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*SHAPING ENGAGED, COHESIVE AND HAPPY COMMUNITIES:
THE ROLE OF GROUNDWORK*

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The challenge the Place Survey presents

The results of the 2008 Place Survey has reiterated many of the challenges public authorities, service deliverers and local places face when it comes to democratic renewal, institutional mistrust, community cohesion, and public service delivery. The Place Survey, undertaken as part of the Government's commitment to delivering better outcomes for local people and places, forms a key element of the local government performance management regime, including the monitoring of locally reflective indicators and Local Area Agreement targets. Undertaken every two years, the Place Survey serves the purpose of gathering local residents' perceptions about:

- the place in which they live;
- the services they receive;
- the involvement they have in local decision making;
- the extent to which people 'get on' and interact in the communities in which they live.

On paper, the Place Survey is a strong mechanism for local authorities to demonstrate the positive work which they and others undertake in their local areas whilst also presenting the opportunity to consult and engage with communities and utilise opinions to shape and reshape service delivery. In reality, resident perceptions as demonstrated in the results of the 2008 Place Survey can also act as a mechanism to demonstrate community frustrations with local authority led service delivery and some of the core issues facing civil society in the UK today. Some of the headline results of the 2008 Place Survey were:

- only 33% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their local council provided value for money;
- only 29% of respondents felt they could influence decisions in their local area;
- only 14% of respondents were engaged in some form of civic participation;
- 80% of the population were satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

These results present mixed reading for both local and central government. On the one hand it looks like people were largely satisfied with the place in which they live, perhaps reflecting the investment that has gone into physical regeneration and neighbourhood renewal over the last twelve years. On the other hand the results in relation to involvement in local decision making and community empowerment look to be low.

1.2 The role of Groundwork in place and perception

The Place Survey is meant to be about detailing what residents think about the areas in which they live, how they interact with other members of the community, and what they think about services delivered by a range of providers. This is reflective of a string of government policies, most notably Comprehensive Area Assessment, which have moved towards local area monitoring rather than local authority monitoring. Almost inevitably, however, the focus for perception always seems to slip back to the local authority and their performance.

Given the marketisation of service delivery through compulsory competitive tendering, best value, commissioning and procurement, and Local Area Agreements, the local authority is not the only service deliverer in place. Indeed a range of public, private and third sector organisations now deliver services in a locality and directly and indirectly contribute to community perceptions about place, services and empowerment.

Groundwork are one such service and project deliverer which can both directly and indirectly contribute to people's perceptions about the place in which they live and the extent to which they are empowered to contribute to wider decision making. Groundwork undertakes a host of project and service activities which contribute to improving the physical and environmental make-up of place. These activities are however importantly undertaken with the local community in mind and empowered to lead on projects. A significant proportion of Groundwork's projects are to some degree embedded in considerations relating to community empowerment, increasing civic participation, enabling community cohesion and increasing community influence over decision making.

The four considerations highlighted above are all important elements of the Place Survey and as such Groundwork should be viewed as an organisation that can contribute towards both improving people's perceptions of the place in which they live and their engagement in democratic renewal and civil society.

1.3 About this research

This research, delivered as part of Groundwork UK's membership agreement with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), seeks to demonstrate and evidence the role of Groundwork in contributing to people's perceptions about place and civic involvement. In this, CLES has examined a range of projects which affect people's perceptions, including projects which seek to:

- improve people's perception of the place in which they live;
- improve cohesion between communities, generations and cultures;
- improve people's ability to engage in local decision making;
- improve people's active citizenry and civic participation.

As a precursor to the examination of Groundwork approaches to affecting community perceptions, the research firstly examines in further detail the results of the Place Survey 2008 and its links to the wider prevailing policy framework before assessing exactly why resident perceptions are important to service delivery decisions and place. Each of the Groundwork approaches to affecting community perceptions are then evidenced with a case study of activity from a specific Trust.

2 ABOUT THE PLACE SURVEY

2.1 Place Survey: A policy background

The Place Survey forms part of the Government's commitment to improving the quality of life in places and delivering better public services in localities. It is framed within the 'new' National Indicator Set which formed a core part of the Local Government White Paper *'Strong and Prosperous Communities'* from 2006. The 'new' National Indicator Set was introduced as part of a wider restructure of government performance management of local government and of the process of Local Area Agreements.

The number of indicators local authorities were required to report upon was cut from somewhere between 600 and 1,200 to 198. Whilst local authorities have to monitor and report progress against each of the 198 indicators to central government via the Government Offices for the Regions, 35 can be set as performance targets in the Local Area Agreement. The 'new' National Indicator Set contains a variety of measures of performance across a host of themes, including:

- safer and stronger communities;
- health;
- education;
- local economies;
- the environment.

For the first time however these are not just collectable indicators based upon service delivery, but instead collected through a range of mechanisms, including in relation to the performance of local partners and importantly the perceptions local people have about the place in which they live, the services which they receive and the interactions they have with other local people and local decision makers.

The 198 indicators were announced as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review, with the expectation that they be implemented from April 2008. The first new Local Area Agreements with up to 35 performance targets were signed off by central government in July 2008. Of the 198 national indicators, 20 were initially designated as requiring collection through citizen perceptions, with an expectation that at least one perceptive indicator be included in the Local Area Agreement as a performance target. The Place Survey is effectively the mechanism the Government has implemented to monitor performance against these 20 indicators.

The Place Survey forms part of a wider shift in performance management away from a sole focus upon the local authority to one based upon the local area. This chimes with the notion of local partnerships, the notion of local authorities being enablers of service delivery, and the switch in policy from Comprehensive Performance Assessment to Comprehensive Area Assessment. Indeed the predecessor to the Place Survey, namely Best Value Performance Indicators, largely asked local residents their thoughts and views about the local authority. The Place Survey is far more area focused.

2.2 Place Survey: How does it work?

The Place Survey is now the sole mechanism for collecting resident perceptions at the local level. This reduces the burden both upon local authorities and citizens. As such, the local authority has responsibility for organising, administering and monitoring the results of the Place Survey, utilising the 20 indicators and some set questions as a basis. The focus for the Place Survey, undertaken every two years, is upon the local area and it is intended to be:

- relevant to anyone living in the area;
- not specific to any one agency or service;
- not specific to any particular client group.

