpool City Council, Solaris**

The Solaris project has involved the transformation of a derelict seafront solarium into a multi-purpose 'zero energy' building, incorporating Lancaster University's Sub-Regional Environment Centre, exhibition facilities, meeting rooms, business space and a café.

The £2m package of funding for the Solarium (£175,000 TYS) has resulted in the reconstruction of the building using a number of sustainability principles, including waste minimisation, and energy self-sufficiency through solar photovoltaic tiles and wind turbines.. These generate more electricity than the building itself requires and the surplus is being sold back to the National Grid. In addition, rainwater from the roof is also collected and used to flush the WCs. The redevelopment work has also resulted in the enhancement of four acres of green space for community usage, for example, walking and other leisure pursuits.

**(2) Social and community impacts**

- 4.14 Through the case study visits and beneficiary research, projects were able to demonstrate a range of social and community benefits arising from TYS funded activity. However, it is this group of impacts is perhaps least quantifiable.
- 4.15 The guidance for the TYS programme states the need for projects to demonstrate that local communities have been consulted in drawing up plans for projects. The programme has taken different forms in different countries, with an open call for projects in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and an allotted funding amount for the designated local authorities in England and Wales. In many instances – particularly in England - we found that local authorities were seeking to engage with local communities in new ways, in developing these types of projects. TYS did not necessarily initiate these new approaches, but it does appear to have come at the right time, and to have offered assistance in a form which could be dovetailed with this new agenda. We found many examples where the Programme has been used to support the development of local community consultation mechanisms.
- 4.16 In many of the Northern Ireland and Scotland TYS case study areas there appears to have been a longer history of voluntary and community activity, and the TYS Programme has provided funding to complement or build upon long standing activities or priorities.
- 4.17 The beneficiary case studies have been particularly useful in identifying a range of social and community benefits arising from TYS funded projects, from people with mental health issues benefiting from taking part in therapeutic conservation activity, to the provision of new community facilities where local people and groups can meet. Many of the early outcomes reported by projects are related to improvements in access to open spaces, increased social interaction amongst local communities, and improved consultation mechanisms, particularly between local authorities and their residents.

## Social and Community Impacts

### ***Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, England***

#### ***(a) Improving community consultation***

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council was awarded approximately, £1m TYS funding and is delivering a range of projects in four areas of the borough. Activity typically involves improvements to local open spaces and play areas, as well as a number of interventions aimed at improving people's feelings of safety, e.g. CCTV, alley gates and traffic calming.

TYS was seen as an important opportunity to bring forward environmental elements of larger projects, and to realise small-scale physical changes that local people had identified as a priority.

Stockton-on-Tees Council has a well-established system of neighbourhood area forums, which gather representatives of local interests and organisations with the relevant ward area politicians. The work to engage the community on TYS-funded projects, which is seen as integral to the approach, takes place within this context, through the activities of the Community Renewal Officer (CRO).

The Area Forums represent a 'high-level' mechanism for consultation; they deal with a wider range of issues, while the role of the CRO has been to focus on the specifics of the TYS projects in the four local areas.

From the perspective of the Council, the approach at neighbourhood level and below is to understand and then try to balance the different interests; also, encouraging parties with a very specific – and in some cases unrealisable – local agenda to take a wider view. The approach taken under TYS has been to gather the parties with specific interests together in a group, and to hold these meetings on 'neutral' ground in the STBC offices. An agenda, with clear parameters, is put forward at the outset: people are then free – and encouraged – to express their own opinions and to exchange views on project priorities, form and design. This is seen as more effective in building understanding and consensus on the way forward, compared to the earlier responsive approach, in which officers went out to meet interest-groups separately, and then sought to balance conflicting interests.

The approach appears to have been accepted as valid by key members of the community in the four areas: the comment reported by STBC was that the Council was now recognised as listening. Feedback subsequently obtained from community representatives supported this; the change in recent years towards what was seen as a more genuinely participatory approach by the Local Authority was noted and welcomed, although some felt there was still some way to go.

The more proactive approach made possible with TYS funding has allowed for clearer communication of the Council's priorities and constraints, and has provided the basis for building understanding and better informed dialogue between the local authority and local communities. The local authority is now proceeding with an application for Beacon Status based on community involvement; the application draws on the Council's wider outlook and experience, but TYS is part of this experience, and is seen as having contributed to shaping some perspectives.

**London Borough of Waltham Forest, Leyton Youth Hub**

**(b) Improved access**

This project is based at the former site of the Essex County Cricket ground which opened in 1855. The site transferred to the ownership of the council in the 1950s when Essex County Cricket club re-located to a new site. The site passed into the ownership of the London Borough of Waltham Forest with a covenant that it must be maintained for 'the enjoyment and recreation of the youth of East London and West Essex'. The site is overseen and managed by the Youth and Community Service and is currently used to deliver a range of youth activities, and to house staff and projects.

There are a number of buildings on the site including; a Pavilion, Sports Hall, Boxing Gym, Arts Block, and Portakabins. There is also a large field on the site and tennis courts. The focus of this project has been the development of the cricket pavilion which has been empty and unused for a number of years. The first floor of the pavilion has been shut for over 20 years for health and safety reasons, and the downstairs part of the building was closed in the last five years because of poor repair and lack of disabled access.

The Pavilion is an extremely attractive building that is much loved by the local community. There has been strong lobbying over a number of years by local people to bring the building back into community use. Whilst numerous plans and proposals have been put forward, sufficient funding has never been available to undertake the renovation of the Pavilion and the wider site. The current head of Youth and Communities Services identified TYS as source of potential funding to begin the renovation of the building, and turn part of it into Youth Hub, from which the council could deliver youth activities.

Transforming Your Space funding (£120,768) is being used to refurbish and re-open the ground floor of the Cricket Pavilion, including a new kitchen, toilets and disabled access. The Council is providing additional funding to replace the roof, install a new clock on the tower, and provide floodlighting. The building is due to re-open to the general public in spring 2005, and whilst the focus will be as a hub for youth activity, it will be available for use more widely within the community.

**Bog Meadows, West Belfast, Northern Ireland**

**(c) Increased community interaction**

Bog Meadows is a 50 acre wetland reserve located in urban West Belfast and located near to the Falls Road. The Bog Meadows Project started in the 1980s with the formation of the Friends of Bog Meadow. They received funding from the Peace and Conciliation Fund to carry out basic remedial work assisted by the active involvement of the local community.

The Bog Meadows Building Partnership made a successful bid for TYS funding (£199,957) to employ a full-time Reserve Officer to co-ordinate volunteer activity, and to build a new visitor facility which will provide office space, training facilities, toilets and changing facilities.

The social impacts of this project arise from Bog Meadow increasingly becoming a focal point for the local community, allowing space for relaxation, play, and as a place where people can meet. A wide range of groups are now accessing the site, e.g. special needs groups, schools and wildlife interest groups. There are also two Faile (Irish Festivals) held at Bog Meadows each year which helped to bring the community together.

As part of the beneficiary research we are working with volunteers and local community groups at Bog Meadows to record a video diary which explores the development of the programme, before, during and after construction of the visitor centre/reserve building.

**(3) Health impacts**

- 4.18 As with economic impacts, there is limited evidence to date of quantifiable health impacts resulting from TYS funded projects. In most cases, health outcomes are not the main priority of projects, and as statistical outcomes, they might not be perceptible for some time, if at all. Anecdotally, they are often being experienced as a by-product of project activity, for example, safer and more attractive green spaces encouraging people to walk more frequently.
- 4.19 Examples of health related impacts resulting from TYS funded activity are described below.

<b>Health impacts</b>
<p><b><i>Sandwell MBC, Salop Drive Market Garden</i></b></p> <p>The project aims to build upon the work of a voluntary organisation, Ideal for All Ltd, which has converted a largely overgrown and little used area of allotments into a market garden producing fresh fruit and vegetables for 100 elderly people. TYS funding (£124,233) is being used to improve access to the site, e.g. tarmac and drainage, and the design and construction of a wildlife garden and communal garden.</p> <p>The project provides opportunities for vulnerable members of the community (such as those with physical and mental health problems) to work in the gardens alongside local volunteers. A number of health benefits which were reported by participants. Volunteering is increasing participants' fitness, as well as therapeutic benefits for vulnerable members of the community that are taking part in the project. Furthermore, the project is producing high quality low cost organic produce for elderly residents in the local area, which has benefits for general health and well-being in the local community.</p>
<p><b><i>Pendle Borough Council, Canal Corridors Project</i></b></p> <p>This project was funded as a 'bolt on' to the existing SRB 6 funded Canal Corridors Strategic Framework. The framework highlighted examples of environmental works that could improve areas along the canal corridor. The TYS funding (£144,135) alongside money allocated from the SRB 6 Scheme (£90,000) allows local residents and community groups to bid for small grants (£100-£15,000) to carry out environmental works that will improve areas alongside the canal corridor. One of the projects currently under development is a 'Healthy Walks' project. This aims to develop four short walking routes alongside the canal to encourage local people to engage in exercise and take advantage of the improving local environment.</p>
<p><b><i>Blackpool City Council, TAB Community Centre and Sports Facility</i></b></p> <p>This project involves the development of a "Health Village" located in the Talbot and Brunswick Wards, comprising a community centre, sports facility, Sure Start and a PCT Centre, and two open spaces (one for play and one quiet). The Health Village is being constructed in two of Blackpool's most deprived wards. The overall aim of this project is to improve the health and well-being of the local community, as well as drawing together different groups. TYS has contributed £340,000 towards the £6.25m budget for the project. The TYS funding is being used specifically to provide the sports facility, open spaces and community centre, and has acted as a catalyst to draw down Sport England funding. The construction of the sports centre and open spaces is anticipated to commence shortly, with completion by the end of 2005. Whilst there are no reported health impacts from the project as yet – as it is still at the construction phase – there are expected to be measurable health benefits in future years.</p>

**(4) Economic impacts**

4.20 Few projects see economic impacts as being the primary objective of their activity. Whilst there is very limited evidence of economic outcomes at this stage of the evaluation, a small number of TYS funded projects were able to identify economic impacts resulting from their activity, both anticipated and unanticipated, for example, jobs or workspaces created as part of the project, or increasing house prices or new local employment opportunities influenced by the area being perceived as safer or more attractive.

<b>Economic Impacts</b>
<p><b><i>Burnside and District Community Group Village Enhancement Project, Burnside, Newtonabbey, Northern Ireland</i></b></p> <p>This project has developed an area of semi-derelict land in the centre of the village of Burnside, into a recreational area for the village. This includes a play area for primary school-aged children, a games area for older youths and a paved area with mains power for community events.</p> <p>There are likely to be economic impacts arising from the building of new properties near the improved community space in the village. The new properties will benefit from improved views which should have a positive impact on house prices in the area. Furthermore, the village in general has become a more desirable location for families with young children, wanting to move into the area.</p>
<p><b><i>Blackpool City Council, Solaris</i></b></p> <p>As well as the environmental impacts of the building described above, the site also benefits the local community, college, local authority and businesses through the provision of office space, meetings groups and catering facilities.</p> <p>The project has created local jobs, employing a centre manager, reception staff and catering jobs in the café. The focus for business/start-ups is on encouraging environmental technologies. In all, there are six businesses on site, employing 25 staff and with an aggregate turnover of £930,000. A further 19 jobs in Solaris are provided through the Blackpool Environmental Action Team and seven Council staff are based there. Eight of the 44 jobs in Solaris were new jobs which had not previously existed elsewhere.</p>

**Lessons learned?**

4.21 The projects that were covered in this year’s case study visits are on the whole progressing well. We did not find any evidence of projects facing major or insurmountable delays to activity. However, in a number of cases, barriers or potential barriers were identified that could – or did - cause delays in the early stages of the projects. Conversely, we also identified a number of factors which have positively influenced the progress of projects. We describe both barriers and positive factors below.

