

2018/19

Groundwork West Midlands Impact Report



About Groundwork West Midlands

Groundwork West Midlands is an incorporated charity working to transform lives in the UK's most disadvantaged communities. We are passionate about creating a future where every neighbourhood is thriving, every community is strong and able to shape its own destiny and no-one is held back by their background or circumstances.

We help people gain confidence and skills, get into training and work, lead more active lives and overcome significant challenges such as poverty, isolation, low skills and poor health. We work with businesses and communities to protect the environment and improve green spaces.

We are part of a federation of independent charities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland called Groundwork Trusts, supported by a national office called Groundwork UK.

Our teams are based in offices across the West Midlands delivering services where they are needed the most.



Objects and public benefit

Groundwork West Midlands charitable objects are set down in its Memorandum of Association dated June 9 2009. They commit us to delivering and promoting regeneration and sustainable development.

The 13 objects cover environmental conservation, social welfare, public education, urban and rural regeneration for public benefit, training and employment opportunities, housing, public amenities, historic buildings, recreational facilities, derelict land reclamation, public health, public safety and other means as may be determined by the Charity Commissioners.

Groundwork West Midlands exists primarily to provide public benefit. Specific benefits delivered in 2018–2019 are detailed in the Strategic Report section and provide evidence that the criteria for public benefit have been met. Groundwork West Midlands Trustees have referred to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the organisation’s objectives and planning future activities.

Our work is designed to address the needs of all sections of the community and we provide equal access to our services regardless of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation. For further details about our work visit **Groundwork West Midlands.** www.groundwork.org.uk/hubs/westmidlands/



Overview

Groundwork West Midlands is the community charity with a green heart. Our mission is for thriving, sustainable communities and our vision is of vibrant West Midlands communities where people and enterprise prosper.

We have been working for over 20 years to create stronger communities with better local environments, to tackle climate change and combat fuel poverty, to improve skills and get people back into work and inspire the next generation of community champions and green leaders.

We continue to deliver a rich tapestry of local projects, programmes and services that are transforming lives in local communities and helping more people get involved in taking action to improve their personal circumstances and the quality of life in their area.

Strategic objectives

Over the year we reviewed all parts of our business from the projects we deliver, to how we operate. In March 2019 Trustees approved a three year financial strategy underpinned by specific actions over 2019–2020 that will create a platform for future stability and growth. Our focus is for Groundwork West Midlands to be equipped to meet the continuing pressing needs of our communities, from business development and innovation, to agile, integrated and efficient delivery.



Our four strategic objectives are to:

1. Create better spaces and places
2. Improve people's prospects and lives
3. Enable sustainable living and working
4. Deliver efficient, quality services

Activity highlights

Performance measures 2018/19

Total year

74

Projects delivered

768

Community
organisations
supported

143

Public spaces improved

12,470

People benefiting from
improved public spaces

58,450

Square metres
of land improved

515,356

Square metres of land
maintained or actively
managed

341

Trees planted

159

Schools involved

346

Businesses supported

450

SMEs supported

434

People helped to reduce domestic energy use, water use and waste sent to landfill

7,934

Volunteers actively involved

16,461
hours

Volunteers actively involved

321

Business volunteers engaged

1,895
hours

Business volunteers engaged

£28,531

Value of volunteering

2,689

Formal qualifications gained

6,263

Number of young people supported to learn and achieve

714

Number of positive outcomes achieved by young people

185

Number of people supported into education, training or work

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Objective one: Creating better spaces and places

Access to good quality green space improves people's lives. We use these spaces to increase people's health and wellbeing, support children's educational and social development and create opportunities for people to come together.


Groundwork West Midlands delivers a diverse range of projects that empower local communities to use, improve and cherish their green spaces. We manage natural spaces, support 'Friends of' groups, teach children about environmental play and show people the joys of growing food. While the range of our projects is always evolving, the environment is at the heart of everything we do.