Following a period of consultation, the number of indicators collected through the Place Survey was reduced from 20 to 18, with this final set of indicators detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Indicators measured as part of the Place Survey

Indicator	Indicator description
NI 1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
NI 2	% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
NI 3	Civic participation in the local area
NI 4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
NI 5	Overall/general satisfaction with local area
NI 6	Participation in regular volunteering
NI 17	Perceptions of anti social behaviour
NI 21	Dealing with local concerns about anti social behaviour and crime issues by police and other local services
NI 22	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area
NI 23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration
NI 27	Understanding of local concerns about anti social behaviour and crime issues
NI 37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area
NI 41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem
NI 42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem
NI 119	Self-reported measure of people's overall health and well-being
NI 138	Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood
NI 139	The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home
NI 140	Fair treatment by local services

2.3 Place Survey: The results from 2008

The results of the 2008 Place Survey were released in summer 2009. The results are based upon information collected against the above 18 national indicators for 152 county councils, metropolitan district councils, London boroughs and unitary authorities. A number of the results provide interesting reading for local authorities and indeed for partners such as Groundwork. As stated in the introduction, Groundwork has an important role to play at the local level through project and service activity in improving citizen perception and related service delivery, democratic renewal and community cohesion. The core results of the survey are detailed further in the following sub-sections.

2.3.1 NI 5 – a positive view of the local area

In relation to NI 5, 80% of respondents to the Place Survey were either very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This varied slightly by place with the lowest levels of satisfaction being in London (75%) and the highest levels of satisfaction being in the South West (85%). This is a relatively positive reading suggesting that people are largely happy with the neighbourhood, area or authority in which they live.

2.3.2 NI 2 – an average sense of belonging in the neighbourhood

Happiness with the local area and sense of belonging to a neighbourhood differs. Happiness with an area may well be related to the physical look of an area or the services on offer; with sense of belonging being more about interactions that take place within that neighbourhood with other people, service providers and decision makers. In relation to NI 2 therefore, 59% of respondents to the Place Survey felt very or fairly strongly that they belonged to their immediate neighbourhood. Again, there were regional variations, with the highest levels of sense of belonging being in the South West and the North East (both 62%) and the lowest being in London (52%).

2.3.3 Poor levels of satisfaction with local councils and the value for money they provide

Despite the Place Survey rhetoric suggesting it being about the 'local area' rather than the 'local authority', the survey still asks a question about levels of satisfaction with the local council and about the value for money they provide. This is not particularly related to any of the 18 national indicators but is instead more of an overarching question. Only 45% of respondents to the Place Survey were either satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way their council was run, with only 33% strongly agreeing or agreeing that their council provided value for money.

2.3.4 NI 4 – poor levels of influence in local decision making

Despite significant investment in recent years in community consultation, community empowerment networks and community involvement and engagement more generally, a poor proportion of respondents to the Place Survey felt they could influence, whether directly or indirectly, decisions affecting their local area. In relation to NI 4, only 29% of respondents to the Place Survey felt they could influence decisions in their locality. The proportion was highest in London at 35%. Even more worryingly, only 27% of respondents to the Place Survey felt they would like to be more involved in local decision making.

2.3.5 NI 6 – low levels of community volunteering

In relation to NI 6, the Place Survey asks about the unpaid help people give to their communities, such as at a youth or day centre or in helping to run an event or campaigning. The results are relatively low, with only 23% of the population stating they had helped out at least once a month in the previous 12 months. Again, there were regional variations with the lowest levels of volunteering being in the North East (19%) and the highest being in the South West (28%).

2.3.6 NI 3 – low levels of civic participation

In terms of formal involvement in local decision making, whether it be through serving as a local councillor or being part of a decision making body, the Place Survey collects perceptions about civic participation. In relation to NI 3 the survey found that 14% of the respondents were engaged in some sort of civic participation, with the highest levels of civic participation being in London (17%).

2.3.7 NI 1 and NI 23 – relatively positive respect and cohesion

NI 1 seeks to gather perception data around community cohesion and respect within communities. The results of the Place Survey found that a relatively high 76% of respondents felt that in their local area people from different backgrounds got on well together, with the highest being in the South West (80%) and the lowest being in Yorkshire and Humber (72%). In relation to NI 23, 31% of respondents to the Place Survey felt that people not treating one another with respect and consideration was a very big or fairly big problem. The highest levels of disrespect were in London (38%) with the lowest in the South West (25%).

2.3.8 NI 17 – there is still a challenge with anti social behaviour

Despite the programmes and projects of the Respect Agenda and numerous community safety initiatives from the police, perceptions of anti social behaviour remain relatively high as demonstrated in the Place Survey. 20% of respondents felt that anti social behaviour was a problem in their area, with the highest perception of problems being in London (26%) and the lowest being in the South West (15%).

2.3.9 NI 119 – relatively good levels of self reported health and well-being

In relation to NI 119, the Place Survey revealed that 76% of respondents felt their general health and well-being was good or very good. There was a relatively large variation between regions on this indicator, with only 70% of respondents in the North East describing their general health and well-being as being good or very good compared to 79% in the South East.

2.4 Interpreting the results of the Place Survey 2008

2.4.1 Community cohesion is a problem in certain localities

Whilst the overall picture of the Place Survey in relation to community cohesion is relatively positive as indicated in the 76% result for NI 1, when the results data is analysed at the local level a different picture emerges. Table 2 highlights the ten worst local authority areas when it comes to the proportion of respondents who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. There are a couple of interesting conclusions to be drawn from these results:

- ❑ the local authorities of Barking and Dagenham and Stoke on Trent are two localities which have seen increases in the presence of and the election of members of the British National Party (BNP) onto local councils;
- ❑ the authorities of Bradford and Oldham were two of the localities affected by the urban disturbances of 2001;
- ❑ authorities such as Tower Hamlets house large proportions of ethnic minority groups.

These are all key potential factors for low levels of perceived community cohesion in these localities.