### ***Barriers to project implementation***

- **Delays before permission to proceed** – in a small number of instances there have been delays due to having to acquire planning permission for activities, or the time taken to purchase land.
- **Timing** – an issue raised was that of maintaining momentum in terms of community participation. In some instances – particularly in England – there was significant time lapse in projects being worked-up, to funding being awarded and activity getting underway.
- **Capital projects** – in some projects, it proved very difficult to fully assess the costings of capital projects at the project proposal stages, and it was subsequently discovered that costings had altered by the time that works got underway. Others were closely related to larger capital projects and were re-thought as a result of change or delay in these: projects officers were usually able to work around these issues, supported by the flexible attitude taken by BIG .
- **Capacity building** – a number of local authorities in England applied for Lottery funding to deliver small grants schemes that focus on a particular type of activity, e.g. environmental improvements. It appears that more time than anticipated was needed to publicise the availability of small grants to groups in the local area, and to develop the capacity of local groups to bid for funding and deliver activities. Furthermore, some groups have little or no experience in applying for, and spending grant funding, and as a result have needed greater support in getting their projects underway.
- **Vandalism** – at least two projects faced problems of minor vandalism/graffiti. Whilst this was not entirely unexpected, it was disappointing for the projects. However, those involved have not allowed these small setbacks to dampen enthusiasm, and have dealt with these issues swiftly.

### ***Factors positively influencing project implementation***

- **Lottery funding as leverage** – a number of projects reported that TYS funding had been beneficial because it had helped lever-in significant additional funding for projects, particularly those with a large capital element.
- **Flexibility of funding** – TYS has proved a relatively flexible source of funding. The broad scope of Programme priorities has allowed for a wide range of activity to be delivered. In a number of cases, it seems unlikely that activity would have taken place without TYS funding, or certainly not as quickly. As noted above, feedback from projects is that BIG has been flexible in its approach, and where changes have

been required to projects or portfolios, the Fund has been happy to negotiate over these.

- **Community consultation** – local authorities - in particular - have been seeking to engage with communities in new ways as part of the process of agreeing and delivering portfolios of TYS projects. Whilst TYS has not necessarily initiated these new approaches, it appears to have come at the right time, and to have offered assistance in a form which could be dovetailed with this new agenda. We found many instances where the Programme has been used to support the development of local community consultation mechanisms. A key challenge over the lifetime of this evaluation will be to assess the extent to which these new methods or approaches are resulting in more sustainable outcomes and impacts.
- **Project Champions** – in most cases there is an obvious ‘Champion’ – typically an individual council officer or a community group - that is driving forward TYS funded activity. Frequently, project champions have had an idea for a project or activity for some time, and the availability of TYS funding has made this a reality. Project champions have also provided the drive to make sure that projects happen. However, where projects are being championed by individuals, there could be problems sustaining momentum if people change jobs or roles; in some instances, volunteers have been unable to sustain their commitment, because of other pressures on their time or long term sickness. A key measure of success for TYS funded activity, will be the extent to which projects maintain momentum, even if the original project champions move on, that is, communities have taken ownership of the idea and are empowered to continue the activity.
- **Quick wins** – the majority of projects have included some element of ‘quick win’ activity, e.g. a new bike trail. This appears to have been important in demonstrating to local residents that projects are responding to the requests and needs of the local community. In some instances TYS funding is being used to fund small pockets of ‘quick win’ activity, e.g. new playgrounds, and the project is intended to facilitate the longer term engagement of local people in making decisions about their local environment.

### **Future sustainability**

- 4.22 As noted earlier (para 4.2), a significant proportion of the TYS projects visited as part of the first year’s research, had only recently got underway. As a result, it is too early to assess the longer term sustainability of the majority of the projects that are being delivered.
- 4.23 The term sustainability means different things to different projects. For ‘quick win’ projects such as the installation of playground equipment, sustainability primarily relates to the question of who will take responsibility for maintenance of the new equipment. For other

types of projects, for example, Friends Groups and volunteering activity, sustainability relates largely to projects' success in engaging community participation over the long term.

- 4.24 Sustainability issues also vary depending upon the nature of lead organisation. In England and Wales, projects are closely linked to local authorities, resulting in an expectation that the council will take some responsibility for maintaining new facilities, or for continuing to support TYS funded activity in some way. This will need to be tested in later stages of the evaluation. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, there are a large number of community and voluntary organisations involved in the delivery of TYS projects, and it is likely that they will need to fundraise or seek additional grant funding in the long term to continue activity or maintain facilities, for example, new buildings.
- 4.25 Amongst the case studies visited in England as part of this year's evaluation activity, a significant number have used some part of their funding allocation for the installation of play and leisure equipment for children and young people. There appears to be an on-going commitment from local authorities to ensure the maintenance of these facilities. But in at least one instance, a local authority – Sandwell MBC – has required project delivery agencies to enter into a contract in which they commit to maintaining and insuring their project for a period of 20 years, before the Council will release funding.
- 4.26 In other instances there will be a clear need for projects to demonstrate impact in order to secure long-term funding; the Community Ranger Post in Caerphilly, Wales, is an example of a project where a strong case could apparently be made for mainstreaming by the local authority, after TYS funding finishes.
- 4.27 In future years of this evaluation it will be necessary to track issues around sustainability. By re-contacting projects on an annual basis we can begin to assess the sustainability of projects. This will take a number of forms. First, there will be a visual element to this, e.g. are buildings and playgrounds being maintained, have there been incidents of vandalism or damage? Secondly, we will also be seeking feedback from project managers and partners about the practicalities of securing additional funding, evidence of mainstreaming, and importantly, evidence of continued community engagement with activity. Finally, through the beneficiary research, we will be seeking to understand how beneficiaries engage in community activity over time, and the sustainability of this.

## **5 Beneficiary Research – Case Studies**

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### **Introduction**

- 5.1 This chapter sets out the findings of the beneficiary research undertaken in the five case study areas. A common format has been adopted for each of the case studies. We first describe the projects, their objectives and the local context in which they are operating. We go on to describe the projects' beneficiaries, and the approaches we undertook in consulting with these groups. Finally, we set out the feedback that resulted from consultation with beneficiaries.
- 5.2 It should be noted that the beneficiary research is an ongoing process that will continue through the lifetime of the evaluation. In a number of cases we have supported projects in developing beneficiary feedback mechanisms, that will be facilitated by project managers, or even beneficiaries themselves, e.g. video diaries. The findings from the beneficiary research are being fed back to projects, and we will be maintaining contact with the projects as we develop a programme of beneficiary research for the second year of the evaluation.

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**North Ayr Community Gardens Initiative, South Ayrshire, Scotland**

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## **Project description**

- 5.3 The aims of the project are: **skills development and education** (in environmental awareness); to address council and community **health and safety concerns about unsafe gardens and open space**, sharps risks, other hazards; **encourage local pride** in property and a **sense of ownership** of open spaces; and to encourage **community spirit**. The project is run in a disadvantaged area, and managed by BTCV, whose aims are: connecting people with places; building healthy and sustainable communities; and engaging a wider cross-section of the community in the natural environment.
- 5.4 A large part of the project has been about community education, including the production and distribution of leaflets, a community food recipe book, and various taster events. Work has been undertaken not only with residents groups, but also with youth groups and schools, etc. Physical outcomes have also been achieved with several areas visibly improved (with related psychological benefits), and compost bins and bulbs have been widely distributed
- 5.5 As demonstrated above, the range of potential beneficiaries is very large, and – additionally – the local community appears to be well set up for supporting and nurturing such a project. There are active local street committees, and the area has voluntary ‘Community Support Officers’, who help to develop ideas and encourage involvement.
- 5.6 The range of projects in the pipeline should make this a good programme for long-term evaluation, looking at the development of project, etc. Future ideas include: a literacy and numeracy project, developing a play area, planting an urban forest, and the possible regeneration of a large urban park.
- 5.7 Most of the targets which were set at the application stage have been easily reached, and the project has expanded well beyond what was anticipated. In addition, links are increasingly being made through the project, to health and community safety issues, using the medium of environment / horticulture.

## **Identified beneficiaries**

- Local residents:
  - Individuals (tenants of council owned houses requiring garden maintenance, or just keen to lend a hand; street-to-street litter sweep)
  - Street committees
  - Residents’ organisations: James Brown Ave, Westoaks and Lochside Tenants Association; (Council Housing department)

- Community groups
- (voluntary) Community Support Officers
- Trainee from May-Tag as Volunteer Officer (*May-Tag is a national training-for-work organisation, which offers courses in administration, computing, customer service and horticulture*)
- Women's Groups – 'Flower Power' (*a workshop on International Women's Day, 08/03/05, providing instruction in the use of power tools for gardening and outside maintenance*)
- Young People with behavioural issues, and Domain Youth Centre (11-18 year olds)
- Primary school students (Whitletts, Good Shepherd, Braehead, Dalmilling)
- Agricultural college students
- *Indirect:* Local businesses

## Methodology

Beneficiary group	Methodology	Description	Details
Local residents	Priority and impact mapping ;	Various members of the local community were asked to feedback on their priorities. Used as a tool for discussion	Jan 2005 visit
	Transect drive / walks ; shadowing ;	Walkabout local SIP area, and drive, with Project Officer and local Councillor; meet with members of local community and informal feedback	Jan 2005 visit
	<i>Photo diary / scrapbook / blog</i>	An example garden will be used as part of an exhibit. Members of the community who will be attending the exhibit will be encouraged to keep a diary /scrapbook/ blog to monitor learning, feedback etc.	Summer 2005
<i>Numeracy and literacy group</i>	'Flash' interactive timeline	New numeracy and literacy group being set up (with another worker) will have a project to develop an interactive timeline	Spring/summer 2005
Community/tenants organisations	Informal interviews ; <i>Focus group ; shadowing?</i>	Informal discussion as walked around area ; discussion of project and benefits. <i>Possibility of attending a community / tenants organisation meeting</i>	Jan 2005 visit ; <i>future visit?</i>
Community Support Officers	Informal interviews; <i>Focus group; shadowing?</i>	Met with 2 CSOs in youth club – (next year, meet in Focus group setting?)	Jan 2005 visit
Young people with behavioural issues	Attitudinal survey ; <i>Video project / diary ; community mapping (street children)</i>	Project officer to carry out attitudinal survey to lay down baseline attitudes to local area and environment. To be used for comparison in future years, following future planned work with group. Mapping to identify psychological priorities in area	Summer 2005 (prior to YP projects)
Agricultural college students	Guided description of project	Met with student in College who had used future regeneration of Victoria Park as a design project	Jan 2005 visit
Other volunteers	Informal interviews		Jan 2005 visit