Open spaces

The Let's Play team at Groundwork West Midlands has been delivering exciting, fun and adventurous play activities to children in Oldbury, Tipton and Wednesbury since April 2017. Let's Play is aimed at children aged 6–12 years old (up to 16 with additional needs). All sessions are free to access, open to all and take place after-school and throughout school

holidays. Let's Play is funded by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and is part of their Go Play partnership.

Let's Play includes a range of activities such as creative, nature based team games, exploring and independence development. There have been nearly 10,000 participants since the programme began.



I enjoy everything here. I like the big soccer goals. If I wasn't here I'd be playing Xbox in my room.

I think Let's Play is awesome. There are loads of cool activities and we never stop having fun.

Maisie's story

When Maisie first attended Let's Play she was shy and withdrawn and due to this didn't want to attend. However, after chatting with the staff Maisie returned a few weeks later. During her time attending these sessions she has slowly built up her

confidence to the team and other young participants. Her favourite activities including craft and games.

Maisie's social skills have improved enormously and her mother could not thank the staff enough for the improvement made.

This has resulted in Maisie socialising more in school, thus establishing a group of friends, taking part in school activities and asking her teacher for help when struggling.

Let's hear it from the kids...

Land management

We currently provide land management services to land owners over a number of sites across the West Midlands utilising a specialist staff team of Countryside Rangers and both Community Engagement and Environmental Education specialists. This blend of skills adds value in achieving our aim of working with local communities to make their surroundings greener, safer and healthier and also to continually improve the quality of the ecology and therefore biodiversity of each site.

Tesco Bags of Help

Tesco Bags of Help is an exciting local community grant scheme where the money raised from the 5p bag charge is being used to fund thousands of local projects in communities right across the UK via the Federation of Groundwork Trusts. Through in-store consumer votes, projects that bring benefit to their community will get the green light – these range from improving outdoor community spaces to buying new equipment, training and informal education, or hosting community events.



Silverdale Country Park

This picturesque 83-hectare park was created on the former Silverdale Colliery and provides a space for the public to enjoy, where nature can thrive.

The park was created as part of a restoration project funded by the Homes and Communities Agency. Silverdale Country Park is now owned by the Land Trust and managed by Groundwork West Midlands. The site has achieved Green Flag status on two occasions, and has been awarded gold in the Parks and Open Spaces category at the Heart of England in Bloom Awards. In addition to Silverdale and on behalf of the Land Trust, we manage Hassall Green Wildlife Haven, Telford Millennium Nature Reserve and The Old Brickworks Nature

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Objective two: Improving people's prospects and lives

Nobody should be disadvantaged because of where they live or their background. We work with people to support them into employment, improve their health and wellbeing, connect them to others and work with them to make a positive difference in their community.

Health and wellbeing

Groundwork West Midlands delivers a wide range of projects that address physical and mental health inequalities in our local communities. We tackle isolation amongst older people, teach people how to cook healthy and nutritious meals and show people the benefits of physical activity. We help to increase levels of affordable warmth through our Green Doctors service which tackles fuel poverty in low income households through a combination of practical and behavioural methods.

Cook Together, Eat Together

Our Cook Together, Eat Together project has been running for over six years. It has evolved into a social prescribing model that aims to tackle social isolation amongst residents aged 50 and over, whilst also addressing issues linked to malnutrition and poor nutrition amongst this age group. This model was developed in collaboration with Public Health Coventry and the local Clinical Commissioning Group against a backdrop of cuts to adult social care funding that was particularly felt in more disadvantaged areas. At the start of 2019–2020 we began delivering a National Lottery Community Fund three year project in partnership with local health, fire, and housing services, bringing a specialist Community Dietician into the team. In the first six months we worked with

517 participants and saw an 80% increase in the regular consumption of fruit and vegetables with 78% of participants telling us they have improved wellbeing as a result of taking part. We developed partnerships with 17 new organisations and ran community training sessions which resulted in local volunteers starting their own community cooking activities.

