

GROUNDWORK

CHANGING PLACES

CHANGING LIVES



Evaluation Brief

Northern Network: Green Community Hubs

Invitation to Tender

Registered Office: 74-80 Hallgate
Wigan
WN1 1HP
clm@groundwork.org.uk

Website: Interested parties may wish to visit our website at
www.groundwork.org.uk

Commissioning Body: Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside

Company limited by guarantee and registered in England No: 1764848

Charity Registration No: 514727

Commissioning Officer (s): Jon Hutchinson, Director of Communities

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Context	1
Timescales	1
About Green Community Hubs	2
Beneficiaries/ Our Impact.....	4
About Groundwork.....	6
The Commission	6
The Successful Tenderer.....	6
Expectations	7
Evaluation Requirements	7
Outcomes & Outputs.....	8
Research Questions and Indicative Methods.....	8
Responding to the Tender	9
Available Resources	9
Management Information	9
Copyright	9
Confidentiality	9
Payment.....	9
Procurement Process.....	9
.....	9Scoring
.....	9

Introduction

Quotations are invited from suitably qualified organisations to undertake a robust evaluation of Groundwork in the North's (GiN) Green Community Hubs pilot programme. This will need to demonstrate both qualitative and quantitative impacts and the return on investment between August 2022 and January 2024.

Context

This commission is from Groundwork's Network of Northern Trusts (GiN) covering the whole of the North of England; North East & Cumbria, Tees Valley, Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside. This year we celebrate our 40th year as a Charity supporting local communities. GiN has secured £341,842 from the National Lottery Community Fund to facilitate the creation of a Northern Network of Green Community Hubs. Resulting in a vibrant and sustainable movement which builds more resilient communities, contributing to better and more integrated, greener services, transforming unused space and providing a focus for community-led regeneration.

A green community hub is a physical space that a local community has the responsibility for managing. These hubs are used to bring partners together and offer a broad range of services that build resilience and reduce health inequalities in communities. Activities will vary depending on the assets and interests of the community and could include volunteer development, education programmes, physical activity programmes or biodiversity and conservation projects. Examples of green community hubs include community gardens, food growing projects, woodlands or parks.

Green Community Hubs will operate using a place-based approach within their geographical location across the North, embedded into the heart of local communities, responding to local need at a grassroots level and connected to other support organisations and local strategy to make the best use of resource available. At each hub we will actively seek to grow the partnership, striving to engage communities that services have previously failed to reach.

Our work is directed and driven by the needs of the local communities we work in. Here is a [video](#) which provides context of how we have supported different communities to grow and feel part of something much bigger than just an activity. We help create a sense of purpose and belonging through community-based projects.

This evaluation is critical to support impact assessment, lessons learnt and programme development. To prove concept and shape the next stage of development: to roll it out to more hubs, support more communities and people most in need. Develop a real, connected, northern network of fantastic community assets.

Timescales

Project delivery will start in August 2022 and be completed and fully evaluated by March 2024. This is a holistic/embedded evaluation commission with a requirement of participatory appraisal to produce reliable and strong Return on Investment (ROI) and Social ROI. Therefore, the successful organisation must be in place and available to start work by August 2022 to establish the relevant methodologies.

Please only provide a submission if you can guarantee that you can deliver within these timescales. Payment will be made on completion of the evaluation report to satisfactory standard within the timeframe.

About Green Community Hubs

Our aim is to facilitate the creation of a network of targeted and sustainable Green Community Hubs.

There will be particular focus on communities who are disadvantaged with a desire to co-design a Green Community Hub but do not have the confidence, capacity, skills or resources to make this happen.

The hubs will operate and be developed through a place based approach embedded in local communities. They will have the potential to connect to other local initiatives such as food waste projects, volunteering and training programmes and health and wellbeing support.

These wider benefits all help with the sustainability, creating local connections and using resources in the most effective and appropriate way.