*Note: italics in table indicate methodologies/arrangements still to be agreed*



**Figure 1:** Drive around with Project Officer and Councillor. Victoria Park in background

## Key findings

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings
Councillor (strong support of the programme, and good overview of benefits to the community within his ward)	Informal interview and local area walkabout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area had become progressively worse – when litter is all around it becomes “a dumping ground” (vicious circle)</li> <li>Tour of successful previous projects – aspirational, would lift community</li> <li>Project has learnt lessons from previous success at Westoaks (another local community garden built recently prior to project) – where previously people were sceptical</li> <li>Many people are keen to see area improve and get involved with project, particularly through enthusiasm of project officer</li> <li>Also good to have local Councillors who generate community support, get behind project and get things done: “Well, I’ve been accused of being parochial, but... I’ve been elected to look out for this area so I stand guilty”</li> <li><i>Issues:</i></li> <li>Litter picking day: some parents weren’t happy about their children helping (safety); 2 of 12 parents didn’t let kids go to pick rubbish</li> <li>Although children learn a lot about dropping litter when picking it up, it may encourage laziness. Could be counter-productive; some lazy people in community might leave litter around, thinking that “the kids are going to do it anyway”.</li> <li>Need to manage expectations and be realistic with community aspirations</li> <li>Where much of the population is homeless or has no need to ‘put down roots’, it is difficult to get buy-in (sustainability issue)</li> </ul>
Community Support Officers	Informal interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project enhances quality of life through involvement – e.g. bulb planting</li> <li>Taking ownership = empowering, and there is now a strong sense of empowerment amongst community</li> <li>In whole time have been CSOs, neither had seen this much community action</li> <li>When project started, only 4 people came to the inaugural meeting, now 30-35 will commonly turn up...</li> <li>Success can be witnessed by the level of phone calls the Project Officer receives</li> <li>In just 8 months, vandalism figures have come to “nearly acceptable levels”</li> <li>Previously, gardens didn’t belong to them – perception that “that’s council business”</li> <li>Building on success: Litter picking is very visible. Adults see children doing it, and think ‘I can do that’</li> <li><i>Issues:</i></li> <li>Harder to get the adults to take pride, but they are starting to follow the children</li> </ul>
Local Residents	Chance meeting on area tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funded worker is widely recognised as playing a positive role in the community: “Are you the community gardener? We were talking about you last night” [in Tenants and Residents Forum</li> </ul>

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings
		meeting] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hope she will come to their area – “we like what she’s done elsewhere – it [planting bulbs] would brighten up the area, and make it a happy place”</li> <li>• Need a community figurehead as a catalyst to drive things through</li> </ul>
Young people	Informal interview with lead Youth Worker at Domain Youth Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Young People is still relatively new aspect of project</li> <li>• Young people from all across the area have started to get involved with this work through projects such as making ‘Willow boats’</li> <li>• ‘Wild camping’ – idea for the future – lots of interest</li> <li>• Most positive aspect is that YP are coming up with ideas for future projects (i.e. developing independent thought) – has come through in other areas – e.g. making ideas for the tuckshop</li> <li>• Projects such as the litter pickup are very visible</li> <li>• Bonus of small area = contact with high proportion of people. If neighbourhood associations see a good project, others ask ‘When are we getting it?’... Therefore, it has proven relatively easy to diffuse popular (visible) ideas through the community</li> <li>• Project can succeed on number of levels, e.g. from changing habits about dropping litter, through to YP going on garden design course...</li> </ul> <p><i>Issues</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Come up with ideas – some may be a bit ‘wacky’ and might not work – e.g. project to learn about DNA through planting. In the event, Young People were looking for something more ‘hands on’ – wild camping was a more popular suggestion</li> <li>• Biggest challenge: “Breaking the mould” (stereotypes ingrained within young people on attitudes to local area – YP often have little respect for their surroundings/immediate environment)</li> </ul>
Design student	Guided tour of project designs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Officer contacted College, to do designs for regeneration of park as part of honours credit</li> <li>• Twin outcomes – helps generate new ideas for area, and gives student ‘real-life’ experience</li> <li>• “It’s been good to be part of a ‘real project”</li> <li>• Putting together what the community wanted with what is actually feasible was very interesting</li> <li>• Needed to get a feeling for what the community would get out of each bit of the proposed design</li> <li>• Issues:</li> <li>• Need to get everyone on board from the beginning, and a clear brief: this project had 3 different briefs at the start</li> </ul>



**Bog Meadows, Falls Road, West Belfast, Northern Ireland**



## **Project description**

- 5.8 The project is located in a 50 acre wetland reserve in urban West Belfast (a focal point for the local community for generations, with an educational and therapeutic role). It has a clear environmental aim, seeking to protect what is seen as a unique site for urban wildlife, but through open access and work to involve different groups in practical conservation and maintenance, it has also sought explicitly to encourage the mixing of Protestant and Catholic communities (mainly Protestant clients in a Catholic area).
- 5.9 Funding from TYS so far has covered the provision of a full-time Reserve Officer as well as a dedicated vehicle. In addition, funding will enable the provision of a new dual purpose 2-storey building for a visitor centre with **offices, classroom facilities** (including teacher-training), **toilets** etc.; and **changing facilities** for the local Gaelic football club. The building is due to be started in August 2005, and expected to be completed by August 2006.
- 5.10 The project had strong local community support from the start, and has generated local and national publicity. There are future plans to build further bridges between the two communities.
- 5.11 The current status of the building presents opportunities to monitor opinions before, during and after completion. Surveys are also being conducted from programmes that are currently running.

## **Identified beneficiaries**

- 25 Volunteers (organised by Reserve Officer) – soon to be offered formal training courses (Roles include: monitoring, biodiversity/identification; marketing; etc.)
- Work experience student – use of (physical and human) project resources as intensive coursework for land management course; on-going evaluation by Reserve Officer
- Regular users:
  - Local schools, special needs groups, wildlife interest groups, and festival-goers
  - Local community (dog walking, exercise, play, general meeting area, greening the local environment)
  - Reconnect – training for people with range of mental and/or physical special needs (challenging beneficiary feedback; out of immediate catchment area)
- Community groups (e.g. St James Forum; Advisory Committee to the Ulster Wildlife Trust (UWT); local branch of UWT)

- Other group users – e.g. office workers (business volunteers, e.g. from tax office, who volunteer one day per year)
- Local business – increased business? (*Indirect*)

### Methodology

Beneficiary group	Methodology	Description	Details
General – volunteers, user groups, local community	Video diary	Video diary to explore development of programme – before, during and after construction of visitor centre / reserve building	2005-06, taken forward by Patrick Davey and Annie O’Kane
Local community / Local volunteers	Timeline and informal interviews	Explore complex background of setting up project – reasons	Jan 2005 visit, and (timelines) early 2005 – Patrick Davey/ Aidan
Reserve volunteers	Informal interviews / Transect walk	Discussion with ‘Environmental Guide’ and guided walk around Reserve, pointing out points of interest / change	Jan 2005 visit
Environmental group	Informal interview / hide visit	Discussion of use of landscaped drainage and bird-hide; visit to hide	Jan 2005 visit
Casual visitors	Survey	Currently only numbers are monitored. Survey will use sample to discover geographic origin of visitors, how they heard about the reserve, comments	Winter survey and summer survey – starting winter 2005 – carried out by Reserve Officer and/or vols
Bog Meadows Watch Group (8-14 year olds)	Brainstorm / Matrix scoring Benefits ranking	Brainstorm of favourite aspects (i.e. benefits) of Reserve. Then ranking, with races, using stones on paper (6 stones each, vote 3 for best aspect, 2 for 2 <sup>nd</sup> best and 1 for 3 <sup>rd</sup> best)	Jan 2005 visit
Mental health group	Interview	Interview with Project worker at Woodstock Lodge	Jan 2005 visit
Mental health group	Evaluation wheels	Using a specially adapted Wildlife Trust methodology to measure user attitudes to volunteering	SQW drafted, Annie O’Kane to use on next site visit (March 2005)
<i>Local businesses (indirect beneficiaries)</i>	<i>Informal survey</i>	<i>Random sample of local shops, cafes and businesses to discuss if any noticeable impacts</i>	<i>Visit winter 2005/6</i>
<i>Schools</i>	<i>Art project; Plays ; mental maps</i>	<i>Using art and drama to explore key benefits to school-age users. Mental maps to identify psychological priorities</i>	<i>2005/6</i>

*Note: italics in table indicate methodologies/arrangements still to be agreed*

## Key findings

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings
Mental health group (Young People aged 18-30 with schizophrenia)	Interview with project worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated Reserve Officer allows access to practical conservation as an activity - staff very attuned to what project needs are [AO'K: Project worker recruited with experience of working with difficult groups]</li> <li>• Ability to provide structured sessions = good for client group: addresses negative symptoms of psychotic illness, i.e. those not sorted by medication → Mood enhancement</li> <li>• Allows for continuous assessment of clients by project worker</li> <li>• Enables client group to                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Work with people</li> <li>➢ Get outdoors / out of house</li> <li>➢ New experience (usually not involved with conservation before)</li> <li>➢ Normality value (no negative connotations)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Future potential for award schemes / qualifications; therapeutic earnings (under discussion) as incentive into employment. But problem at moment = lack of facilities</li> <li>• Unusual self-initiated remarks from clients – “I really enjoyed that”</li> <li>• 1 young person who went from barely talking to becoming a (paid) ‘casual guide’</li> <li>• <i>Issues raised:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Lack of toilet</li> <li>➢ Lack of educational facilities for support in providing award</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Project volunteers	Interview and transect walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers: Positive benefit for project – environmental improvements (virtuous circle), although can take longer than normal with particular groups (e.g. mental health groups)</li> <li>• Landscaping has opened up area to environmental guiding (e.g. mini-beast walks)</li> <li>• More accessible – proper paths to use</li> <li>• Accessible to more schools than other local reserves (not many urban nature reserves in Belfast)</li> <li>• Locals are able to come and tell Reserve Officer and volunteers about problems – e.g. rats; kids drinking; litter dropping; burning things</li> <li>• <i>Issues raised:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Restricted – can’t push programme too much until building is up and running</li> <li>➢ A building will provide: hand-washing facilities (health &amp; safety); educational resource; wet weather facilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Local residents	Informal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term discussion / argument over use of land for various competing uses. Compromise reached through</li> </ul>