We now run 'Cooking Clubs' in a variety of venues across the city which bring residents together over a six week period. Each week participants get to cook four different

courses and receive advice and support from a dietician ensuring a wealth of knowledge that will result in a more educated approach towards food. What is most important and special about this project is how it brings people together, the participants sit and eat their food together and from that new friendships flourish. We also offer bespoke one to one support for participants who need tailored advice, either within their homes or at a community venue.

Fiona's Story

"I came to Cook Together, Eat Together to learn more about healthy eating. I enjoyed both the cooking and eating of foods that I do not normally eat. I found some chopping difficult, but people were happy to help me. The course has made me realise that healthy options are tasty. Moving forward I will try to eat more fruit and vegetables and reduce salt in my meals. I found the staff from Groundwork to be supportive and helpful."

David's Story

"I found out about Cook Together, Eat Together via a friend who had enjoyed the free cooking clubs. The recipes were marvellous and got me trying things I would not normally

cook as I live alone. I was not planning to try to make any of the recipes at home until Luke told me I could freeze certain ones. I have met with some friends from the group and we talk to each other about what we are cooking and eating."

Maggie's Story

"For me, joining Cook Together, Eat Together was about making new friends and getting me out of the house. I looked forward to each week and trying new food. The staff from Groundwork were attentive and always had our best interests at heart. It was an added benefit to have a dietitian at each session as she could help answer any questions about diet and health. I have recommended the cooking clubs to my friends."

Employment and skills

We support people into employment and over the year we delivered four Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programmes, funded through the National Lottery Community Fund and European Social Fund. We provide information, advice and guidance to help people progress in their life towards one of three goals: employment, education or competent job searching. We work with people, who face a range of barriers to employment, across Burton, Tipton, Stoke-on-Trent and across Coventry and Warwickshire. Our team provides bespoke support to individuals aged 15 and above for up to 12 months per participant; by building relationships with them we tackle these barriers and connect them to local support, ensuring they receive a holistic service.

Breakthrough

The Breakthrough BBO programme is a project that helps people tackle the financial barriers they face in gaining and sustaining employment. The programme works throughout Coventry and Warwickshire to assist people in gaining access to education

and training, in addition to taking on an active role within their community.

Breakthrough works in association with Bedworth, Rugby and Nuneaton Citizens Advice Bureau.

It is increasingly easy to fall into a difficult situation with regards to finance. As a result people's mental health, wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem can be affected, which all create further barriers to progressing in life.

Breakthrough provides services on a one-to-one basis and tailored to each individual. Our support includes the following:

- **ensuring clients are accessing the correct benefits, applying for social grants, creating budget plans, food budgeting, energy saving advice and debt support (i.e. a repayment plan if possible); and**
- **employability training such as CV writing, job search training and interview training. We will also support clients to enrol on training courses or to apply for and obtain employment if they are ready.**

Our aim is to empower participants and help them to become more financially independent. As such we encourage participants to take ownership early on by allocating them actions and helping them to set achievable goals, enabling them to become more confident and better able to take control in the future.

Groundwork West Midlands has been delivering Breakthrough since September 2017, and the project has recently been extended for a further two and a half years. Groundwork West Midlands will be working with another 100 people across Coventry until September 2021, providing them with the confidence to manage their money and move towards education and employment.

Progress

Progress BBO is a project delivered across Coventry and Warwickshire coaching and supporting NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) young people to break down their personal barriers and gain access to training or employment opportunities.

Progress is targeted at those who are the furthest away from getting work, training or back into education. The programme provides up to 12 months of personalised, one-to-one support to young people who are most in need of a helping hand to get them on the path to a successful future.

Young people work with a dedicated Progress Coach – an experienced youth work professional – who encourages them to set positive goals, inspire a positive work attitude and help them navigate their own personal plan towards employment. Through tailored, one-to-one support, the programme aims to increase the confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing of those enrolled, boosting social and personal skills as well as employability.

