



CHANGING PLACES
CHANGING LIVES

GROUNDWORK

GREATER MANCHESTER

2020/21 IMPACT REPORT



FOREWORD

As Chair of Trustees and Executive Director of Groundwork Greater Manchester (GM), we are delighted to introduce our 2020-21 Impact Report.

At the time of writing, we are slowly emerging from a period of unprecedented challenges brought about by the impact of Covid-19 on individuals, businesses, VCFS organisations and communities. We know the pandemic has disproportionately affected those individuals and communities that already faced the most disadvantage and inequality.

Now, more than ever, there is a recognition of the importance of quality urban green spaces, of creating opportunities for our young people to achieve their potential and of harnessing the power of communities. We have therefore re-focused our strategic priorities to ensure we can support these areas of activity and to complement the work of partners and public agencies in Greater Manchester as we move into the post-Covid recovery period.

During these most demanding times, we successfully managed a merger between the former Groundwork Bolton, Bury, Oldham & Rochdale (BBOR) and Groundwork Manchester, Salford, Stockport, Tameside & Trafford (MSSTT) Trusts to create a new organisation with enhanced capacity and resilience and a mandate to work across the city region. Groundwork GM provides a strong foundation from which we are sustainably growing the scale and breadth of our services and, crucially, the impact of our work.

Since the creation of Groundwork GM in August 2020, we have expanded many of our services, from Landscape Design and Build to Green Doctors and Green Skills to Community Engagement. We delivered a wide range of high quality, innovative projects that deliver genuine social value – from school and hospital ground schemes through to carbon literacy training.

Our fantastic staff team has been hugely resilient and creative in finding new ways to deliver services digitally or in Covid safe practices. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude for all they have done throughout the pandemic.

Looking ahead into 2021-22, our ambition is to continue growing our services, delivering more social impact and making a positive difference – we are particularly excited about being part of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund; about the opportunities we are providing young people via the Kickstart programme and about starting our journey towards being a Carbon Net-Zero organisation.

We have also taken clear and decisive steps to play our part in tackling the climate emergency and look forward to supporting the COP26 summit hosted in the UK this year.

If you would like to join us in our work as a volunteer, corporate partner or trustee, please get in touch.



Tony Berry
Chair of
Trustees



Mike Ormerod
Executive
Director

ABOUT

In 2018 we outlined our 5 year vision for Greater Manchester as follows:

A Greener, More Resilient City Region with Stronger, Healthier Communities, Responsible Businesses & Enhanced Prospects for all Local People

In 2020/21, we have continued to work in partnership with public, private & community stakeholders in Greater Manchester to:

- ✓ **Support young people to bounce back**
- ✓ **Support greener growth**
- ✓ **Facilitate the power of communities**

We will continue to deliver projects which strengthen local communities and respond to the climate & nature emergencies.

Young people supported by us will:

- > Feel more resilient and prepared for the future
- > Have increased aspirations for employment, education or further training
- > Be more actively involved in their communities & influencing decision making

People on our employment programmes will:

- > Have better climate awareness and work-related environmental knowledge
- > Be better equipped to access jobs, particularly greener jobs

Businesses we work with will:

- > Adopt more environmentally & socially responsible practices

Communities that we support will:

- > Have more people involved in climate and nature action
- > Demonstrate a sustained increase in greener behaviours
- > Have a stronger community infrastructure

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

2020/21



3,075
people helped to reduce
their energy use
(including 1,753 home visits)



746,730 m²
Land improvements



Leading to an estimated
1,634
people benefiting
from public space
improvements



156
people supported to
gain new qualifications



155
community groups
supported



624
young people supported
to learn & achieve



156
people supported into
education, training or work



189
volunteers mobilised,
dedicating **3,980 hours**



78
businesses supported

Greener Growth

Young People

Community

Climate Emergency

SUPPORTING GREENER GROWTH

Thousands of new jobs need creating to meet the UK's environmental commitments in various sectors, from energy generation to nature conservation.