We will work with local communities to co-design the creation and development of Green Community Hubs. This could include community gardens delivering horticultural therapy or community woodland projects delivering

conservation volunteering and education programmes. There will be ongoing community-led consultation to ensure responsiveness of activities and increased engagement and aspirations.

The Northern Network will test different approaches and models based on the characteristics and needs of that community. We will develop both online and offline networks of community groups and key activists across the country. We will deliver a training programme of community development to support projects to thrive and flourish. This will likely include support around organisational structure, good governance, inclusivity, fundraising, project delivery, environmental social action and impact evaluation.

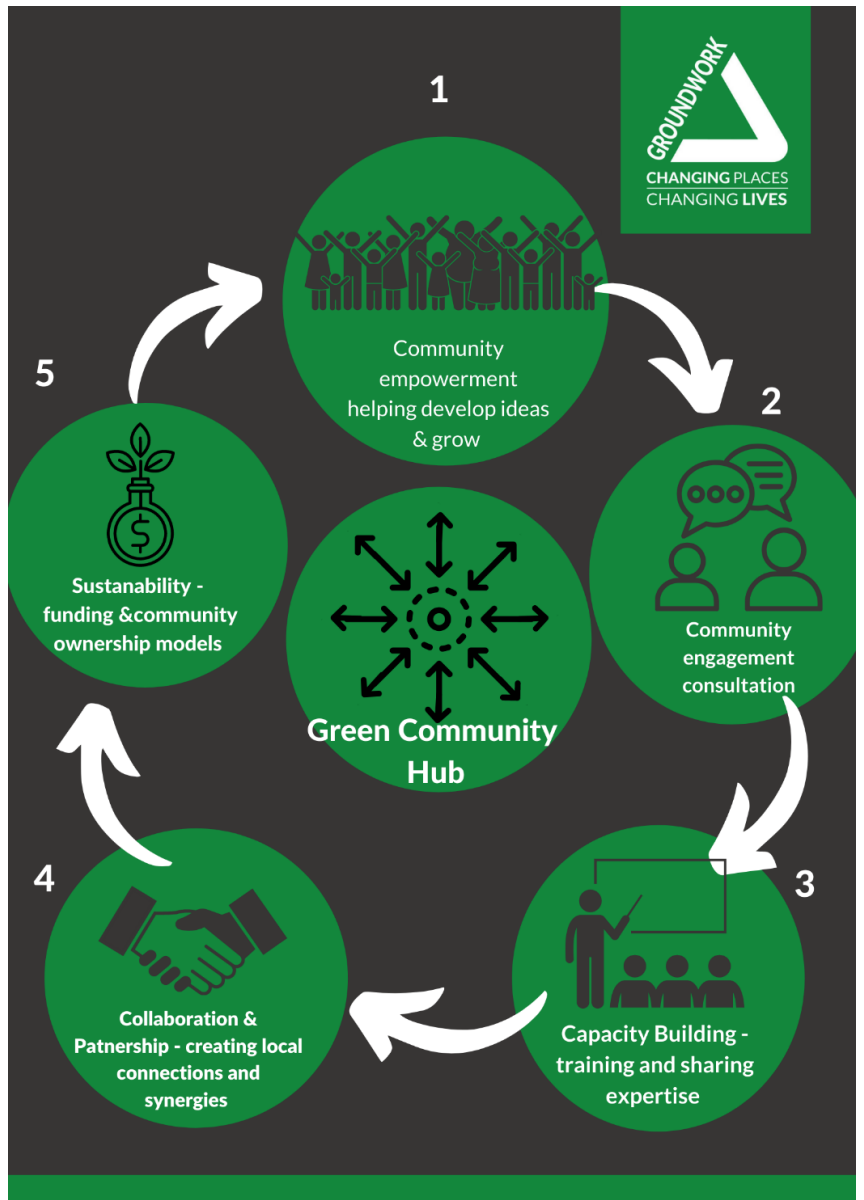
Each hub will respond to specific needs in their location e.g. gaps in services, lack of outdoor space, communities feeling left behind and isolated, anti-social behaviour or concerns about the climate emergency. We will enable communities to create projects in an inclusive manner where everyone has a place to have their voices heard and can contribute their ideas that matter most to them. A bank of information resources and toolkits will be shared across the hubs, which support best practice. The network will help form a flagship programme of Green Community Hubs with the ability for other communities to replicate in other areas.