Table 2: Worst 10 local authorities for NI 1

Name of authority	% who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	64.8
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council	64.6
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	62.5
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	61.6
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	61.0
Stoke on Trent City Council	60.8
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	57.2
Thurrock Council	54.2
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	50.4
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	49.1

2.4.2 Is there really a correlation between poor involvement in decision making and deprivation?

The England average figures for NI 4 around levels of current involvement in local decision making, was poor at 29% of respondents. When this figure was broken down further to specific localities, it became evident that there was not necessarily a correlation between low involvement in local decision making and deprivation, as is often suggested. Table 3 highlights the ten worst local authority areas when it comes to the perception of residents who agree that they can influence decisions in their local area and the relative position of that authority in the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

This lack of correlation is reflected in the example of North Somerset Council, which is the 6th worst performing area when it comes to resident involvement, but is ranked at 215 on the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The flipside of this is the London Borough of Hackney, which the Place Survey reveals was the top area when it came to resident involvement in local decision making. Hackney is however the 2nd most deprived local authority in England.

Table 3: Link between involvement in decision making and deprivation

Name of authority	% who agree that they can influence decisions in their local area	Authority position in IMD
City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council	23.2	66
Sefton Council	23.2	83
Wigan Council	23.0	67
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	22.7	45
North Lincolnshire Council	22.4	132
North Somerset Council	22.3	215
Plymouth City Council	22.2	76
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	22.1	41
Torbay Council	21.2	71
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	20.9	50

2.4.3 The correlation between area satisfaction and deprivation

The England average as a whole for the Place Survey for NI 5, percentage of people who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, was 80%. There was however a number of localities where levels of satisfaction were significantly lower than the average. Table 4 demonstrates the ten worst performing areas when it comes to satisfaction with the local area, together with the position of these localities on the Index of Multiple Deprivation. It is clear that there is a strong correlation between area dissatisfaction and deprivation, as evidenced by the example of Newham which is the worst local authority area when it comes to satisfaction as a place to live and the 6th most deprived local authority in the country.

Table 4: Area dissatisfaction and deprivation

Name of authority	% who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live	Authority position in IMD
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	67.2	56
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	66.7	42
Salford City Council	65.6	15
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	64.6	25
Thurrock Council	63.9	124
Slough Borough Council	63.6	115
London Borough of Waltham Forest	63.6	27
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	62.2	14
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	56.6	22
Newham London Borough Council	56.0	6

2.4.4 Over emphasis upon the local authority

Whilst the emphasis in the policy rhetoric of the Place Survey is clearly that it should be about the local area, the reality is that local people will continue to identify that it is predominantly the local authority that is responsible for the area and the services that they receive. This perception is not helped in questions contained in the Place Survey around satisfaction with the council generally, agreement over whether the council provides value for money, and satisfaction with council service provision.

Indeed, many of the services named as being delivered by the council have often sometimes been outsourced to large private contractors or through procurement let to a host of other public, private and third sector organisations. The results of the Place Survey regarding local authorities should therefore not be looked upon too harshly. If we are to be serious about performance management being about the area rather than the authority, clearer lines of accountability need to be drawn in processes such as the Place Survey.

2.4.5 Evidencing the problem of democratic deficit and inactive citizenship

The Place Survey has served the purpose of providing hard evidence of the problems we have in the United Kingdom with regard to democratic deficit, community cohesion, inactive citizenship and non-civic participation. These issues all contribute to considerations around deprivation, social capital, declining local economies and intergenerational mistrust. It is evident from the findings that more needs to be done, both in policy terms to reinvigorate the appetite of citizens to become involved in local decision making and wider civic issues, and in project terms by providing people with the skills required to become active citizens.

3 WHY DO RESIDENT PERCEPTIONS MATTER?

Section 2 of this research report provided an overview and interpretation of the results of the 2008 Place Survey. This included analysis of resident perceptions around:

- the area in which they live;
- the services which they receive from the local authority and others;
- the extent to which they feel the place in which they live is cohesive;
- the extent to which they are involved in local decision making.

In an era focused upon the individualisation and personalisation of services, particularly with regard to issues such as welfare reform and upon engaging and empowering communities to shape their lifestyle and localities, perceptions of residents and processes such as the Place Survey are incredibly important to a range of agendas.

3.1 Perceptions enable needs to be identified

The perceptions of communities are incredibly important in identifying community needs and issues. If public sector bodies, particularly local authorities, are unaware of what is required in a community they are unable to provide tailored and responsive services. The third sector is well briefed in understanding community needs. Often based within a small geographical area or serving the needs of a specific sector of a community, third sector organisations are adept at identifying need and community issues.

3.2 Perceptions provide feedback on the quality or otherwise of services

The perceptions of residents have long been utilised to provide feedback upon the quality of services delivered through the public sector and by contractors or specialist project deliverers. Perception gathering has largely come in the form of surveying or door-to-door enquiries and can provide the means by which communities can provide feedback on the quality or otherwise of services. Again, relating to the point around the move towards individualised and personalised services, perceptions provide a strong mechanism to shape and reshape service provision.

3.3 Perceptions enable geographical areas to be targeted for support

Linked to the point around the identification of community needs and issues, the gathering of community perceptions can also identify significant gaps in service delivery provision at the local level. This is important not only for mainstream service provision but also for the geographical targeting of funding provided through area based and other special initiatives.

3.4 Perceptions are important for local democratic renewal

The gathering of community perceptions about the place where they live, the services they receive, their involvement in decision making and their interactions in the local community are important activities in the process of democratic renewal. Simply involving the community in surveys is a form of community engagement and can potentially lead to greater empowerment and participation at the local level in order to make change happen.

3.5 Perceptions provide evidence of cohesion or respect

In an increasingly multi-cultural society in the UK, it is becoming more important that communities interact across cultures and generations. Perception data, such as that gathered through the Place Survey can provide useful evidence, particularly at the neighbourhood level, of the extent to which there is cohesion and respect within communities.

4 POLICY CONTEXT

The Place Survey is rooted in a wider government agenda designed to empower communities in local decision making to:

- increase the powers of local government;
- improve central/local relations;
- renew local democracy.

The Strengthening Local Democracy Consultation from the Department for Communities and Local Government is the latest attempt by the Government to enhance democratic renewal over the last ten years. The rhetoric of each of the policy developments described below is upon engaging communities about services, empowering communities to engage in local decision making, and strengthening the role of local government.