Throughout Groundwork Greater Manchester's 35-year history, we have created green job opportunities for local people experiencing higher than average unemployment, including the **Green Team**, an apprenticeship scheme delivered in partnership with Rochdale Boroughwide Housing. Now in its 11th year, it provides opportunities to unemployed people whilst also tackling unsightly public places. In 2020/21, the Green Team completed several projects, including the Sheriff Street Independent Living Scheme. A team of four apprentices gained valuable landscaping skills whilst improving access and reviving the community garden for residents.



Building on our experience as Green Team mentors, we have recently started to deliver the **Natural Neighbourhoods** programme, supporting young people to start their career in the environmental sector. Participants on the programme will focus on improving the accessibility and biodiversity of 5 nature sites or creating pocket parks and improving roadside verges in urban areas. Eight young people have already been recruited into the programme via the **Kickstart** scheme and have recently started their employment journey with Groundwork.

Our **Low Carbon Careers** programme has recently commenced. Unemployed people in Rochdale, Manchester and Trafford, aged between 18 and 25, are supported into various green economy careers. Choosing from one of three specialisms (the natural environment, waste and recycling or retrofitting), participants will undertake 3-4 weeks of classroom-based learning followed by a 2-week work placement and then support into employment.

Groundwork's Employment Coaches specialise in supporting people with a criminal record into employment; a group which finds getting work eight times more challenging than the average person. **Green Start** is a learning and employability programme aimed at helping prison residents thrive in the Green Skills job market following their release from custody. Throughout 2021/22 our team will deliver a mix of practical workshop sessions, group learning, and classroom-based activities at HMP Forest Bank in Salford. Learners will achieve health and safety and carbon literacy qualifications, as well as the knowledge and skills needed to help them progress into employment in land and construction roles.

We have continued to support businesses to adopt more environmentally and socially responsible practices and, in early 2021, awarded the first-ever Seasoned Level for the **Sustainable Business Initiative** to electrical manufacturers, Electrium. This Groundwork initiative is a framework that drives improvements across Environment, Health & Safety, Quality, and Social Responsibility. We strive to support more businesses with their sustainability journey in 2021/22.



"I've learnt a lot since working with the Green Team, I really do adore my job, and I don't think I'd be here today if it wasn't for the opportunities that I've been given."



Christian, Green Team Apprentice



"Electrium have worked with Groundwork for a number of years to help improve our environmental performance and focus on sustainable growth. The Sustainable Business Initiative has allowed us to ensure continual improvement in these areas."



Paul Wilcock, EHS Advisor at Electrium



SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BOUNCE BACK

The impact that Covid-19 has and continues to have on young people is intense and long-lasting. Groundwork has responded to the new challenges presented by the pandemic ensuring that the young people we work with receive the support they need to find their path in life.

Achievement Coaching is one of our most established and well-recognised services supporting young people aged 11-17. Our Achievement Coaches help young people prepare for life and engage better with their learning journey. In 2020, re-engaging with school was particularly challenging for many young people due to prolonged lockdown periods. Our experienced youth workers provided weekly 1-2-1 coaching sessions online and over the phone to 65 young people who needed extra support. As a result, 85% of the young people demonstrated an increase in their emotional resilience, with 100% returning to the school environment once restrictions allowed.

Another impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was a worrying increase in the number of domestic abuse cases. In response, as soon as in-school delivery was possible, qualified youth workers delivered our **Respectful Relationships** programme to four schools in Tameside, reaching over 500 pupils. The programme helps young people learn the fundamentals of domestic abuse, that it is broader than simply physical violence and how it can affect the whole family. Young people aged between 9-13 were shown how to spot the warning signs, where to go for help, and how to support others.

Since 2017, Groundwork has been working with Manchester Youth Zone and Sport England to understand if sports and environmental social action could be brought together to influence young people's attitudes towards volunteering and physical activity. This three-year project engaged over 200 young people aged 10-17 in North Manchester and successfully demonstrated an increased desire to volunteer in the local community, with many young people showing an ongoing interest in social action after completing the programme.