Tammy's Story

Tammy* is a single mum who was referred to Breakthrough from a family hub support worker. Tammy was having financial difficulties including debts and CCJs (County Court Judgements). This resulted in her struggling with anxiety, stress and depression, in addition to a complete lack of self-confidence.

With the support of Breakthrough Tammy was able to prioritise her issues, firstly tackling the CCJs and debts. Applications to appeal the repayment figures of her debts were submitted. These were subsequently approved, resulting in a more reasonable payment arrangement thus reducing her stress in regards to her debt.

Breakthrough applied to community grants schemes for bedroom furniture for her daughter, which helped her to buy a wardrobe. We applied to the Big Difference Scheme via Severn Trent Water and were able to reduce her water bills each month to under £4, making sure she could meet her monthly payments and set up a direct debit to keep this going. We also managed to reduce her gas and electric bills by switching supplier. Tammy is now also job searching and excited about the prospect of returning to work.

Following working with Breakthrough, Tammy is now more financially stable, her confidence and self-belief have grown massively and she feels more positive about the future.

*Names changed for confidentiality reasons

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Objective three: Enabling sustainable living and working

Global environmental, social and economic challenges impact first and worst on people and communities that have the least. Addressing these challenges requires people everywhere to learn to live differently.

We help people and organisations to make choices and changes that deliver practical benefits now and sow the seeds of a more sustainable future. Living and working in this greener way protects our environment, improves health and well-being and saves money.

Sustainable Business Services

Groundwork West Midlands Sustainable Business Services (formerly Environmental Business Services) generates income to support our charitable aims. Our customers are mainly SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) from across the West Midlands and are also part of our communities; we also provide services to large national businesses that have a local presence. They are largely manufacturing businesses and we support them with their environmental and health and safety legal obligations. Around 35 loyal customers return to us each year to buy one or more of our suite of services, from managing legal registers, undertaking annual environmental and health and safety compliance audits, through to quarterly updates and bespoke training.

Avanti Fitted Kitchens was just one of the SMEs who took advantage of the grant that enabled them to install new LED lighting to reduce their carbon emissions and reduce their energy costs.

“Please pass on my thanks to all the team there for all their help and support during this project. I have been re-inspired to make more savings and improvements within the business.”

Energy efficiency

We also delivered the Low Carbon Growth Support programme funded through the European Regional Development Fund, where SMEs were able to access Energy Efficiency audits that identified opportunities for their business to increase their energy efficiency, reduce their carbon footprint and, importantly, reduce energy costs. Grants were then made available to help implement any recommendations that required capital investment. By the end of the year 154 businesses took advantage of Energy Efficiency audits of which 16 businesses purchased energy efficient equipment with a total investment of £336,382, of which £138,000 was grant. As a result, 366 tonnes of carbon emissions were saved; these figures will rise by the end of the programme in June 2019.

Flood management

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) has an important role to play in localised flood management including tackling surface water flooding. Importantly it takes a holistic approach, delivering multiple benefits for the water environment, local habitats and wider community wellbeing. We have been working with the Environment Agency and local authorities to deliver a suite of interventions at strategic sites to support these aims.



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Objective four: Quality and efficiency

We provide our external and internal customers – from people and partners to clients and colleagues – with a high quality and cost effective service to support the achievement of our delivery objectives.