4.1 Engagement through partnership: Local Government Act 2000

The Local Government Act 2000 legislated for the formulation of Local Strategic Partnerships. These all encompassing partnerships were designed to bring together representatives of the public, private and community sector to discuss issues of local concern and enable more effective local decisions to be made. The perceptions, views and concerns of communities were designed to be fed into the Local Strategic Partnership through voluntary and community sector infrastructure bodies and, in neighbourhood renewal funded areas, through special purpose vehicles in the form of Community Empowerment Networks.

4.2 Engagement through decision-makers: Local Government White Paper 2006

The Local Government White Paper 2006 recognised that local public services needed to continue to improve and in order for this to happen local authorities and their partners and leaders needed greater powers and freedoms to meet the needs of their communities and tackle issues of exclusion and deprivation. Indeed, the linkage between local government and community, and the empowerment of the latter was a key overriding theme of the Local Government White Paper. Many of the proposals related to increasing engagement between elected officials and communities through the Community Call for Action. The Paper also included proposals to create more parish councils at the local level, and review the process of Local Area Agreements in order to make the target setting process more locally reflective.

4.3 Empowering communities: Empowerment White Paper 2008

The Community Empowerment White Paper 2008 was focused upon democratic renewal and set out government plans on *'passing more and more power to more and more people using every practical means possible'*. The focus was very much upon providing the mechanisms by which communities could be more empowered to engage with local decision making and become more active in their community. Proposals were both focused upon local authorities - such as a duty to promote democracy through dedicated funding to develop the activities of community anchor organisations; and upon the community - such as a raft of measures designed to stimulate community involvement in decision making, including the promotion of participatory budgeting.

4.4 Empowering through local government: Strengthening Local Democracy Consultation 2009

The Strengthening Local Democracy Consultation is the latest central government policy proposal seeking to reinvigorate community empowerment, local democracy and strengthen local democracy. Unlike the focus of the Empowerment White Paper upon community, the focus of this consultation is very much upon the role of local authorities as key actors in local democratic renewal, acting as the means through which citizens can affect their lives and their communities. This is reflected in the proposals of consultation which seek to:

- increase local government's powers of scrutiny;
- reconsider the powers required by local authorities;
- assess the powers required by local authorities to tackle climate change;
- consider the accountability arrangements for sub-regional partnerships;
- improve central/local relations and the transfer of power.

5 THE ROLE OF GROUNDWORK IN ENGAGING COMMUNITIES AND AFFECTING PERCEPTIONS

5.1 The diversity of Groundwork projects

Groundwork UK have an important role to play at the local level through project and service activity in improving citizen perception and related service delivery, democratic renewal and community cohesion. Groundwork Trusts around the UK offer a host of activities that both directly and indirectly contribute towards improving people's perceptions about the communities in which they live and the extent to which they feel empowered to influence local decision making and to engage in civic activity. These may be activities that physically improve local areas, making for a greener and safer environment, to activities that promote attachment to place, such as community heritage projects. To develop an understanding of Groundwork's role in engaging communities and affecting perceptions, we have examined the following Groundwork projects:

- ❑ Groundwork Greater Nottingham: Getting a Taste for History;
- ❑ Groundwork Greater Nottingham: Talk Sneinton;
- ❑ Groundwork London: Up to No Good;
- ❑ Groundwork Kent and Medway: Walkie Talkies;
- ❑ Groundwork London: Past on the Doorstep, Future in your Hands;
- ❑ Groundwork London: Windmill Park Play Area;
- ❑ Groundwork Black Country: Bumps and Babies Garden;
- ❑ Groundwork Merseyside: Halton Neighbourhood Pride;
- ❑ Groundwork Oldham and Rochdale: Alt Green Scheme;
- ❑ Groundwork Merseyside: Antonia Street project;
- ❑ Groundwork Lancashire West and Wigan: Youth Works;
- ❑ Groundwork Greater Nottingham: Scargill Walk and Hopkins Court Linear Park;
- ❑ Groundwork Oldham and Rochdale: v@groundwork;
- ❑ Groundwork Wakefield: Portobello Neighbourhood Action Station.

From the analysis of the projects listed above, it is possible to develop a typology of approaches in which Groundwork engages communities and affects perceptions:

Approach 1	Improving cohesion between communities, generations and cultures
Approach 2	Promoting community engagement
Approach 3	Neighbourhood improvement programmes
Approach 4	Promoting democratic involvement and active citizenship

5.2 Approach 1 – improving cohesion between communities, generations and cultures

Groundwork undertakes a number of projects and activities that serve to improve cohesion between different sections of the community, generations and cultures. Simply being involved in a community activity and working alongside people from different cultural or generational backgrounds is likely to promote greater understanding between different groups. As such, many Groundwork projects will have the effect of promoting cohesion. As well as more holistic approaches, this research has also identified projects that have been developed with a more specific aim of promoting cohesion. These projects are detailed in Table 5, including discussion of some of the advantages of this approach.

Table 5: Improving cohesion between communities, generations and cultures

Approach	Project name	Groundwork Trust	About the project	The pros of the approach
Improving cohesion between communities, generations and cultures	Getting a Taste for History	Groundwork Greater Nottingham	Getting a Taste for History aims to give young people a living experience of how people coped during World War 2. This involved learning to cook with rations and how to grow vegetables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides children and young people with an interactive way to learn about history. • Gave older people an opportunity to share their experiences and feel valued in the community. • Brought together residents from different generations and cultures.
	Talk Sneinton	Groundwork Greater Nottingham	Talk Sneinton was a project that celebrated the diversity of accents and dialects in Sneinton, exploring the population movements which led to the current rich mix of people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings people from different backgrounds and generations together. • Celebrates and raises awareness of diversity in Sneinton. • Promotes an attachment to place. • The project outputs, including a book and CD, will be a future local and oral history resource.
	Up to No Good!	Groundwork London	Up to No Good! combined heritage and the arts to break down the barriers between young people and older residents living on six estates in North London. The project ran over three years and involved six individual projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds understanding between groups and helps to promote inter-generational cohesion. • Raised awareness of local heritage. • Provided learning opportunities for younger and older people. • Reduction in ageist stereotypes. • Increased awareness of cultural differences. • Encouraged engagement with vulnerable and isolated older people.