How will this work? - The lifecycle and development of a community hub

The cycle begins with community consultation and empowerment. Our role is to support the facilitation of this at each stage and explore community ideas during the process, providing the necessary technical skills and experience. This will ensure communities are better integrated into local networks, resources, partnerships and the green agenda. Communities will be able to make broader connections and take action on issues that matter most to them.

We know through our conversations with the communities in our targeted areas the barriers which limit their ability to progress ideas and their understanding of what can be achieved. Working within local communities we have witnessed the difficulties in progressing ideas and accessing funding due to lack of resources, skills and knowledge. The passion and drive is there, what they often do not have is the expertise to make their vision a reality.



“Just being able to get out has helped improve my confidence and improve my mental health”

“Helped me to get out and about after Covid. Before joining I was in a bit of a recluse and being in the house is all my daughter has ever known”

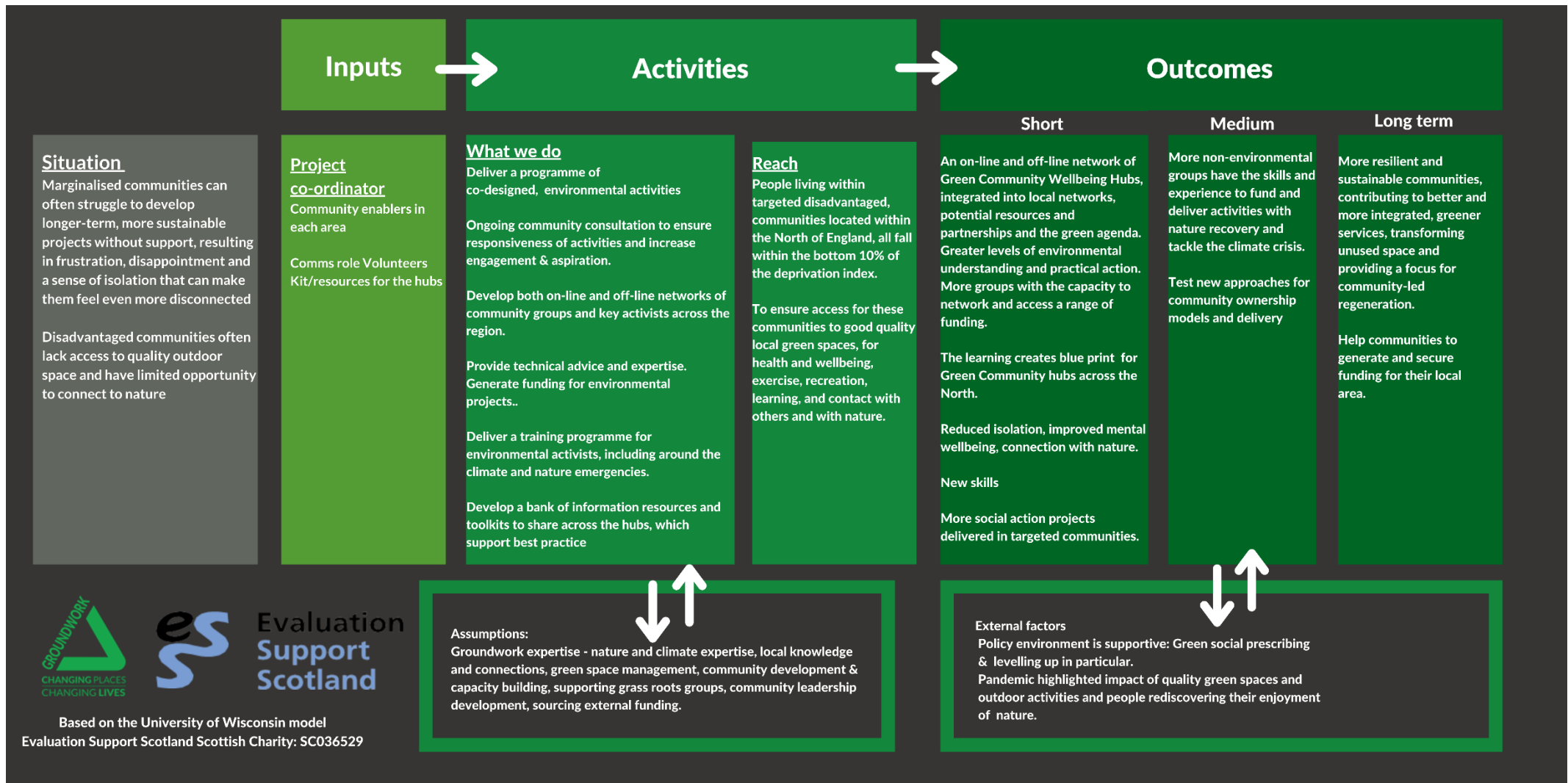
“I have a reason to get out of bed.”