Despite lockdown measures, 100 young people from Rochdale, Oldham and Tameside participated in the **Prince's Trust Team Programme**. We delivered 10 of 13 planned programmes in 2020/21 after quickly adjusting between on-site, blended, and remote learning. Despite the challenges faced by learning in this environment, 98% of young people attained the Team qualification, and 36 young people have immediately progressed into employment, college, training, or voluntary work.

A further 400 young people were supported by our employment team in 2020/21, typically through remote learning. 200 young people received ongoing employment support, resulting in 69 young people moving into employment and 20 young people moving into further education or training.

Ensuring the wellbeing of young people on our programmes during Covid-19 was paramount. In addition to our employment provision, we introduced welfare check-ins, providing food parcels, clothing, and IT equipment wherever required.

There's no doubt that the next year will continue to be challenging for many young people, which is why we have already started to deliver several youth employment programmes focused on the Green Economy. We are working with Mersey Rivers Trust and City of Trees to employ 61 unemployed young people through the **Kickstart** programme, launching their careers in the environmental sector. Plus, 70 young people will be supported on our Low Carbon Careers programme, 20 young people with a background in care will be supported through **Construction Workforce**, 12 young people on **Reconnect Oldham** and over 200 on our pre-recruitment courses.

These programmes go hand in hand with our 2023 ambition to support people in accessing greener jobs, improving their climate awareness, and feeling more resilient and prepared for the future.



“I love seeing my mentor; I'm not gonna lie, he's the best thing that has happened to me this year. I wouldn't have got through Lockdown if it wasn't for him. He taught me so much about life and how to overcome my challenges and problems.”



Trevon, aged 15, Achievement Coaching Participant



“Before I took part in the Prince's Trust Team programme with Groundwork, my confidence was very low after losing my job. I was struggling to understand what my next steps in life were going to be and what I wanted to achieve in the coming year. The programme has inspired me to change my career path and work with young people who are struggling themselves. I have now gained a role as a learning mentor at Groundwork through the Kickstart programme.”



Jack, aged 22, Prince's Trust Team Participant

FACILITATING THE POWER OF COMMUNITIES

The past year has demonstrated that there is remarkable resilience and strength within our local communities. Our teams continued to do what they have done for the past 35 years; support communities to be at the heart of local action in their neighbourhoods, at home and in work.

One example of the amazing community spirit showcased throughout the pandemic was from residents in Brinnington, Stockport. Volunteers delivered food parcels to families in need, arranged phone calls to isolated older residents, and captured community stories with a 'Covid Time Capsule'. As the Locally Trusted Organisation for this **Big Local** project, we provided emotional and practical support to a team of dedicated volunteers, supporting them with health and safety protocols and how to adopt more digital practices.

In **West Gorton**, Manchester, community action continued throughout 2020/21 following the completion of the €12 million community park in July 2020. Our dedicated team have engaged more residents in discussion about the benefits of nature-based solutions and have supported Armitage Primary School with securing funding to install wildflower meadows and native hedging to further improve air quality in the area.

In **Hattersley**, Tameside, our community engagement activities with Onward Homes' residents were initially put on hold during the first lockdown. However, our team created several video guides which explained how residents could plant simple plants and vegetables at their home, improving their connection with nature. As soon as it was safe to do so, we resumed face-to-face activities, which strengthened community cohesion.

Similar activities took place in Oldham as part of the **Thriving Communities** project, which sought to reduce social isolation and build stronger, healthier communities. Over the 2-year project, Groundwork delivered over 50 activity sessions ranging from crafts to gardening and engaged over 300 people in the programme, many of which initially reported health issues and feeling socially isolated. The programme has led to the establishment of 10 new community groups, which Groundwork will continue to support throughout their first year.



In Chorlton, Manchester, residents were awarded over £200,000 in August 2020 from The National Lottery's Climate Action Fund, enabling them to deliver a 16-month project to make Chorlton cleaner, quieter and more active. As a Chorlton Climate Action Partnership member, we began community engagement activities in the New Year to understand the barriers and triggers of people living in the area concerning active travel and climate change. We will work with partners to deliver a number of community led idea under the **Our Streets Chorlton** banner throughout the summer.