5.2.1 Case Study 1: Getting a Taste for History, Groundwork Greater Nottingham

About the project

This three year project was established in 2007 with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The aim of Getting a Taste for History was to give children and young people a practical insight into what life was like during World War 2 by drawing on the experiences of older people in the community. The project brought together the Radford local history society, a primary school and a local play centre. The project involves older people going into school and delivering information sessions and hands on activities, such as cooking with rations, planting and tending to a garden allotment, and crafts. The project had a number of tangible outcomes, including the production of a World War 2 recipe book, a DVD and an exhibition.

Core objectives of the project

From an interview with the People Programmes Manager at Groundwork Greater Nottingham, the following objectives were identified:

- ❑ to 'bring history to life' and give children and young people a practical experience of what life was like in wartime Britain, providing a wider educational experience;
- ❑ to encourage communication and greater understanding between different generations;
- ❑ to encourage community cohesion.

Advantages of the projects as an approach to engaging communities and affecting perceptions

The Getting a Taste for History project is deemed to have the following advantages:

- ❑ **providing young people with an insight into local history** – the project aimed to provide children and young people with a hands on experience of what life was like during World War 2. This not only complements their school work but also helps develop a sense of shared local heritage;
- ❑ **an opportunity for people from different generations to mix** – in bringing together older people and children and young people, this project helped encourage interaction between different generations. According to the People Programmes Manager, some of the older people had expressed hesitancy at entering schools, but found they enjoyed spending time with the children;
- ❑ **provides older people with an opportunity to be involved in the community** – the project also gave the older people involved a chance to meet new people, develop new skills and feel valued in the community;
- ❑ **raised perceptions of the area** – the project took place in an area of Nottingham that had a negative reputation, however, Getting a Taste for History provided a 'good news story' for the area;
- ❑ **an opportunity for people from different cultural backgrounds to mix** – another positive aspect of this project is that it brought together older white residents with children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. This helped to promote greater understanding and stronger community cohesion.

Negatives of the project as an approach to engaging communities and affecting perceptions

This was deemed a successful way of affecting residents' perceptions, however the following challenge was raised:

- ❑ **internal Groundwork challenges** – delivering this project to schedule was the only challenge identified.

5.3 Approach 2: Promoting community engagement

As demonstrated earlier in this report, the ambition to promote community engagement is a key theme to have emerged from government policy in recent years, and there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of encouraging engagement at the local level. Community engagement broadly refers to the extent to which individuals are involved in community life. This includes involvement in local decision making processes and subsequently the extent to which people feel they can influence the destiny of their local areas, both of which can have a positive impact on residents' perceptions of where they live. Many Groundwork projects foster community engagement, a number of which are detailed in Table 6.

Table 6: Promoting community engagement

Approach	Project name	Groundwork Trust	About the project	The pros of the approach
Promoting community engagement	Walkie Talkies	Groundwork Kent and Medway	The scheme helps to employ two local residents to help spread a positive regeneration message and distribute current local community news. The Walkie Talkies act as walking notice boards, giving out information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides residents with an informal opportunity to find out more about what is happening in their area. • Breaks down barriers that currently prevent people from engaging in community life. • Provides an opportunity to create new and rewarding jobs for members of the community. • Offers a chance for members of the community to share their concerns about their local area and have their voice heard. • Encourages the development of social networks.
	Past on Your Doorstep, Future in your Hands	Groundwork London	This project was established in response to the concern that many people, including young people, feel no sense of local belonging or community engagement. Around 100 young people from 6 different schools were involved in the Past on Your Doorstep, Future in Your Hands project which set out to engage young people at risk of exclusion in the history of law and crime and punishment in their area. All of the young people chosen to be part of the project were considered to be at risk of offending or exclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted a sense of attachment to place amongst young people at risk of offending or exclusion from school. • Encouraged young people to become engaged in their local community in a positive way. • Provided young people with an opportunity to spend time with class mates that they might not usually mix with, thus promoting cohesion.
	Windmill Park Play Area	Groundwork London	This project was established between Groundwork London and a host of local partners as a direct response to the need for new play provision in the Windmill Park area of the London Borough of Ealing. Community engagement with children and young people involving a range of activities was used to design and develop the play facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engagement of young people in play provision design has fostered a sense of respect and ownership for the play areas thus reducing anti social behaviour. • The range of activities involved in the design of the play areas was successful in engaging children and young people of all ages in neighbourhood improvement. • The focused approach of the project meant that children and young people were the main users of the project.

5.3.1 Case study 2: Windmill Park Play Area

About the project

The Windmill Park Play Area was set up by Groundwork London with a raft of other partners as a result of the direct recognition that some of the most deprived areas of the London Borough of Ealing had very poor access to play provision. Over previous years, play provision in the Windmill Park area had gradually become derelict and vandalised and had eventually been taken away and concreted over. This meant not only did children and young people have nowhere to play but also that this scenario exacerbated issues of anti social behaviour in the area.

Groundwork London recognised that no single agency in Ealing was taking the lead on developing play provision in the Windmill Park area. Working in partnership with Registered Social Landlords and the local authority, and utilising Lottery and neighbourhood renewal funding, Groundwork London sought to develop new play facilities in the Windmill Park area. This project was not just about providing new play facilities it was about engaging the local community, particularly children and young people in the area, as to the type of facility they would like and also enabling the community to spend public money on things that they really needed and wanted.

Three play areas were developed through engagement with the community largely reflecting the needs of three age groups. A soft play area was designed and developed for young children, an adventure play area was designed and developed for older children and a sport focused play area was designed and developed for teenagers.

Core objectives of the project

The Windmill Park Play Area project had three core objectives:

- ❑ to provide some physical play provision for the Windmill Park Play Area;
- ❑ to use community engagement to shape the design and development of the play facilities;
- ❑ to use community engagement to tackle other issues such as anti social behaviour.