“It gets better every week I come.”

“It’s like a big back garden and we feel safe here.”

Beneficiaries/Our Impact

Benefits of Green Community Hubs can be categorised as direct and in-direct (although these can be interchangeable). The logic model below, outlines the short, medium and long term outcomes we expect to achieve through this project.



Outputs

Over the 18-month delivery period we expect to achieve the following:

- Co-creation of 5 Green Community Hubs across the North of England
- 50 new partners working collaboratively and contributing to the design of the hubs
- 200 local people involved in co-designing services
- 30+ community projects with access to technical advice and expertise related to creating Green Community Hubs
- 100 local people reporting greater climate awareness
- 200 people reporting greater connection with nature and increased skills

In addition, we expect to facilitate:

- A bank of resources and best practice information to support the creation of Green Community Hubs
- An online and offline network of Green Community Hubs sharing resources and experiences
- A steering group in place for each proposed hub
- Connection of marginalized communities with local partners and stakeholders
- Greater awareness in the local community of climate awareness and emergency

Outcomes

Short term – Creating a blue print for Green Community hubs across the North, which contributes to reducing isolation, improving health and wellbeing and connecting communities with nature.

Medium term- More non-environmental groups have the skills and experience to deliver activities with nature recovery and tackle the climate crisis. This enables us to test new approaches for community ownership models.

Long term - More resilient and sustainable communities that can prosper and thrive, contributing to better and more integrated, greener services, transformed unused space and a focus for community-led regeneration.

Across the community projects supported we hope to embed a series of impact measures to identify their impact. This could include, but is not limited to:

- Number of individuals who access the community hub
- Pre and post programme questionnaires monitoring changes in health and wellbeing and physical activity
- Number of individuals accessing training opportunities or volunteering

About Groundwork

Groundwork has a mission to mobilise practical community action on poverty and the environment.

We aim to create a society of vibrant, healthy, green communities with resources and resilience to shape their futures, where individuals reach their full potential, lift out of poverty and communities thrive.

We:

- **Improve People's Prospects:** Reduce poverty, increase confidence, skills, wellbeing and employability of those most in need
- **Create Better Places:** Help people work together to make places greener, safer and healthier
- **Promote Green Choices:** Help people and businesses understand and reduce their environmental impact

Groundwork in the North operates within our national Federation of Trusts, a group of independent charities helping people and organisations make changes in order to create better neighbourhoods, to build skills and job prospects and to live and work in a greener way.

This commission comes from Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside on behalf of the Groundwork in the North (GiN).

The Commission

Groundwork is seeking an Evaluation expert to work alongside the five Groundwork Trusts and the team tasked with delivering the Northern Network Green Community Hubs programme to evaluate and measure the financial, social and environmental impact of the programme.