We are working with Manchester's youth sector to improve their **Climate Change** awareness and establish a network of youth practitioners who will oversee the development and delivery of a range of Climate Change focused work programmes in the city.

Unemployment rates reached their highest level in four years during Covid-19, driving more people into fuel poverty. Throughout the year our **Energyworks** team continued to help households in Greater Manchester stay warm, stay well, and save money on their household bills. Our traditional face-to-face work switched to phone and video calls throughout lockdown periods. Nonetheless, we were able to support nearly 2,000 households, saving them an estimated £305,784 on their energy bills. In line with Covid-19 regulations, we also delivered 885 fuel vouchers, 80 Winter Warmer packs and supported 293 households onto the priority services register.

The Energyworks team have been acknowledged for their dedication to tackle fuel poverty throughout the pandemic, with a nomination for the 'Vulnerable Customer Support Campaigner of the Year' at the 2020 Regional Energy Efficiency Awards.

Looking ahead, we intend to deliver even more programmes in 2021/22 which engage people in climate and nature action, including:

- > **FOOD WAVE** - increasing Manchester residents' knowledge and awareness of sustainable patterns of food consumption and production.
- > **ECO-STREETS** - supporting communities to transform unused areas into exciting green spaces, which feature nature-based solutions to help alleviate climate change.
- > **GROW, COOK, EAT** - helping veterans in Trafford and Rochdale develop new food growing and cookery skills whilst also reducing social isolation.



“Groundwork is a fantastic organisation, they are there to help, and the Green Doctor has helped me get through this latest cold spell and during lockdown, which has been a huge relief during this difficult time, and I feel as if a huge weight has been lifted.”



Grace, Energyworks Customer, Manchester*



“This course has given me much joy and a greater sense of wellbeing. Our group has been so creative, supporting and nurturing towards each other. I have felt part of this little community and have so looked forward to it every week. Jules and Gemma have been ever so supportive, and I have loved Jules's demos on growing and craft.”



Adel, Thriving Communities Participant, Oldham

RESPONDING TO THE CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCIES

Throughout this report, we have highlighted how our delivery seeks to connect more people with nature by delivering environmental, social action, food & horticulture activities in local neighbourhoods or by providing Green Job opportunities. In addition to these projects, we have delivered several environmental improvements on the ground, all designed to have a positive impact on climate and nature.



As the host organisation for the **Irwell Catchment Partnership**, we have continued to support 30 organisations to collaborate on water quality improvements. The partnership has successfully delivered 42 water improvement projects in 2020/21 and has a growing pipeline of projects ready for investment.

Several of these projects were led by Groundwork, including removing a redundant weir on the **River Tonge** in Bolton, resulting in water quality improvements along 1.7km of river.

Across all our sites our teams have worked to control invasive species, in the **Roch Valley** we have created a wetland habitat with marginal planting and at both **Irkside** and **Trafford Ecology Park** we have managed woodland.

Our **Landscape Architects** have incorporate a range of nature based-solutions in their designs to alleviate the impacts of climate change. One example is the creation of green screens around schools, which help collect pollution particulates as well as providing natural habitat. Our Fencing & Landscaping team installed these green screens at New

Islington Primary School in Manchester last year, with a similar solution being planted at neighbouring St Ann's Primary School early this year.

Our Fencing & Landscaping teams have installed numerous **nature-friendly solutions** as part of their contractual work:

- > We installed a rainwater harvesting system at North Chadderton Social & Bowling Club with the capacity to store 10,000 litres of rainwater for reuse on their bowling greens.
- > We planted native semi-mature street trees in tree pits on Waithlands Road in Rochdale; each tree can store 1,500 litres of rainwater.
- > We used carbon zero tarmac and recycled aggregate in Kirkholt, Rochdale as part of a series of improvements on Rhodes Ravine and planted of 350 native trees.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Working in partnership with public, private & community stakeholders, we improve, protect and lobby for our local environment, which is increasingly at risk from climate change.

A wholehearted thank you is extended to all the organisations we have worked within 2020/21. It is impossible to list all of our partners, but a selection of our core delivery partners includes:



Greener Growth

Young People

Community

Climate Emergency