Advantages of the project as an approach to engaging communities and affecting perceptions

The community engagement approach used at Windmill Park had a number of advantages:

- ❑ **not a generic approach to community engagement** – unlike many community engagement type projects, the Windmill Park Play Area was not targeted at the whole community, it was very much targeted at engaging children and young people and their families. This targeted approach enabled up to 50 children and young people to be engaged with the project and made the objectives of what the partners wanted to achieve very clear. It meant the sole objective of creating more effective play provision in the area was met;
- ❑ **a range of activities used to engage** – Groundwork London and partners used a range of engagement techniques to engage the children and young people of the Windmill Park area to design and develop the play areas. These included graffiti sessions, workshops, street activities and visits to other play areas. These techniques were all positive in engaging the children and young people;
- ❑ **engagement has fostered respect** – prior to the investment of Groundwork London and partners in play provision in the Windmill Park area, the existing provision was derelict and disrespected. The engagement of particularly young people in the design of the new facilities has fostered a sense of respect and ownership for the facilities, leading directly to reductions in anti social behaviour.

Negatives of the project as an approach to engaging communities and affecting perceptions

The community engagement approach used at Windmill Park had very few negatives, bar the recognition that engagement requires a lot of hard work on the part of project staff. Successful engagement is dependent upon effective consultation and time spent with the local community.

Impacts of project and summary

The Windmill Park Play Area has had a number of impacts upon and benefits for the local community. The area now has three well-used and well presented play areas. The engagement approach adopted has led to decreases in anti social behaviour on the estate and a range of other indirect outcomes in relation to education. The Windmill Park area is much improved aesthetically as a result of the project. The project has also contributed to improvements in key indicators which the London Borough of Ealing are reporting upon and has also enhanced the reputation of Groundwork London. The project has received a number of national awards for effectively engaging communities.

5.4 Approach 3: Neighbourhood improvement projects

Improving the physical and environmental aspects of a community can go a long way in improving residents' perceptions of the place in which they live. Groundwork has a long history of delivering projects that engender physical and environmental improvements that make for cleaner, safer, greener neighbourhoods. By making areas more attractive and safer, individuals are likely to feel a stronger attachment to, and greater satisfaction with, their community. Table 7 details Groundwork's neighbourhood improvement projects that contribute towards improving residents' perceptions of the place in which they live.

Table 7: Neighbourhood improvement programmes

Approach	Project name	Groundwork Trust	About the project	The pros of the approach
Neighbourhood improvement programmes	Bumps and Babies Garden	Groundwork Black Country	This project involved the creation of a garden on an underused piece of land in a housing scheme for young parents. The garden provided young parents and their children with an attractive space to play and meet other residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved residents' perceptions of where they live by creating a more attractive outdoor communal space. Provided a space for young parents to socialise and thus reduce isolation. Encouraged healthier lifestyles. Acts as a focal point for integrating new residents.
	Halton Neighbourhood Pride	Groundwork Merseyside	The Halton Neighbourhood Pride Initiative (NPI) was developed in June 2003 in response to community concerns about the lack of community facilities, recreation facilities, social events and a general lack of pride in their neighbourhoods. The objective was to generate a mixture of projects and activities that would bring about physical change through intensive community development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groundwork Merseyside adopted a 'hands on' approach to ensure the community's engagement in the project. This included door-to-door surveys, focus groups and questionnaires. The project brought underused and derelict land back into use. Community involvement has enabled residents to have a greater say in issues and the ability to develop new initiatives. Activities such as the bike project and art club have developed positive links between different sectors and generations of the community. Resident attitudes about their areas have changed and they are proving more willing to use spaces on the estate. Community pride and spirit have been boosted.
	Alt Green Scheme	Groundwork Oldham and Rochdale	The Alt Green Scheme is an 18 month project aimed at improving the environmental quality of Alt estate whilst providing diversionary activities for Alt residents. It aims to improve community cohesion and liveability of the neighbourhood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves the physical environment by removing rubbish from the area. The project offers youth involvement activities and rewards to encourage young people to become involved in the physical improvements of their areas. All members of the community benefit from a cleaner and more attractive place to live.

Approach	Project name	Groundwork Trust	About the project	The pros of the approach
Neighbourhood improvement programmes	Antonia Street Project Bootle	Groundwork Merseyside	The residents of Antonia Street in Bootle had become increasingly unhappy with levels of fly tipping in their area. Antonio Street residents and the wider community approached Groundwork wanting help to transform the derelict space into a communal garden for everyone living in and around the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By tackling levels of fly tipping in the area, residents’ perceptions of their community were improved. • Groundwork Merseyside also tackled the negative stereotypes associated with the area, thus helping to develop community pride and a sense of social inclusion.
	Youth Works	Groundwork Lancashire West and Wigan	Groundwork Lancashire West and Wigan worked with the tenants and residents association to develop the Youth Works project after a feasibility study by Crime Concern identified that Worsley Mesnes would benefit from a youth diversionary project. Groundwork Lancashire West and Wigan managed to secure Big Lottery fair shares funding for a three year period, providing two workers, and a project manager; and enabled a bookies on the precinct to be turned into a youth hub site, designed by local young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted active citizenship amongst the young people who were involved in designing the hub site. • Helped to tackle negative perceptions of the area. • May have contributed towards reducing anti social behaviour.

5.4.1 Case study 3: Bumps and Babies Garden project, Groundwork Black Country

About the project

Tanners Court in Walsall is a Caldmore Housing supported housing scheme for young women (16-25) who have housing needs as well as requiring support to achieve a level of independence and become confident parents. The service is also available to young fathers who want to be involved in the family and require support to assist with their parenting skills. Tanners Court approached Groundwork Black Country in November 2008 to see if they could support them with improving their surroundings; they wanted a place to play and relax outside. The existing facilities (a small ring fenced lawn in the corner of the car park) were not used and the residents commented that they found the environment bland and cold and that they'd rather stay in their flats. This was one factor leading to isolation and lack of community cohesion between the residents. Although there is a small common room, the scheme manager felt they were missing opportunities to bond with each other and share experiences, coupled with a tendency to spend almost all of their time indoors. The staff wanted to create an opportunity for the residents to be involved in improving their environment and learn the health and well-being benefits of natural play in the outdoors. Caldmore Housing was unsuccessful in their application for European funding, so Groundwork Black Country agreed to help them look for alternative funding. They were later awarded £1,000 from the Bright Ideas Fund (part of the funding stream for the Walsall Children's Fund Programme) for tools and materials.