The evaluation commission will be holistic and provide a 360 appraisal of the programme, from inception, to delivery and outputs. It will be required to provide a mechanism for almost continuous monitoring and evaluation, effectively utilising the skills and resources of both the successful organisation and the Delivery Team to enable detailed and effective assessment of the programme.

The Successful Tenderer

The successful tenderer is likely to have experience in:

- Active, 'in the field' assessment of community programmes
 - Working with third sector organisations and understanding the specific challenges faced by this sector.
 - Working with a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities, community centres, community hubs and statutory services.
- An understanding of Groundwork's mission and objectives
- Embedding evaluations within relevant policy context
- Researching and understanding relevant commissioning landscapes
- Writing clear and impactful reports and case studies for a variety of audiences working flexibly and in close partnership with a commissioning organisation

Experience in evaluating community/person-focussed interventions concentrating on one or more of the following areas would be advantageous:

- Work in disadvantaged/ despaired communities
- Work in diverse communities with good understanding on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Community centre/ hub/ network development
- Nature based community work
- Vulnerable and/or high needs participants

Joint or consortium bids/academic bodies or other third party evaluators are acceptable, and encouraged from agencies with complementary capabilities, with the proviso that they must show they meet the criteria and all agencies must not be subject to any exclusions or disqualifications stated below. Joint bids must designate a lead bidder and contact to act as the key contractor for Groundwork's purposes.

In order to ensure that this research is impartial and relevant, Groundwork will not award the contract to any party who has:

- Canvassed any Groundwork Trust personnel or Board Members a personal relationship of any kind to any person employed by or on the Local and Federation Boards of Groundwork
- Previously undertaken work for Groundwork which has not been completed to our satisfaction

Expectations

The successful organisation will need to work with Groundwork to identify key questions for the evaluation, the indicators to demonstrate financial, social and environmental impact and the key evaluation/data gathering methods.

This will enable the agreement of data gathering responsibilities, and also the successful consultant to deliver training to the Delivery Team to enable them to carry out their role in the data collection, monitoring and evaluation. In this way, a complementary process will be developed, which will share evaluation tasks and build ownership, involvement and skills in evaluation.

It is envisaged that the successful consultant will:

- Work closely, flexibly and collaboratively with the project Deliver Team, partners and participants.
- Attend key meetings and events throughout the programme to form relationships with partners and disseminate learning.
- Develop an overall evaluation framework alongside Delivery Teams, to include the key questions to be used within the evaluation process, outcomes and outputs and the data gathering methods to be used
- Agree with the Delivery Teams which aspects of the evaluation will be delivered by the commissioned organisation and which will be delivered within the Delivery Team through self-evaluation activity and monitoring
- Provide support and training to the Delivery Teams in self-evaluation and monitoring techniques
- Gather feedback from beneficiaries and other stakeholders
- Collate and analyse all evidence gathered as part of the programme
- Report on the social, environmental and economic impact of the programme (see outcomes and outputs below)

Evaluation Requirements

Evaluation will be undertaken to include (but not limited to) understanding:

- Degree to which environmental, economic, social, health and Levelling Up agendas can be met by Green Community Hubs
- Identification of successful ingredients of creating and delivering a Green Community Hub e.g. referral sources/protocols, delivery methodology, host employer type and tangible stakeholder engagement/support
- Achievement against original outputs, including successes, challenges and future opportunities
- Level of influence Groundwork's engagement and support has on the development of successful Green Community Hubs

Outcomes & Outputs

Anticipated outputs are detailed below. However, we would also welcome creative and innovative approaches and output proposals from expert evaluation organisations.