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings
	interview (on site)	<p>'honest negotiation' with all partners and the passage of much time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflicting ideas and debate was generally positive – brought all the issues out into the open</li> <li>• Additional community benefit – provided community with “something to rally around” (a common cause) given the political situation in recent history</li> <li>• Wider community support (from town as a whole), particularly following media interest after swans flew into the electricity pylons</li> <li>• Community use of land won out because of the sense of ownership – adults remember collecting frogs, skating on ice, etc.</li> <li>• UWT’s long-term involvement with Community Partnership was positive, and has helped with acceptance and consequent success of scheme</li> <li>• <i>Issues raised:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Community may have been “over-consulted”? – many outsiders/external groups have been involved over the last 15 years: these are recognised as well-meaning, but not seen by the community as having taken things much further forward</li> <li>➢ “We could do with 10 Rosses... there’s so much to do, and a lack of resources”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Environmentalists	Informal interview (on site); hide visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original desire for (closed) wildlife reserve. Environmentalists have had to modify their demands and, through negotiation, a compromise has been reached allowing people access to the reserve.</li> <li>• In retrospect this is better, as it has an educational / awareness-raising function: “It’s all about people interacting with nature, and enjoying it, at the end of the day”</li> <li>• Part of a wider ‘green corridor’, linking the hills with ...</li> <li>• Active daily management regime – coppicing willow; cattle-grazing = much better for the land and biodiversity</li> <li>• Provides a resource to meet and discuss wildlife</li> <li>• African migrant birds – ringing 350-400 per year. Potential location for international bird-ringing event</li> <li>• <i>Issues raised:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Proximity to motorway (adjacent). However, this (high) level of visibility is also perceived as a benefit: allows more people to see it is there – particularly with the ponds, cattle grazing, bird diverters on pylons, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Bog Meadows Watch Group	Brainstorm / Matrix scoring Benefits ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best things about the Bog Meadows (in order):</li> <li>• Learning about Wildlife (12 votes) ; Good to visit and have fun (5) ; Watching wildlife (4) ; Cows (4) ; Place to come for a Picnic (2) ; Come down with your kids (1) ; Come for peace and quiet (1) ; Meet people and other kids in the club (1)</li> <li>• <i>Ideas for the future:</i></li> <li>• Place for young people to sit ; place to store stuff ; place to wash hands ; bat-watching group ; more frequent meetings; making models / stuffed animals</li> </ul>



**Figure 1:** Benefit brainstorm with Bog Meadows Watch Group



**Figure 2:** Project Manager and Reserve Officer with Bog Meadows Watch Group



**Figure 3:** Matrix scoring with Bog Meadows Watch Group

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**North Sirhowy Community Ranger, Caerphilly, Wales**

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## Project description

- 5.12 The project provides funding for a full-time (4 years) Community Ranger. This forms part of the programme of **environmental and aesthetic improvements** for the valley – *North Sirhowy Valley Design Study* – to **attract tourism** and **inward investment**. The Ranger's remit is town/village areas as well as park activities. He reports to (and responds to) a number of **community and partnership structures**.
- 5.13 There already seems to be significant community capacity, and more innovative techniques may be possible. Local interest is added in: 1) the shift in local politics (from Plaid Cymru to Labour), causing individual tensions in the community, and 2) the presence of two distinct community groups (ex-mining communities; farmers & land owners).

## Identified beneficiaries

- Local people / village communities (increased chance of having their voice heard?; increased local policing and direct response to community problems/priorities?)
- Farmers
- Young people (directly and through schools)
  - Activities and training – hedge coppicing ; Junior Ranger Club
- Older people (increased voice through community structures?; better paths → increased walking activity?)
- Walkers – local / tourists (improved access? Less disturbance from quad bikes, etc.)
- *Indirect:* Local businesses – more tourism?

## Methodology

Beneficiary group	Methodology	Description	Details
Young people (ages 8 - 10)	Class discussion	Class-based exercise – Discussion about Junior Ranger Club and activity days. Show-and-tell with objects made (e.g. birdboxes; plant pots)	Jan 2005 visit
Young people	Brainstorm ; Problem/solution trees	Class-based exercise : Brainstorm - What's good about living in your valley? What are the problems? What are your hopes for the future? Stuck as 'leaves' on the tree, with solutions and hopes coming up through the roots	Jan 2005 visit
Young people	<i>Community maps</i>	<i>Children to draw the valley – psychological interest to see what features are drawn on</i>	<i>2005 through schools ; visit next year?</i>
Older people	“	“	“
Village communities	Focus group with Community Partnership ; matrix ranking	Meeting in community hall, with 6 members of Community Partnership, representing 3 of the 4 villages. Long discussion over lunch, followed by writing benefits on post-it notes, then grouping together	Jan 2005 visit
General community	<i>Ranger shadowing?</i>	<i>'Day in the life of a valley ranger'</i>	<i>Next year's visit</i>
Farmers	Informal interview	Informal interview with a hill-top farmer ; not enough time for transect walk this time	Jan 2005 visit
Farmers	<i>Transect walk</i>	<i>Guided tour of farmer's land, pointing out key benefits as travel around</i>	<i>Next year's visit</i>
Tourists	<i>Comments book (seasonal sample)</i>	<i>Comments book left near Ranger when working on outdoor projects near pathways – to capture views (and origins) of recreational walkers</i>	<i>Throughout 2005, especially summer. Action - James</i>

Note: italics in table indicate methodologies/arrangements still to be agreed



**Figure 1:**  
 Problem /  
 solution tree

## Key findings

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings
Village communities	Matrix ranking exercise	<p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employing Ranger was the first visible sign of progress – after much discussion by community and council</li> <li>• Ranger has wide range of relevant, practical skills for his job</li> <li>• Ranger works with <i>all sections</i> of the community, and has built good contacts with local landowners, farmers, communities. He knows the urban community AND the farming community</li> <li>• Enables these groups to find and articulate their voice to external bodies – “very important link” between NSV Partnership, the Council and the Police. Now communications are “far better”</li> <li>• Voice for the community in any feasibility study; unique position for overview of any projects implemented (e.g. tourist projects)</li> <li>• Physical presence in villages allows personal contact between community and tackling any problem</li> <li>• Early warning ability when barriers / gates / boulders have been breached / vandalism has improved</li> <li>• Ranger has helped to develop inter-village links and awareness</li> <li>• A presence in schools and evolving role in education matters</li> </ul> <p>• Unable to rank benefits – “<i>they are all important!</i>” (they were grouped instead, as above)</p>
Community Partnership	Focus group; Additional comments made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Helped people to see where we’re going”</li> <li>• “Since James came along, he’s been the centre of everything”</li> <li>• There’s enough work here for 2 or 3 Rangers!</li> <li>• Link role – if there’s a car torched, Ranger can alert the council to remove the car quickly and the police to follow up</li> <li>• Other communities in the County now want a Ranger</li> <li>• “When the post was first discussed, I first perceived it as a policing role (e.g. car torching; fly tipping) – it is part of his job, but I’ve come to appreciate his other role as an educator...”</li> <li>• Getting people involved – e.g. through planting trees – gives a sense of ownership; less likely to rip them up</li> <li>• Opening up access and increasing activity in Valley – deters trouble-makers</li> <li>• Savings to the community on not having to clear up the area, is not evaluated on any balance sheet</li> </ul> <p><i>Issues raised:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of a base – don’t know exactly where to find Ranger</li> <li>• Educator role – Ranger needs to access parents as well – to educate wider community</li> <li>• Future plans/aspirations for increasing tourism – e.g. Ranger to create leafleted walks; build on colliery heritage and natural scenic beauty ; need to develop overnight tourism business</li> </ul>

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attracting visitors from outside (Cardiff and further afield) will encourage community to feel proud of area</li> <li>Fear for the future – what will happen when the funding runs out? “If the lottery funding doesn’t continue... we will hold a raffle for him...”. “A strong case can be made to the local authority that they take on the funding of the post”</li> <li>2-year consultation for community preferred options in Valley → ‘over consultation’??</li> </ul>		
Farmer	Informal interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“James has been much more effective in his 12 months, than years of previous effort”</li> <li>It’s extremely beneficial that he <i>knows</i> farming and he knows the countryside – can call him, and he immediately understands the problem</li> <li>Accessible to farmers, and a visibly active link to the Council</li> <li>Activity run: Fun club from Markham village - teaching Young people about farming, animals, problems and issues. Gives them a different understanding of the farmer’s role.</li> <li>“If everyone (other valleys) could do the same, we would have far fewer problems amongst young people” (they would understand the consequences of their actions)</li> <li>Major problems: Quad biking; scrambling; dumping cars – damage to farmers (e.g. sheep escape through walls knocked down); puts people off walking and riding etc.; local business is suffering, diversification of countryside is suffering</li> <li>Ranger hasn’t solved problem, but actively taking steps to minimise it (e.g. blocking access), and his visibility discourages people</li> </ul>		
Local environmentalist	Interview and photo display	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main threats to biodiversity are bikes, fly-tipping, etc.</li> <li>It’s better now that they have shut the colliery, (wild strawberries grow in the shale); and will get better still with the Ranger</li> <li>It’s a “stay-at-home” population – people are not out enjoying it, it’s an uphill struggle, but a few people are helping by leading walks, etc. Ranger is helping to encourage access</li> </ul>		
Children / Young people	Class discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14 in attendance</li> <li>4 hadn’t seen James before; 10 had seen him in his van</li> <li>All had been to the Fun Day – and had made bird boxes; a willow planter; painted plant pots</li> <li>What do you think James does?</li> <li>“He is a Ranger”, “and he helps the countryside”</li> </ul>		
Children / Young people	Brainstorm ; Problem/solution trees	<p><b>Best bits about living in the valley:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trees (x2)</li> <li>Seeing all the mountains ; the girls</li> <li>Hills / forest</li> <li>My massive garden! (x2)</li> <li>Go up the common on my motorbike (x2)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Problems about the valley</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It’s too quiet and too dark [<i>This girl lives in Hollybush, in the Valley – in shade much of the time</i>]</li> <li>No sun</li> <li>Too quiet, because nothing to do</li> </ul>	<p><b>How would you like things to improve?</b> (took vote on 2 main problems)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Litter:</i></li> <li>More picking it up activities</li> <li>More bins</li> <li>Children to pick it up when they</li> </ul>

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flowers</li> <li>• Good views</li> <li>• All the trees and all the mountains and all the animals</li> <li>• Mountains, animals, girls</li> <li>• See all the mountains and farms</li> <li>• Farms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poo from animals (x2)</li> <li>• Too much litter</li> <li>• Chopping down all the trees</li> <li>• Destroyed views</li> <li>• School</li> <li>• Not enough clubs for children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have sweets</li> <li>• <i>Not enough to do:</i></li> <li>• More things to do at the Fun Club – going on trips</li> <li>• Build a leisure-centre / swimming pool</li> <li>• Advertise things that are going on in Hollybush</li> </ul>



**Figure 2:** Typical problem of burnt-out (stolen) car, encountered on transect drive



**Figure 3:** View of valley farmland, with main village (Markham) in background – illustrating the clear physical separation



**Figure 4:** Brainstorming and Matrix scoring with members of the Community Partnership

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## **The Solarium, Blackpool, England**

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## Brief Description

- 5.14 This project involves transforming a derelict solarium into a multi-purpose ‘**zero-energy**’ building (*Solaris*), and is considered a ‘flagship’ regeneration project for the area and community. Set in four acres of garden, the project has various energy demonstration features and is home to Lancaster University’s Sub-Regional Environment Centre. The building also provides space for business, including start-ups. These are selected to be compatible with the ethos of the initiative, and therefore can act as stakeholders as well as beneficiaries; as they bring direct economic benefits, they also widen the role of the project
- 5.15 Funding has been used for *physical refurbishment*, (the TYS funding provided impetus for the project). The refurbishment has involved creating: **Open access meeting space** (meeting rooms; heavily booked); space for **Businesses**; a well-used **café**; and space for **Exhibitions** (adult/child education; local art work). Visitor numbers are ‘extremely high’.
- 5.16 This project attracts a wide variety of people, from the business community to local residents, school children, artists and tourists. It was interesting to discover how these different user groups mix under the same roof. This is also the first major building in Blackpool with this level of energy-efficient features, and has a wider educational function related to environmental issues. These features are highly visible and it was interesting to hear the local viewpoint about the visual impact, and how much impact it has had on the environmental awareness of the local community.