Core objectives of the project

From an interview with the Community Project Officer at Groundwork Black Country, the following core objectives were identified:

- ❑ to engage young parents in transforming an underused space into a garden that all the residents could use. Prior to the project, the area was described as 'depressing' and discouraged the young parents and their children from spending time outside leading to isolation and a lack of communication between residents;
- ❑ to improve the environment by planting shrubs, flowers and herbs to encourage and support the local wildlife;
- ❑ to give young parents the opportunity to influence local decisions and have their voices heard as to how they want to improve their local environment;
- ❑ to provide a space for young parents and their children to spend time with each other and with other young parents and children.

Advantages of the project as an approach to engaging communities and affecting perceptions

The Bumps and Babies Garden project improved residents' perceptions of where they live in a number of ways:

- ❑ **making the housing scheme a more pleasant place to live** – first and foremost, the project was successful in making the Caldmore Housing supported housing scheme a more attractive and appealing place to live. Residents have commented that it makes a real difference to look out of the window and see the garden, as opposed to just concrete;
- ❑ **providing opportunities for natural play** – not only does the garden improve the appearance of the community and encourage wildlife, it also offers a space for 'natural play' for children. The garden is a space where young parents and their children can play, learn and enjoy being in the open air;
- ❑ **improved the reputation of the area** – the housing scheme previously had a bad reputation within the wider community; however the development of the garden helped to change the perceptions of both residents and the wider community;
- ❑ **provided a focal point for integrating new residents** – the housing scheme is characterised by a high turnover of residents which can potentially threaten cohesion. However, improving the garden has proved effective in providing a focal point for integrating new residents into the community;

- ❑ encouraged residents to communicate and get to know one another – before the improvement of the outdoor space, there were limited opportunities for the young parents to meet other residents leading to feelings of isolation. Creating the garden helped to improve this situation by providing a space for the young parents to meet new people;
- ❑ a sustainable project that will last beyond Groundwork’s involvement – the Bumps and Babies Garden project is a sustainable project thanks to the enthusiasm of Caldmore Housing staff and residents. The project demonstrates the long term impact that a small grant and the support from an organisation like Groundwork can have. Moreover, by involving residents in the development of the garden, the young parents had a sense of ownership over the project that will hopefully help to ensure its longevity.

Negatives of the project as an approach to engaging communities and affecting perceptions

The Bumps and Babies Garden project has been deemed a very successful project, however the following challenge was raised:

- ❑ encouraging involvement from all residents – whilst the majority of young people were happy to get involved in the project, some residents showed some reluctance and risked dampening enthusiasm.

5.5 Approach 4: Promoting democratic involvement and active citizenship

Individuals are unlikely to have an attachment to where they live if they do not feel that they are involved in local democratic decision making. Therefore, the final approach in this typology of engaging communities and improving perceptions of place is that of promoting democratic involvement and active citizenship. Table 8 highlights examples of Groundwork projects that aim to encourage members of the community to become involved in their local community, either through becoming active volunteers or through local democratic involvement.

Table 8: Promoting democratic involvement and active citizenship

Approach	Project name	Groundwork Trust	About the project	The pros of the approach
Promoting democratic involvement and active citizenship	Scargill Walk and Hopkins Court Linear Park	Groundwork Greater Nottingham	The aim of this project was to engage residents in the improvement of a public space in order to make it a safer and more pleasant place to live. Through a public consultation, Groundwork Greater Nottingham engaged community members and other interested parties in decision making to help encourage pride in the local area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped residents, particularly older people, to reclaim a space that had been associated with anti social behaviour. By making physical improvements to the area, residents' attachment to their neighbourhood was enhanced. By involving the public in a consultation, residents developed a sense of pride in the project and community and also felt they could shape the outcome of the project.
	v@groundwork	Groundwork Oldham and Rochdale	The v@groundwork programme started in September 2006 with the aim of engaging young people aged 16-25 in volunteering within their local communities. The programme has provided a wide range of opportunities from physical conservation work to environmental art projects across both Oldham and Rochdale Boroughs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers young people an opportunity to get involved in their local community, thus promoting active citizenship. Project activity often helps to improve the physical and environmental quality of the community, thus improving residents' perceptions of place.
	Portobello Neighbourhood Action Station	Groundwork Wakefield	The Neighbourhood Action Station is a mobile facility which offers advice and services from a wide range of agencies including West Yorkshire Police, Wakefield District Partnership, Victim Support and Wakefield and District Housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established links between agencies and young people in the area. Engaged with young people on the Portobello housing estate via two existing local youth groups.

5.5.1 Case study 4: Scargill Walk and Hopkins Court Linear Park, Groundwork Greater Nottingham

About the project

This project was developed in response to the concerns of local residents and councillors about anti social behaviour and drug abuse in a pedestrianised space in a residential area. The area had gained a 'bad reputation', particularly amongst older residents. To reclaim this space for the benefit of the community, Groundwork Greater Nottingham set out to develop a linear park between Scargill Walk and Hopkins Court and create a more pleasant environment for residents. As well as the physical improvements to the area, the project also sought to promote democratic involvement and active citizenship, which was achieved through Groundwork Greater Nottingham's community consultation process. The consultation process engaged with various groups that had an interest in the area, including residents, the police, the fire service and landowners. This process involved collecting views on what people thought were the challenges facing the area, which in turn informed the concept design. This design was then taken back to the interested parties and once again their thoughts and feelings were gathered. The project, which was recently completed, was funded by Nottingham County Council's Building Better Communities fund.

Core objectives of the project

From an interview with the Programme Manager, it became apparent that the project had two key objectives:

- 1) to improve residents' perceptions of their surroundings and to help reduce local levels of anti social behaviour;
- 2) to promote active citizenship and democratic involvement by including local people in decision making. It was hoped that if local people felt they had helped to shape the project, they would take ownership of the area and develop a sense of local pride.

Advantages of the project as an approach to engaging communities and affecting perceptions

This project improved residents' perceptions of where they live in two key ways:

- ❑ **making the area a more pleasant place to live** – developing the park created a pleasant green space and challenged the perceptions that the area was an unsafe place. The project has only recently come to an end and, as such, it is too early to gauge the long term advantages of the project. However, initial reactions to the park have been highly positive, with older residents feeling more confident to use the space;
- ❑ **adopting a strong community consultation process** – the consultation process meant the local community were given a stake in how the project developed and therefore encouraged a stronger attachment to the project and the wider community, thus promoting levels of civic involvement.