We have challenged ourselves on all aspects of our operations and will continue to do so in line with growth or contraction:

Premises

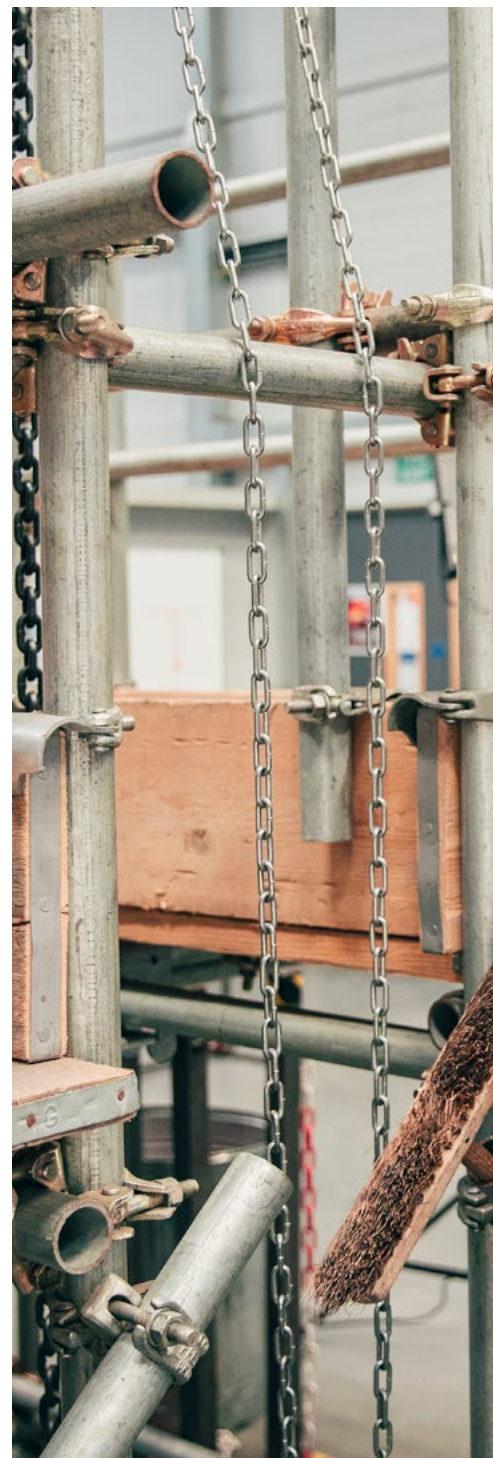
Groundwork West Midlands is similar to other Trusts in the Groundwork Federation; we operate a hub and spoke model to enable us to cover a wide geographical area. We delivered our services from five locations, in a mixture of owned and rented accommodation. In 2018–2019 we reviewed all of our medium-term premises requirements. We confirmed that our future strategy will be to base our operations in communities where our services are needed, in premises where we have the potential to accommodate flexible working and the ability to exit smoothly when we have completed our work. As a result, we will dispose of the buildings we own and ensure that rented office space can meet our aspirations for agility and efficiency.

Support services

We have reviewed support service requirements to make sure that they are proportionate to the size of our workforce, so that our delivery offers are cost efficient. Where there has been natural attrition we have reflected on how we could better deliver that internal support service. As a result we now share, for example, communications and marketing resources with Groundwork UK. The close proximity of Groundwork UK's offices and Groundwork West Midlands operations means that we will continue to consider shared back-office functions and support.

Technology

We use a range of systems and software to support our different operational functions. We have identified improvements that could be made and are reviewing these in the context of a Federation-wide ambition to harmonise systems across Trusts. Our IT infrastructure will also be reviewed to ensure it supports our premises strategy, for example, mobile working and video-conferencing so that staff are engaged and involved and we minimise our carbon footprint.





Quality assurance

Groundwork West Midlands has a wide range of effective policies and procedures. Some of these are led by Groundwork UK to make sure that there is consistency across all Trusts. A particular area of focus of Groundwork UK this year has been to establish minimum standards for Safeguarding as this is relevant to many areas of our business. We have exceeded these standards and: reviewed our policy; trained two experienced staff as level four Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and two level three deputy DSLs; nominated a Board Champion trained in Safeguarding governance; established a Safeguarding steering group; embedded Safeguarding reporting and learning at scheduled management and Board meetings.



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