## Identified beneficiaries

- (Regular) café users – including the local resident older community
- Community and voluntary groups using the meeting rooms
- Four business start-ups who have located in centre
- Local artists exhibiting in the centre
- Local environmental interest groups (e.g. City’s Environmental Action Team: BEAT)
- Visitors to exhibits and holiday-makers
- Visiting school and college groups (visits and provision of teaching space)
- *Indirect beneficiaries*: Local businesses

## Methodology

Beneficiary group	Methodology	Description	Details
Hoteliers	Informal interview	Hotels and hoteliers are a major part of the local economy. Lots of residents also live in hotels, so they represent a major segment of the local community. Meeting arranged at centre	February 2005 visit
Local community groups	Informal interviews	Meeting arranged at centre	February 2005 visit
Council (Environmental education)	Informal interview	Meeting arranged at centre	February 2005 visit
Young people	Comic strip competition	Idea evolved in discussion with Council's Environmental Education officer, for Junior BEAT members to take competition back to their schools: design a comic strip using current characters of centre to investigate young people's understanding of the building's environmental technologies and ethos, and obtain ideas for future of the centre	Spring - Summer 2005 (following next Junior BEAT meeting)
Council and other key partners	Focus group	Focus group held over lunch in the centre, to explore reasons building was taken forward and perceived level of success so far	February 2005 visit
Local businesses	Informal interviews	Meeting arranged at centre	February 2005 visit
Local people	Visitors book / feedback sheets	A comments book is in the centre, and we have recommended that a column to record visitor's origin is included. Feedback sheets are collected in reception, and all possible actions are followed up and/or the member of public is contacted to discuss	February 2005 visit



**Fig 1:**  
Solaris  
Building



**Fig 2:**  
Solaris Cafe



**Fig 3:**  
'Community'  
green space  
at Solaris

## Key findings

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings
Local community groups	Informal interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good community buy-in: Project Officer was previously Council's LA21 officer developing links with the community</li> <li>• When Solarium was shut in the 1970s (unsafe structure), there was a common fear that it would be turned into yet another hotel, so the 'Save Our Solarium' group was formed. Community pressure led to original façade being kept, replacing the original council idea to flatten the building and build a new environmental centre. This has also led to an increased feeling of community ownership of the building</li> <li>• Previously, groups would meet in the Council chambers, which was 'qualitatively different' – there used to be a feeling of 'us and them'. 02 In the Solarium, even though it is still a council-owned building, groups feel that it is neutral ground, and even a sense of ownership and empowerment</li> <li>• An example was given of an older female member of the community who had many valid opinions but never spoke up at community meetings etc. Now at meetings in this building, "you can't shut her up!"</li> <li>• There is a desire to build on the success of this project – e.g. using libraries which are shutting down to become 'satellite' projects along the same lines</li> <li>• The project helped to secure / maintain a large area as green space – which Blackpool is lacking. There is a common perception that 'nothing will grow' in the local area, but project aims to demonstrate this is untrue</li> </ul> <p><i>Issues raised:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to have seen even more space provided, as part of this project</li> <li>• The café just about pays for itself at the moment – community groups don't want it to get too commercial, or it will lose the feeling of community ownership</li> </ul>
Members of local community	Informal interviews in café / art gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local people having a place to meet / 'network' – even over a coffee!</li> <li>• There is a general feeling of community ownership, who are eager to help promote the centre and use it as much as possible:</li> <li>• Older people like to talk about the nostalgia of the building</li> <li>• "I don't think we could have envisioned it being this kind of success!"</li> <li>• "It's successful because it's unique and it fires the imagination... and brings people onto the same level"</li> <li>• "The building is light and spacious and feels really friendly"</li> </ul> <p><i>Issues raised:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people think building is lacking some of its previous character, e.g. the 'tropical' plants have gone</li> <li>• Could use this sort of place to encourage the community to come together with <i>even more</i> good ideas</li> </ul>
Visitors	Selection from comments book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Nice to see the old Solarium restored so well"</li> <li>• "A great delight. Very informative. Makes you realise we all have to pull together to save this planet"</li> <li>• It's good to see something clean and modern, and <i>as yet unspoilt</i> in Blackpool! A vast improvement, keep</li> </ul>

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings
		up the good work!"
Blackpool Environmental Action Team (BEAT)	Discussions at centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now have a place to be based, which helps to secure funding much easier</li> <li>• A new level of partnership working: BEAT is involved in the building's Steering Group, along with the Borough Council and Lancashire University</li> <li>• High profile location on the Promenade allows ethos of group to be spread</li> <li>• Junior BEAT is evolving, using the space for activities groups – and parents also stay to learn</li> </ul>
Environmental education part of Council	Informal interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of this project is wider than at first sight – there are indirect benefits through subliminal messages; information about the environment is being absorbed by people, even if they just come in for a cup of tea.</li> <li>• One father fed back that his kids "finally turned off the telly" after visiting the centre</li> <li>• Schools also come to do workshops, and science lectures – through free use of the meeting rooms; people also learn through (often impromptu) tours of the centre</li> </ul> <p><i>Issues raised:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nervousness about ability to cope with the sheer numbers of visitors in the summer (opened in Nov. 2004)</li> <li>• Difficult to monitor repeat visits, and so hard to measure this key aspect</li> <li>• Potential to promote food awareness through the café, as yet unexplored</li> </ul>
Council / Solaris Partnership	Focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was a project looking for a home, rather than specifically to 'save the solarium' building, which was a "pleasant by-product"</li> <li>• Cheap food has been a marketing tool ("secret weapon") for the building. It brings people in, who will then – often indirectly – learn from the environmentally-focused exhibitions</li> <li>• To some extent, the anticipated outcomes were fairly speculative, but it has exceeded all expectations. Communities vote with their feet – with no marketing other than through the local paper, the booking sheet is full for months in advance, and the place is always busy. This is also good from a business point of view, and shows they have the pricing about right</li> <li>• The project is also a popular resource for local artists and keeps generating fresh enquiries about exhibition space (which is fully booked until February 2006)</li> <li>• Solaris has wider benefits to the community – it is also a symbol that regeneration is actually happening, particularly as it is opposite the revitalised Blackpool promenade</li> <li>• A real strength has been the calibre of the various partners with different specialisms who came together to make this work</li> <li>• Partnership has a choice as to which businesses locate in the centre – if it doesn't fit with the ethos of the building, they have the right to say no</li> <li>• Building can be a catalyst for bringing together funding streams into particular projects</li> <li>• The project continues to attract other users – e.g. the probation service comes in to do maintenance, build walls, and window-cleaning</li> <li>• Boosts Blackpool's profile – e.g. through attracting blue-chip companies here on seminars</li> </ul> <p><i>Issues raised:</i></p>

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community is still learning about what they can do in/with the centre</li> <li>Very challenging work to get a large number (10) of funders together for the same project</li> <li>Whilst the project could potentially be reproduced across Europe, its success has also been to do with specific factors such as the heritage aspect, and its good location for a cafe and community focal point</li> <li>Collecting visitor figures and breakdown has been one of the biggest challenges (/annoyances). Particularly in the busier periods, this is time-consuming for staff, and seen as distracting them from more important tasks. Also, visitors can easily be missed if a staff member is away from the desk. Information on age/ethnic breakdown/disabilities is arbitrary, as visitors are not required to complete a survey form</li> </ul>
Environmentalists	Informal interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NatureWatch (a sub-group of BEAT) use one of the rooms in Solaris as their meeting point. Previously they used the Town Hall, but there were conceptual barriers related to it being council space; it is now freer to have discussions, as it is a 'community space'</li> <li>The USP (unique selling point) about the building is its tangible environmental benefits (including two wind turbines and the second largest PV roof in the region) – which the public can see and touch</li> <li>Its visibility - being on a main access road (the busiest in Blackpool) - is good for awareness-raising amongst the general public about the environment. Its future use as a polling station will further increase this</li> <li>Educational / showcase benefits – e.g. for engineers, Housing Associations, private businesses</li> <li>Boiler company put in CHP (Combined Heat and Power) as a demonstration, as they were impressed with the project</li> <li>"If we [UpBEAT] weren't here, we'd be in the church hall, and the church hall is mingling!"</li> <li>Provided a resource for networking and exchange of ideas</li> <li>One staff member overheard 2 ladies discussing the use of rainwater flushes in the toilets!</li> </ul>
Local businesses	Informal interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location in the building gives a sustainable image to the businesses within it</li> <li>The mix of uses in the office brings in a vibrant and relaxed 'atmosphere' – not usual in the workplace!</li> <li>"It makes us accessible" (people just walk straight in from the street)</li> <li>Its visibility makes it easy to give directions to, so it is a particularly good meeting venue</li> <li>[Engineering firm] Can bring clients to see the centre. As a firm trying to promote green energy, it is ideal: "Better than a brochure!"</li> <li>Fantastic facilities, broadband, etc. Having meeting rooms is excellent – can hold seminars on site. "We couldn't take our clients to our old office"</li> <li>Synergies through being located near others: e.g. "through our proximity to the Council, we have accessed funding which we'd never have known about... they introduced us to ERDF funding"</li> <li>"When we set up, if you weren't anything to do with tourism, they [Council] wouldn't help you. Now the focus of the Council has shifted..."</li> </ul> <p><i>Issues raised:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canteen sometimes gets a little <i>too</i> busy; "Invasion of old people!"</li> </ul>

<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Key findings</b>
Hotel groups	Informal interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The (voluntary) Private Hoteliers Association was involved from the start, and needed to have a base where they could hold meetings and surgeries</li> <li>• Provides a place for trade associations to come together on neutral ground – (previously the PHA had met in a particular hotel)</li> <li>• Having a base helped hundreds of local small hotels to work together – e.g. to secure funding from the local tourist board for IT equipment, which has helped them to become a stronger group</li> </ul>

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**Paston Fairshare, Peterborough, England**

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## **Project Description**

- 5.17 This is a play-area project, providing a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), a bike track, and a skate area. A new path has been built to take people away from residential areas, and the scheme landscaped with shrubs and trees. A neighbouring play centre backs onto the field, and will be able to use the facility as a resource in the term-time; in the evenings/weekends it will be for community use. The project aims to provide the area with a **play/leisure resource**, to encourage **young people to engage in outdoor activities** (to keep them active and out of trouble): previously, there was little scope for such activities. It is located on a previously underused site, and intended to provide a focal point for **community action**.
- 5.18 The project has already incorporated a large amount of community involvement in setting the priorities for this underused piece of open space, as well as the eventual design of the play area. This has included various community groups, and began with community consultation at the local Primary School, where children drew pictures and built models of what wanted.
- 5.19 The project is very new, and will provide an opportunity to track a project from its early stages. There are also possibilities for expansion of the scheme as it stands, for example creating something for older people and/or a nature area. Given the project has only recently started, we can only draw provisional conclusions. We were invited to attend one of the 'planting events' arranged over the February half-term to engage the community in advance of its official opening.