Negatives of the project as an approach to engaging communities and affecting perceptions

Whilst early signs show the project has been successful in improving the appearance of the area and improving residents' perceptions of where they live, the following challenges were raised:

- ❑ **effective community consultation can be challenging** – Groundwork Greater Nottingham recognises that reaching out beyond the 'usual suspects', who are often already involved in civic society, can be difficult. This highlights the importance of holding public meetings and ensuring that all residents are aware that the consultation is taking place;
- ❑ **overcoming practical challenges** – Groundwork Greater Nottingham also faced a number of practical challenges during this project (e.g. managing negotiations with the land owner). As with many physical improvement projects, there are also concerns as to how the park will be maintained after Groundwork Greater Nottingham has left;
- ❑ **managing community expectations** – like all projects, the Scargill Walk and Hopkins Court Linear Park project was limited by budget. This meant that Groundwork Greater Nottingham needed to manage residents' expectations as to what the project could and would achieve.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The recent results of the 2008 Place Survey have really brought home the challenges that communities across the UK face with regard to community cohesion, civic and democratic engagement and active citizenship. The results show that in many localities the perceptions of communities and how they interact and engage with each other and the state are poor. However, Groundwork as a Federation, and at a local and sub-regional level through its network of Trusts, undertakes a number and variety of projects which seek to:

- improve cohesion between communities, generations and cultures;
- promote community engagement;
- foster neighbourhood improvement;
- promote democratic involvement and active citizenship.

This research has thus sought to demonstrate the role of Groundwork in shaping engaged, cohesive and happy communities, demonstrating the potential contribution of Groundwork to the perception indicators used in the Place Survey.

The conclusion summarises the contribution of the researched projects to the indicators of the Place Survey, together with providing a series of thoughts as to how Groundwork can take forward activities in relation to this agenda.

6.1 The link between Groundwork projects and Place Survey indicators

Table 9 demonstrates a simple way of correlating the projects highlighted throughout this research with the indicators contained in the Place Survey. It is clear that the projects examined correlate with a broad spectrum of the Place Survey indicators.

Table 9: Link between Groundwork projects and Place Survey indicators

Indicator number	Indicator description	Taste of history	Talk Sneinton	Up to no good	Walkie Talkies	Past on doorstep	Windmill Park play	Bumps and babies	Neighbourhood Pride	Alt Green Scheme	Antonia Street	Youth Works	Scargill Walks	v@ground work	Portobello Action
NI 1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓						
NI 2	% of people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
NI 3	Civic participation in the local area											✓		✓	✓
NI 4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality				✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
NI 5	Overall/general satisfaction with local area			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
NI 6	Participation in regular volunteering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NI 17	Perceptions of anti social behaviour						✓		✓			✓	✓		
NI 21	Dealing with local concerns about anti social behaviour and crime issues by police and other local services														
NI 22	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area														
NI 23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓					✓		
NI 27	Understanding of local concerns about anti social behaviour and crime issues						✓					✓	✓		
NI 37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area														
NI 41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem														
NI 42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem														
NI 119	Self-reported measure of people's overall health and well-being							✓							
NI 138	Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood	✓		✓					✓						
NI 139	The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home														
NI 140	Fair treatment by local services														

6.2 Recommendations

This research has highlighted a number of good practice case studies of Groundwork projects that are shaping engaged, cohesive and happy communities. Drawing on the findings from this research, it is possible to outline a number of recommendations that may inform future Groundwork activity, including:

- ❑ **continue to recognise the holistic nature of shaping engaged, cohesive and happy communities** – our research has shown that there are a number of different approaches that can be adopted to shape engaged, cohesive and happy communities, including improving community cohesion, promoting community engagement, neighbourhood improvement and promoting democratic involvement and active citizenship. However, ultimately, shaping engaged, cohesive and happy communities is a holistic endeavour. From examining the case studies included in this report, we have found that the most successful projects are those that combine elements of all four approaches (e.g. the Bumps and Babies Garden project was deemed particularly successful as it combined improving residents' environment with community engagement activity whilst also promoting active citizenship and community cohesion);
- ❑ **recognise the importance of the project's sustainability** – from the case studies examined in this report, it is clear that the projects that are most likely to have a long term impact on levels of engagement, cohesion and happiness are those that are sustainable and will thrive beyond Groundwork's involvement. Project sustainability can be enhanced by involving residents in the planning and design stages, as was the case with Scargill Walk and Hopkins Court Linear Park, thus encouraging a greater attachment to the project. In turn, this enthusiasm helps to ensure that the project is sustainable and able to affect long term improvements in the community;
- ❑ **continue to appreciate the value of community consultation** – related to the point above is the importance of Groundwork continuing to appreciate the value of community consultation. A number of the projects we examined involved the community in both planning and delivering the projects. This helps to ensure residents' connection with, and commitment to, the project. Not only does this help to ensure the project's longevity but also contributes towards promoting active citizenship and involvement in the community;
- ❑ **realise the role of Groundwork as a broker between local partners and the community** – Groundwork Trusts are well placed to act as brokers between local partners, such as local authorities and the police, and communities. Public bodies can sometimes seem inaccessible or intimidating to members of the community, however Groundwork Trusts have the potential to break down barriers and challenge community perceptions. Groundwork Trusts may also be an effective route by which public bodies can access members of the community;
- ❑ **the value of targeted approaches** – this research highlights a number of projects that have successfully shaped and engaged cohesive and happy communities by targeting a particular section of the community (e.g. the Windmill Play Area project aimed to engage with children and young people, whilst the Bumps and Babies Garden project set out to improve young parents' immediate environment). A targeted approach such as this can help to make the objectives of a project clear and focused;
- ❑ **continue to develop projects that challenge perceptions** – an important aspect of many of the projects considered in this research was their role in challenging perceptions; both residents' perceptions of a given area in a community and also perceptions between different groups in a community (e.g. the Getting a Taste for History project helped to develop relations between older members of the community and children and young people, encouraging greater communication and understanding between people from different ethnic backgrounds). Moreover, in acting as a 'good news story', the project also improved the wider community's perception of Radford.