- Production of Evaluation Framework by 31st October 2022 including methods of engagement and data collection.
- Training provided to the Delivery Team to enable them to effectively conduct their roles within the monitoring and evaluation work
- Measure the performance of the programme against key performance indicators
- Collect information to report on progress towards meeting outputs, information available to the successful consultant.
- Evidence the impact of the programme on beneficiary outcomes, including:
 - Increased wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem;
 - Community empowerment and leadership
 - Positive attitudes towards the environment
- Provide 5 case studies of participants and businesses regarding their journeys on the programme
- Identify the critical success factors and/or limitations of the delivery and make recommendations for in-programme changes
- Produce mid-term report by May 2023
- Produce final report for presentation to Groundwork by March 2024, in a format to be agreed detailing key outcomes, outputs and successes/areas for improvement, lessons learned and opportunities/recommendations for future programme development.

Research Questions and Indicative Methods

The following framework is intended to act as a guide for prospective evaluators. Providers are invited to design additional or alternative research questions and methods if they add value to or deepen our understanding of what works and why.

It is essential that the evaluation team has experience in using interactive research tools and methods to successfully engage vulnerable people.

Effectiveness of the Programme Model

- How effective is the delivery model at achieving 'hard' and 'soft' outcomes (both pre-agreed programme outcomes and additional outcomes)?
- How well does the delivery model meet the needs of communities?
- How successful is Groundwork in achieving programme outcomes, and what are its key factors for success / challenges that need to be overcome
- To what extent is the programme able to identify appropriate opportunities and support?
- To what extent does the delivery model add value to existing local provision, and what opportunities are there for it to do more?
- How effectively does the programme integrate with other local services, and how could it integrate better?
- What benefit has the programme brought to the local area?

We anticipate mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, including:

- Depth interviews
- Group workshops, interactive sessions Observations of interventions
- Surveys
- Analysis of core data (collected and collated by programme staff), including needs assessment and distance travelled tools
- Analysis of management information data

Responding to the Tender

When submitting your proposal, please provide:

- Your proposed approach including how you would work alongside the Groundwork / Delivery Teams.
- Project plan and budget, indicating the number of days allocated to each task. The budget should include all costs associated with delivery (fees, travel, other costs) and make clear daily rates. An indication of how you would plan to allocate the budget across the timescales should be included.
- CVs of key delivery personnel, highlighting relevant qualifications and experience.
- Details of experience of undertaking similar work. Specifically, outline your knowledge and understanding of measuring outcomes, managing and analysing information, training others in self-evaluation and engaging communities and stakeholders.
- Information about your environmental policies and approach to mitigating environment impacts.
- Copies of the last three years' account and a statement that provides confidence that your organisation will be able to conduct the evaluation over the required period.
- Referees - you should provide names and contact details for 2 independent referees

Tender submissions should be kept to a maximum of 10 pages.

Available Resources

The budget available is **£30,000 inclusive of VAT**. This sum must cover all fees and expenses associated with the delivery of the contract and set out the VAT.

Management Information

The main contacts for this evaluation will be Jon Hutchinson, Director of Communities and Green Community Hubs Coordinator (to be appointed in July 2022).

Copyright

The successful Provider will grant Groundwork full copyright on all contents and materials produced. Where the Consultant makes use of material in which copyright vests in third parties, it will be the responsibility of the Consultant to obtain permission for the appropriate use of such material.

Confidentiality

The appointed organisation must safeguard the confidentiality of any data and information supplied for the purpose of the project.

Payment

Payments will be made on receipt of invoice and following authorisation by Groundwork of services satisfactorily completed for each stage.

Procurement Process

Completed proposals should be submitted to jon.hutchinson@groundwork.org.uk by 27th June 2022 at 5pm. Proposals will be assessed within 2 weeks of receiving them. If there is a need for interviews, these will take place on the 6th July 2022

Please address any questions to the via email to jon.hutchinson@groundwork.org.uk or via phone on 01942 821 444 or 07500 104 690

Scoring

The selection panel will use a scoring system to ensure objectivity. This will be weighted as follows:

- Methodology and approach – 40%.
- Skills, knowledge and experience – 30%
- Price / value for money – 30%