## **Identified beneficiaries**

- Children / Young People (e.g. from local schools and the neighbouring playcentre)
- Parents
- Local resident community (through providing a much-needed resource and keeping young people out of trouble)
  - Paston (community) Action Group
  - Other active local community groups: Church group; 'Energy for Paston'
- Local Councillors

## Methodology

Beneficiary group	Methodology	Description	Details
Young people	Informal discussions	Young people were engaged in conversation around the bike track and ramps. The visit was arranged over half-term to maximise potential contact.	February 2005 visit
Young people	Shadowing	Researcher was involved in the planting event, and used the shared activity to engage young people in conversation	February 2005 visit
Local community, councillors and parents	Shadowing	Researcher was involved in the planting event, and used the shared activity to engage local community, councillors and parents in conversation	February 2005 visit
Young people	Video project	A video diary of the development of usage of the play area, possibly coordinated by the Paston Action Group or a local school	TBC
Local community	Focus group	Focus group with the Paston Action Group, to discuss wider benefits to the community. However, the Action Group has been consulted a number of times, so it was decided to leave this until next year	2006
Local environment groups	Informal discussions	Met with the members of Peterborough Environment City Trust at the planting event.	February 2005 visit

## Key findings

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings
Young people	Informal discussions / shadowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “There was nothing to do before... now I have something to do in the holidays”</li> <li>• “When I get bored I go there and play football and biking”</li> <li>• “It’s a good place to come and look at boys...” (response from female young person)</li> <li>• A few younger children responded that they liked the look of it, but don’t yet use it. When asked “How old will you be when you start to play here?”, they replied somewhere between 10 and 11</li> <li>• “We [my family] like it, because I’ve got brothers and sisters, but lots of other people [who don’t have kids] didn’t want it ...because it would be noisier and kids might ruin their fences”</li> <li>• Some young people had come from the other side of town to use the skate/bike ramps, or just to ‘hang out’. This demonstrates the attraction of the resource, and its benefits wider than the immediately local community</li> <li>• Local young people stated that they didn’t mind other young people coming in to use ‘their’ play area</li> </ul> <p><i>Issues raised:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It’s rubbish – the ramps aren’t big enough” [the older young people tended to be more sceptical]</li> <li>• Young people questioned couldn’t remember any consultation, although likely to have been other groups</li> <li>• Would like to see: lights for the night-time, and a playground for kids who don’t own a bike or skates, a fence to keep out the younger kids who can get injured from running into the ramps when they are in use</li> </ul>
Councillors	Informal discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous under-utilisation: The field was just open space and only used for dog-walking, and trail-bike riding</li> <li>• There was also previously nothing to do for local kids. Other places had sports centres and shops etc., but “it was like Paston was the ‘forgotten’ area...”</li> <li>• It was important to consult the community beforehand, and it worked really well; good at getting people involved. Previously, there was no focus to the community which, with no real facilities, is almost a dormitory commuter settlement. This is returning a sense of spirit to the community</li> <li>• Through coming together as a group to plan this project, the community has developed the capacity to take forward similar projects for the benefit of the community in the future</li> <li>• The biggest benefit for the community so far has been “hope for the future”</li> </ul> <p><i>Issues raised:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up until recently it had been really successful in terms of utilisation and ‘keeping the peace’, but just this week the games area was graffitied, which is disappointing</li> </ul>
Parents	Informal discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area didn’t have such facilities before – this helps parents by keeping their children from getting bored in the holidays and getting into trouble</li> <li>• Kids before were hanging around in the streets – “now at least you know where they are!”</li> <li>• Some of the parents who didn’t know each other before, now talk to each other since the planning events</li> </ul>

Beneficiaries	Methodology	Key findings
		<p><i>Issues raised:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was some vandalism, with young people ripping down the fences before it was open, although this could show that they were keen to use it!</li> <li>• Still getting vandalised, and looks a bit of an eyesore, with graffiti on it</li> </ul>
Other community members	Informal discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscaping and access path encourage activity away from neighbouring properties</li> <li>• Bringing local people into the open space has helped a feeling of community safety, particularly after a local rape 2 years ago</li> <li>• 36 young people came to the design event – and the name 'Unity Park' came from a school competition to reflect the aim of bringing the two communities (on either side of the field) closer together</li> </ul> <p><i>Issues raised:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families from the more affluent area of the field had also been consulted, and generally thought the play area was a good idea, although there was some concern that it would impact on the value of properties overlooking the field</li> <li>• Youths are coming to use the bike tracks with their (motorised) scramble-bikes. This is noisy and dangerous, and some concerns were expressed</li> <li>• Uncertainty as to whether community has gained 'capacity' – in the past, groups have come together, fallen apart and come together again, depending largely on immediate need. However, there is also a suspicion that there is a certain amount of apathy still in the community</li> </ul>
Environmental groups	Shadowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This project got local people interested / re-engaged in their space, and then we can work with and include them in further improvements</li> <li>• Use planting projects to bring more native species back into community space, but also to encourage a sense of community ownership (if they have helped to plant them), particularly amongst younger people, so the trees will hopefully not be vandalised</li> </ul>



**Figure 1:** The bike track / MUGA in action



**Figure 2:** Councillors and community at 'tree planting' event



**Figure 3:** Children getting involved in the tree-planting event

## 6 Conclusions and next steps

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### Conclusions for Year 1

- 6.1 In this final section, we summarise the findings set out in section 4, and briefly consider the implications, for Transforming Your Space and similar initiatives, and for the rest of the research programme.

#### **Conclusion (1): projects have been designed in line with TYS aims and objectives, and are generally progressing well**

- 6.2 First, we assess what we found against the aims of the Programme, which were set out at beginning of this report. TYS seeks to enable the improvement of local environments, in order to enhance the quality of life, particularly in the more deprived communities. Project activities should reflect residents' views of what is important, while being consistent with local and regional priorities. Engaging the community in planning and delivery, and developing community assets for the future, are also explicit aims of the Programme.
- 6.3 We found that the activities which have been funded through TYS are consistent with these aims, and our interpretation of the ethos of the TYS Programme. This is to provide resources for environmental improvement and community engagement, as a means to improving the quality of life in deprived communities. We also judged, on the basis of the evidence presented to us and our interpretation of this against the original plans, that the projects were generally progressing well.

#### **Conclusion (2): some evidence of positive early impacts**

- 6.4 Assessing the extent to which these activities have contributed to improvements in the quality of life is of course conceptually far from straightforward – there is, for example, a lively current debate on the relevance of happiness/well-being as a more appropriate measure of well-being than GDP, and the practicality of measuring this. A wide range of stakeholders benefit in different ways and to different degrees, depending on the purpose and design of the project, and the intended and unintended consequences which are resulting.
- 6.5 Improved quality of life is impossible to judge more than impressionistically through this research process, particularly at this early stage, when most projects have not been completed and some have not yet begun. The relatively small scale of many of the projects – and the limited impact that can be expected relative to other influences - must also be kept in mind.

Any judgements on sustainability are at best provisional, as actual outcomes are not yet evident.

- 6.6 In summarising our interim findings, in table 6.1 below, we first highlight the relevance and contribution of activities in relation to the environmental and social/community objectives which are central to TYS. We then also comment on the contribution to health and economic outcomes, which we interpret as supporting – and potentially providing evidence for – the overarching aim of an improved quality of life.

**Table 6.1: summary of findings and conclusions**

<b>Core Objective</b>	<b>Assessment of activity</b>
Environmental: <i>improving/ developing green spaces, enhancing the image of local areas; encouraging the use of these public spaces</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary feature in all case studies; includes both generic activities to improve the attractiveness of local public green spaces (in order to increase local usage), and specific e.g. improvement/maintenance of a public garden or woodland</li> <li>• Visible evidence of improvements made, and some early evidence of increased use by local communities</li> <li>• Evidence of community involvement, in planning and through volunteering/other activities, that has the potential to create ownership of community assets (<i>all projects were required to demonstrate how the communities would be involved at application stage</i>)</li> </ul>
Social/community: <i>providing new/ improved community facilities, including playgrounds; often with a dual aim of encouraging community involvement/ increasing capacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of community facilities, especially for children's play, is a strong feature in the case studies</li> <li>• Community involvement and use of TYS to improve community capacity is also a strong feature. The form this takes – ranging from consultation to community lead role - varies between projects and countries, but in many instances, public authorities have seen TYS as an opportunity to signal a change of approach towards the more active involvement of local communities</li> <li>• Beneficiary case studies provide evidence of how specific target groups e.g. those with mental health problems, have been successfully encouraged to become involved; also of outcomes where completed projects have facilitated more interaction among community groups and increased use of public space: the latter is important also because increased use may be associated with reduced crime and fear of crime..</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting Objective</b>	<b>Assessment of activity</b>
Health: <i>developing facilities and activities to encourage healthy lifestyles, including exercise, gardening, growing vegetables for own use</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important secondary aim of many projects, as health – and perceptions of state of health – are recognised as a key aspect of quality of life: many projects include elements to facilitate both formal sports and informal active leisure use, with an explicit link made to improved personal well-being of individuals living in the area, as well as providing opportunities for social interaction</li> <li>• Too early to assess results against this objective: anecdotal feedback from project promoters and community representatives are positive regarding increased – or likely –increased use. Measurable impact on health may not be evident within the timescale of this study.</li> </ul>
Economic: <i>generating income and spend within the Programme areas, to benefit members of the local community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a stated aim of TYS (<i>overall NOF objectives related to education, health and environment</i>) nor of the projects included as case studies</li> <li>• But awareness of economic effects is important in the sense that deprivation is closely linked with low incomes. Physically more attractive areas can raise local morale and increase the potential for financial investment , while new locally-based activity can provide jobs for those in the local community, for example through volunteering, leading to ILM opportunities and then to fully-paid work</li> <li>• A minority of case studies were able to identify economic impacts – some anticipated, some not. These included jobs created through TYS projects, and a positive influence on house prices, as local areas became more attractive.</li> </ul>

### **Conclusion (3): Positive impressions in relation to sustainability, but as yet limited evidence of outcomes**

- 6.7 ‘Sustainability’ is multi-dimensional, and the relative weight given to environmental, social and economic aspects, the timescale for consideration and the importance of organisational ‘process’ factors will vary depending on the specific project and circumstances. Our conclusions on this are necessarily provisional, partly because a significant proportion of the TYS projects that were visited as part of the first year’s research, had only recently begun. We also found that, while all the projects studied explicitly focused on improvements to the local environment and social/community facilities, and emphasised the engagement of the communities in these areas, the balance between these aims, and the way in which they were interpreted, was quite different – particularly across the four countries. This affected, for example, the extent to which projects sought ‘quick wins’, looked for long-term change, or recognised that they needed to encompass both these.
- 6.8 While difficult to assess, and subject to different interpretation and measures in relation to different projects, sustainability is central to judging the success of TYS. We gained some – generally positive – impressions from the first stage research. The different dimensions of sustainability will be assessed more explicitly in years 2 and 3.

### **Next steps: research programme for years 2 and 3**

#### ***Case study sampling and visits***

- 6.9 Through early and on-going discussions with BLF, and our own knowledge of the countries and local areas, we are confident that our selection of case studies in year 1, and those that have been selected for inclusion in year 2 of the evaluation represent a good spread of types of activity being funded by TYS. Funding in Scotland has only recently been fully allocated. As a result, we did not select year 2 case studies in Scotland in our original sampling methodology. A priority for next year will be to agree the four case studies to be covered in Scotland.
- 6.10 We anticipate a slightly earlier start to fieldwork in year 2, with case study visits beginning in September 2005. Our proposal also outlined plans to re-contact case studies from year 1, in subsequent years of the evaluation. It was initially envisaged that this would take the form of telephone contact with project managers and other key organisations and individuals to follow-up on progress. However, given the scale of projects planned – particularly capital projects relating to buildings – and the early stages that many projects had reached at the time of this year’s fieldwork, we suggest that a number of these projects are visited in person during the final year of the evaluation.

***Beneficiary research***

- 6.11 The approach adopted to undertaking beneficiary research changed during the early stages of the evaluation. We believe that the more in-depth approach taken to this activity, with a smaller number of case studies has provided additional useful information, and we recommend that this should continue in future years of the evaluation.
- 6.12 Drawing together the findings of the beneficiary research to make conclusions about the TYS Programme as a whole is complex. However, this approach is allowing us to validate the benefits and impacts that are being reported by projects, as well as identifying wider benefits that the project may not have identified. Furthermore, by tracking beneficiary groups over time we have the opportunity to assess the long term impacts of activity, beyond the initial enthusiasm that accompanies a new project.

***Reporting findings – years 2 and 3***

- 6.13 As highlighted above, the majority of projects are still in their early stages. The conclusions that can be drawn on impacts and outcomes, and regarding the extent to which these benefits are proving sustainable, are limited and provisional. In years 2 and 3 of the evaluation we expect to seek further evidence of projects' achievements, and to attempt to quantify this wherever possible.

***Dissemination***

- 6.14 Several TYS project leaders expressed interest in the evaluation research findings, and asked about their wider dissemination. In particular, they were eager to learn more about the ways in which other organisations have used their funding. This issue also came through when we conducted the beneficiary research activity, with particular interest from projects in identifying good practice in community consultation and engagement processes, and how they should evaluate their activities. We propose that dissemination should be considered in reviewing these Stage 1 findings: some feedback could help the projects - for example, in providing information on other approaches when unforeseen difficulties arise with implementation. It may also facilitate the subsequent stages of the research, particularly the work with beneficiaries.

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**ANNEX A**  
**Case Study Sampling and Project Descriptions**

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## Case Study Sampling

### *England case study sampling*

1. TYS spend in England has been allocated based on the 51 Fair Share local authority areas with each local authority running a number of projects. As a result the case study sampling has been most complex in England. We weighted the case study sample to broadly reflect the proportion of spending that has been allocated to each region, whilst at the same time ensuring that at least one local authority case study is undertaken in every region over the lifetime of the evaluation. The allocation of TYS spend across the regions is demonstrated in the table below:

**Table A1: Allocation of TYS Funding by Region**

Region	Allocation (£)	% of all Allocation	No. of case study areas	Case Study – Cohort 1	Case Study – Cohort 2
North West	14,456,111	39%	4	2	2
Y&H <sup>2</sup>	8,805,948	24%	2	0	2
West Midlands	5,012,073	13%	2	1	1
East	2,147,887	6%	1	1	0
London	2,041,901	5%	1	1	0
North East	1,863,135	5%	1	1	0
East Midlands	1,395,373	4%	1	0	1
South West	768,070	2%	1	1	0
South East	639,113	2%	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,129,611</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>

2. We also cut the sample by the size of grant given to each local authority, >£500,000 and <£500,000. In addition, we needed to ensure coverage of a good spread of activity type.
3. The table that follows outlines the list of local authority case study areas for the both cohorts of the study. These are mapped against the allocation of funding and the types of activity they are delivering under their package of projects. The selection also covers a range of urban, rural and mixed areas.

<sup>2</sup> A planned Y&H case study visit for Cohort 1 (NE Lincs) was moved to Cohort 2 because TYS activity had not commenced.

**Table A2 England Case Study Selection**

Region	Local Authority	Activity Type									Award Size	
		Habitat Creation	Wildlife/Bio diversity	Cycle Tracks	Local Built Heritage	Restoration etc. of Inland Waterways	Land Restoration	Countryside and Green Spaces	Maintenance and Preservation of Community Buildings etc.	Footpaths and Bridleways	>£500K	<£500K
<b>Cohort 1</b>												
NW	Pendle	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆		◆
NW	Blackpool	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
WM	Sandwell	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
East	Peterborough	◆	◆	◆			◆			◆		◆
Lon	Waltham Forest	◆	◆	◆	◆			◆	◆		◆	
NE	Stockton on Tees		◆	◆			◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
SW	Swindon	◆	◆	◆			◆	◆	◆	◆		◆
<b>Cohort 2</b>												
NW	St. Helen's	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	
NW	Burnley		◆	◆	◆		◆	◆		◆		◆
Y&H	Doncaster	◆	◆				◆	◆	◆		◆	
Y&H	NE Lincs		◆			◆	◆	◆		◆		◆
WM	Telford	◆					◆	◆	◆	◆		◆
SE	Thanet	◆		◆			◆	◆	◆			◆
EM	Derby	◆					◆	◆	◆		◆	

### ***Wales case study sampling***

4. The TYS programme in Wales was based on an allocation system, with each local authority receiving a pot of funding that was weighted to take into account, factors such as deprivation. A total of 22 projects have been funded in Wales. The case study selection was based on ensuring a good geographical spread of case studies (North, South, Urban and Rural) as well as a wide range of activity types.

**Table A3: Wales Case Study Selection**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Funding</b>
<b>Cohort 1:</b>		
North Sirhowy Valley Community Ranger	Caerphilly Borough Council	£181,847
North Grangetown Community Environmental Action Project	Cardiff Council	£215,601
Space 4 Youth	Wrexham County Borough Council	£124,430
Woodlands for Communities	Flintshire County Council	£116,857
<b>Cohort 2:</b>		
Abergynolwyn New Community Centre Project	Gwynedd - Village Hall Committee	£122,236
Parc Taf Bargoed Voluntary Warden Scheme	Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Taff Groundwork	£159,414
Dim Pen Y Daith	Ceredigion Recycling and Furniture Team	£100,000
Ogmore Centre Trust Living/Learning Environment Eco Centre	Ogmore Centre Trust	£112,716

### ***Northern Ireland case study sampling***

5. The NI TYS awards were granted on the basis of an open bidding round, i.e. there were no set allocations of funding as in the English TYS programme. In total 14 projects were selected for funding in NI. We split the projects based upon size of grant, >£150,000 or <£150,000, type of project and location. The agreed case study projects are detailed in the table below.

**Table A4: NI Case Study Selection**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Funding</b>
<b>Cohort 1:</b>		
The Woodland Trust	NI Wide	£115,901
Ulster Wildlife Trust	West Belfast	£199,957
Burnside Community Group	Newtown Abbey	£118,000
<b>Cohort 2:</b>		
Kilcreggan Homes	Carrickfergus	£95,646
Devenish Partnership Forum	Fermanagh	£178,423
Creggan Country Park	Derry	£198,891

### **Scotland case study sampling**

6. Scotland held an open bidding round for the TYS programme, as in Northern Ireland. In Scotland a total of 58 projects have been funded to date<sup>3</sup> (all funding is to be awarded by March 2005). As a result, we only suggested projects for the first cohort of case studies. The funding awarded to projects in Scotland varies from £20,000 to £150,000, with 60% of projects to date, being awarded less than £50,000. Again, we attempted to include a range of projects based on activity type and location.

**Table A5: Scotland Case Study Selection**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Funding</b>
North Ayr Community Gardens	North Ayr	£70,000
Beardmore Park	Glasgow	£150,000
Moray Mountain Biking	Morayshire	£47,500
Salsburgh Moss Scenic Walkway	Salsburgh	£42,769

### **Project descriptions**

7. A brief description of all the projects that were visited as part of this year's case studies is provided in the table below.

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<sup>3</sup> At the time of sampling in September 2004

Country	Lead Body	Project Name	TYS Funding	Brief Description
England	Swindon Borough Council	Buckhurst Field Initiative	£57,000	Developing community-wide use of Buckhurst Field site in the centre of a local housing estate through introduction of environmentally sensitive recreational facilities, e.g. community orchard, skate area and play facilities.
		Children's Play area – Broadgreen Centre	£35,215	Installation of an outdoor play area for the under 5s at the Broadgreen Centre.
		Rose Garden – Broadgreen Centre	£6,200	Improving the appearance and community use of a green space behind Broadgreen Centre, by planting a garden and installing a seating area for older residents.
		Youth Shelter Broadgreen Centre	£14,838	Installation of a seating area for teenagers behind the Broadgreen Centre.
	Peterborough City Council	The Paston Fairshare Project	£79,000	Improvements to an underused piece of open space in a residential area, to provide facilities for young people. The project will provide a Multi-Use Games Area, a bike track with obstacles, a skate park, new patch and landscaping with shrubs and trees.
		The Embankment Project	£165,000	The project aims to improve access to, and the attractiveness of, the embankment area alongside the river Nene to make it easier and safer to reach the riverside area.
		Bluebell Meadows/Welland Recreational Ground Project	£80,000	The project aims to improve recreational facilities for children and teenagers in two locations. This includes the development of a Multi-Use Games area, a mini skate park, and improvements to existing play areas,
	Sandwell MBC	Growing Opportunities: Salop Drive Market Garden	£124,233	Project aims to build upon the work of a voluntary organisation, Ideal for All Ltd, which has converted a largely overgrown and little used area of allotments into a market garden which produces fresh fruit and vegetables for over 100 elderly people. TYS funding is being used to improve access to the sites, e.g. tarmac and drainage, and the design and construction of a wildlife garden, a communal garden and additional planting.
		Children's Play Facilities at Forge Lane/Mousesweet Brook	£100,000	Provision of a play area for children between the ages of 8-14. Installation of new play equipment, safety surfaces and landscaping.

Country	Lead Body	Project Name	TYS Funding	Brief Description
	Blackpool City Council	Solaris	£175,000	TYS monies have been used a part of a wider package of funding to transform a derelict sea-front solarium into a multi-purpose “zero energy” building, incorporating Lancaster University’s Sub-Regional Environment Centre, exhibition facilities, meeting room, business space and a café.
		TAB Community Centre and Sports Facility	£340,000	The focus of the project is the development of a ‘Health Village’ comprising a community centre, sports facility, Sure Start and PCT Centre, and town open spaces (one play, one quiet). The aim of the project is to improve the health and well-being of the local community, as well as bringing local community groups together. TYS funding is being used for the sports facility and open spaces element of the project.
	Pendle Borough Council	The Canal Small Corridors Projects Fund	£144,135	This project is a ‘bolt on’ to an existing SRB funded Canal Corridor Strategic Framework. The TYS funding alongside SRB monies has allowed local residents and community groups to bid for small grants (£100-£15,000) to carry out environmental works to improve areas in and around the Canal Corridor, e.g. restoration of a bandstand and improvements to allotments.
		Pendle Productive Landscapes	£144,135	This project was set up to identify derelict land in the borough and looks at ways of turning them into areas of benefit for the local community. This has included an audit of land in the borough, including consultation with local residents about which sites they regard as needing improvements. A number of sites have been identified and ‘tidy up’ activity is underway.
	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	Newtown ‘Places for People’	£247,500	The project has a number of elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for external elements of the conversion of a former school into a Resource Centre</li> <li>• Alleygates to improve security and fly tipping, and traffic calming measures</li> <li>• Improvements to Primrose Hill Park, community garden, garden equipment and fencing etc.</li> <li>• A football pitch</li> </ul>

Country	Lead Body	Project Name	TYS Funding	Brief Description
		Parkfield 'Who Cares? We do!'	£225,000	The project has a number of elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to sports pitches and school recreation grounds</li> <li>• Alleygates and new street lighting</li> <li>• Planting and shrubbery removal</li> </ul>
		Hardwick 'Improving Community Spaces'	£215,000	The project has a number of elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to the extension of Hardwick Community Centre</li> <li>• Outdoor play facility</li> <li>• Sculpture, entrance features for Dene and a new footpath</li> </ul>
		Portrack and Tilery 'Changes for the Future'	£162,500	The project has a number of elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A skateboard park</li> <li>• Play area</li> <li>• Shrubby removal, CCTV and traffic calming.</li> </ul>
	London Borough of Waltham Forest	'Friends Groups'	£390,000	The project aims to tackle borough-wide problems affecting parks, open spaces and play grounds by establishing a sustainable network of 'Friends Groups' working in partnership with the council and local communities to deliver improvements to spaces, increase usage, and develop a sense of ownership of local green spaces and playgrounds.
		Creating a Youth Hub at the Pavilion	£120,768	This project aims to transform a listed cricket pavilion (the former Essex County Cricket Ground) into a 'Youth Hub'.
Scotland	Moray Mountain Bike Club	Moray Mountain Biking	£47,500	The wider focus of the Forestry Commission's activity is on protecting and expanding Scotland's forests and woodlands. This project focuses on working in partnership with the Moray Mountain Bike Club, and users of the local forest to design and build, safe and environmentally-friendly mountain bike trails.
	Glasgow and Clyde Valley Greenspace Trust	Beardmore Park	£150,000	The main objective of the project is to provide a green space for residents to enjoy, play facilities for children, and a managed area for older youths. The proposed layout aims to provide a 'flexible community space' offering a wide range of uses, and accessible by all members of the local community.

Country	Lead Body	Project Name	TYS Funding	Brief Description
	BTCV	North Ayr Community Gardens Initiative	£70,000	The project aims to address council and community concerns with respect to health and safety issues around unsafe gardens and open spaces. Activity provides opportunities for BTCV to educate local communities in environmental awareness, e.g. bio-diversity, and encourages people to work together to improve their local environment, giving a stronger sense of ownership of green spaces. Gardens in need of improvement are referred to the project, and the project brings together local volunteers to undertake improvement activity.
	Smarter Salsburgh	Salsburgh Moss Scenic Walkway	£42,769	The aim of the project is to create a scenic-walkway on a well-known local nature site, called Salsburgh Moss. Plans include the installation of new gates, shrub plantation, upgrading of pathways, new signage and a picnic area.
Wales	Flintshire County Council	Woodlands for Communities	£116,857	Funding is being used to further develop Forest School activity in Flintshire. The project includes the appointment of a Forest School Leader, and the development of a programme of activities for local children.
	Cardiff Council	North Grangetown Community Environmental Action Project	£215,601	The project has two aspects. The green space element focuses on improvements to a patch of green space in the North Grangetown area. The Environmental Projects Officer delivers community health-type activities in partnership with the Health Living Centre.
	Wrexham County Borough Council	Space 4 Youth	£124,430	The focus of the project is on developing diversionary 'play ground' facilities for older youths, where they can meet. This includes the provision of an 'adventure playground', youth shelter, and basketball net. Staff are also employed to engage youths in the design and construction of these activities.
	Caerphilly Borough Council	North Sirhowy Valley Community Ranger	£181,847	The project funds a Community Ranger as part of a wider package of environment and aesthetic improvements underway in the North Sirhowy Valley. The Ranger has a role in working with communities to undertake local environmental improvements, and to create appropriate facilities for local people, e.g. a small picnic area.
Northern Ireland	Bog Meadows Building Partnership (Ulster Wildlife Trust)	Bog Meadow (West Belfast)	£199,957	The project builds upon earlier activity at the Bog Meadow site. Funding is being used to employ a full-time Reserve Officer to co-ordinate volunteer activity, and to build a new visitor facility which will provide office space, training facilities, toilets and changing facilities.

Country	Lead Body	Project Name	TYS Funding	Brief Description
	Burnside Community Group	Burnside Community Group Village Enhancement Project (Newtonabbey)	£118,000	The aim of the project was to develop an area of semi-derelict land in the centre of the village of Burnside into a central recreational area for the village, including a play area for primary school children, a games area for older users and a paved area with mains power for community events.
	The Woodland Trust	NI Community Wood Warden Scheme (Across NI)	£95,646	Funding is being used to recruit people to become wardens and act as environmental champions in some of NI's most deprived areas. The role of the wardens is to encourage local people to become involved in the development of neighbourhood woods.

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**ANNEX B**  
**Research Tools (Topic Guides)**

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## **Topic Guide – Transforming Your Space Evaluation (Scoping Stage)**

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This topic guide is for use during the scoping stage of the Transforming Your Space evaluation, and should form the basis of discussions with the Big Lottery Fund policy and operational leads in each of the countries.

### **(1) Background and policy context**

- Interviewee's background to involvement with TYS (role/length of involvement)
- Anyone else who should comment?
- Description of how the programme evolved in your country
- Describe the key priorities of the programme in your country? How were these decided upon? Who decided upon them? Rationale behind this?
- Any conflicts between the 2 underlying themes of TYS, i.e. "green" environmental aspects and the "human" aspects, e.g. improving quality of life or community development and social capital. How are these dealt with?
- Has priority been given to specific types of project? Any key eligibility criteria for projects, e.g. evidence of match funding.
- Any geographical targeting of funding? Rationale behind this?
- Describe the breadth of activities that have been funded by TYS in your country?
- Has there been any links between the TYS programme and other Lottery Funded programmes, or other local/national programmes? Any links between programmes at a project level? Nature of these links and any added value.

### **(2) Operational arrangements**

- Please describe the grant making process in your country?
- How well has this process worked in practice?
- Who made (or makes) decisions on grant applications (e.g. a panel or an individual)?
- How have organisations been made aware of the TYS programme? How has it been promoted? How well has this worked?
- What support is offered to projects once they have received TYS funding?

### **(3) Monitoring and evaluation**

- How has contact been maintained with projects once funding has been awarded? And by whom? Any opportunities for different projects to share ideas etc?
- Please describe monitoring procedures, e.g. what information is collected? How well have these worked? Do projects understand the types of information they are expected to collect, and do they do this?
- Any expectations on projects to do local evaluation? Is this encouraged? Any good examples of this, particularly where this involves beneficiaries.

### **(4) Impacts**

- Any evidence of particular types of projects working better than others? Reasons for this, e.g. very specific focus, effective partnership working, community involvement?
- What evidence of impact is there, e.g. improved green spaces or capacity building of local communities? Any evidence of new or innovative ways of engaging local people with activities?
- Any views on the long-term sustainability of projects, e.g. improvements to green spaces, who will maintain in the future?

### 1. Project Design

- Interviewee's role in relation to the project
- Nature of their organisation (e.g. local authority, community or voluntary group)
- How were they made aware of the TYS programme (particularly in NI/Scotland)?
- Their understanding of the aims and objectives of the TYS programme
- Description of their project(s) including key activity types, and aims/objectives of activity? Rationale for the project?
- Who is delivering project activities, e.g. are there other partners involved in the project?
- How does the project(s) fit with other local/regional initiatives and strategies, e.g. Neighbourhood Renewal Fund or Local Agenda 21

### 2. The Application Process

- Describe the grant application process you went through
- Who was involved in assembling the application?
- Was the application process straightforward, e.g. guidance and timescales clear?
- How the project was developed? Did ideas for projects already exist, or have projects evolved in response to funding?
- How were local priorities agreed?
- Level of community involvement in this process - any evidence of this e.g. consultation exercises or surveys?
- Was there community involvement in the design of the programme? How important was this?
- Nature of Local Strategic Partnerships (England) and the Community Strategy Partnerships (Wales) involvement in the development of project(s) (if any)
- Was match funding obtained – was this a condition of the project? If this was a factor, how much was secured and were specific conditions attached to it?
- Did the NOF/Big Lottery Fund require any amendments to the original project(s) plan? What amendments were required and how did you deal with this?
- When were you awarded funding? Confirm amount of funding. Did you secure any additional funding (how much/from where)? When did the project formally start?

### 3. Project Delivery

- Describe the key stages in getting the project(s) underway?
- Any evidence of different/innovative approaches to project delivery, e.g. is this different to anything that has been delivered previously? How and why?
- How have local communities been involved in the delivery of activities?
- Is community involvement as a direct result of pro-active marketing or engagement by those involved in the project, or as a result of direct interest from beneficiaries?
- Who are the beneficiaries of the project? (e.g. users type, numbers, direct/indirect) Have particular types of beneficiary been targeted – why? Do they reflect the wider local community?
- Has the type/number of beneficiaries changed over time? Why?
- Have there been any barriers to delivering projects as planned? How have these been overcome?
- Have you received any external expertise or support, e.g. consultants or Big Lottery Fund, in delivering the project(s)?
- Do you have links with other local/regional networks and projects delivering similar activities? Nature of these links
- How is the project's progress monitored (both by funders and the delivery organisation)
- Could monitoring procedures be improved? Any further support required?

### 4. Project outputs and impacts

- What are the key outputs and outcomes for the project(s)? How will these be measured?

- Please describe any *environmental impacts* (e.g. improved green spaces etc., preservation, biodiversity or heritage benefits)
- Please describe any *community impacts* (e.g. increased community capacity, new networks created, reduction in anti-social behaviour through reclamation of community space etc.)
- Please describe any *social impacts* (e.g. interaction amongst users of space, reduction in isolation within communities)
- Please describe any *economic impacts* (e.g. increased confidence in the area – evidenced, for example, by rising property prices or recent private and other public investment, increased use of local facilities, opportunities for employment etc.)
- Please describe any *health impacts* (e.g. opportunities and motivation for people to exercise, reduction in stress, psychological benefits of outdoor space)
- Overall, how are activities impacting upon *quality of life* locally?
- What evidence is there of take up of opportunities and the impacts described above, and to what extent can impacts be attributed to the project? (get copies of anything available)
- Which groups of the population were expected to benefit? Has this been borne out in practice?
- Will output/spend profiles achieved? If not, why?
- Have there been any unanticipated outcomes or outputs?
- Do you track project beneficiaries? How?
- Any thoughts on how we might access the project's beneficiaries (we have a number of ideas but it is important to get buy-in from those involved in the project, and get their buy-in.

## 5. Overview and Issues

- Would the activity have gone ahead without TYS funding? If so, at what scale and when?
- Is there any evidence that the project(s) has displaced funding or activity from elsewhere?
- Positive lessons – what 3 things from the project(s) would you describe as positive or best practice?
- Negative lessons – what 3 things from the project(s) have worked less well, or might you change?
- How are transferable are the key lessons learned to similar types of project?

## 6. Future and Sustainability

- Will the project and/or activity need to continue beyond the lifetime of TYS funding? – what evidence is there of continuing need?
- If project activity stops:
  - Will the output/completed project be maintained to the quality created (how?)
  - will formal/informal networks that have been created remain?
  - Who will lead/co-ordinate these networks?
  - Will there still be benefits arising as a result of the project?
  - What types of benefits?
  - How will you ensure these benefits are sustainable?
- Have any future funding sources been identified?
- Is future activity or maintenance of existing projects likely to be mainstreamed?
- Has the project resulted in mainstream services being delivered differently in the local area?