

# GROUNDWORK UK POLICY



## Sustainable Development



Last review May 2023

### 1. Purpose

Groundwork's vision is to build a society of sustainable communities and our federation strategy is centred on improving people's prospects and the places where they live while promoting environmentally responsible behaviours.

Our commitment to sustainable development is core to what we do, and we recognise the importance of leading the way in reducing our own carbon emissions and promoting greener behaviours among our staff teams.

Our baseline carbon footprint as a federation has been calculated to be 2,143 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent and we are working collectively to reduce that and to use our influence, expertise and resources to help others on their journey to net zero.

Groundwork UK, through its position as the 'hub' of the Groundwork federation and guardian of the Groundwork brand, has a specific responsibility to lead by example in its application of sustainable development principles. Groundwork UK's plans and processes flow directly from the agreed vision and strategy and Groundwork UK's values include being environmentally aware and supporting communities in need through everything we do. Our charitable objects specifically state that we will promote sustainable development for the benefit of the public.

The purpose of this policy is to confirm Groundwork UK's understanding of what sustainable development means and to state what we will do to meet the obligations, challenges and opportunities that this presents, across all our activities and operations.

## 2. Definition

Groundwork UK accepts the definition of sustainable development coined in the Brundtland report Our Common Future in 1987 - 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

We recognise this means, among other things:

- living within environmental limits
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- achieving a sustainable economy
- promoting good governance.

We consider the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>), agreed in 2015, as the best tool for driving change and will seek to align our development work and reporting with these wherever possible.

## 3. Scope

Pursuing and promoting sustainable development has implications for Groundwork UK in four fundamental ways. It informs:

- what activity Groundwork UK will undertake, and just as importantly, what activity Groundwork UK will not undertake
- how Groundwork UK organises itself, runs its business affairs and carries out its activities
- the way in which Groundwork UK describes and communicates what it believes and what it does
- the values and behaviours we expect of our staff, volunteers and trustees.

Promoting sustainable development cannot be confined to a single project or set of actions. It is an organising principle underpinning what we do and how we do it. This policy therefore sets out our commitment to operating in accordance with these principles and how sustainable development is embedded in a range of processes, policies and procedures through which we manage our activities and operations, It informs the culture we strive to promote amongst our colleagues and the communities we work with.

## 4. Groundwork UK's Commitment to Sustainable Development

Groundwork UK supports the goal of creating a just society living within environmental limits and will ensure that all of its activities are underpinned by the principles of sustainable development. Furthermore we will actively seek to develop and deliver programmes that promote sustainable development in local communities and influence the priorities and practice of other organisations.

Our role at the centre of the Groundwork federation involves driving the development and implementation of our collective strategy and associated delivery goals. This strategy commits us to:

- investing in the places and people that need us most
- working with local leaders and listening to local voices
- growing a culture of equality and inclusion
- collaborating with others
- acting as environmental exemplars.

We will promote these commitments publicly on our website and work with colleagues across the federation to deliver appropriate action plans. This includes working towards our own Carbon Reduction Plan. We will specifically communicate Groundwork's mission to support practical responses to poverty and the climate and nature emergency.

## **5. Embedding sustainable development in our work**

Groundwork UK will act on this commitment by embedding the principles of sustainable development into all areas of its business as follows.

- **Planning**

We will factor our commitment to sustainable development into all of our strategies, plans and policies, including plans for continuous improvement. In practice this means ensuring that all of our plans link back to our organisational vision and the Groundwork strategy and support the delivery of our charitable purpose, all of which have sustainable development at their core.

- **Business management**

In managing our business we will minimise our environmental impact and ensure that our operational decisions contribute to the wellbeing of people and the planet. We will prioritise good environmental practice and set an ambitious goal for becoming a net zero or climate positive organisation. We will be instrumental in influencing Groundwork as a whole to measure and reduce its environmental impact.

We will promote and facilitate the use of public transport among our employees and visitors, minimise our waste and maximise our resource efficiency and will factor these considerations into decisions we make about office accommodation. We will regularly review our facilities management arrangements to ensure they minimise harmful impacts to the environment and local communities, ranging from energy supplies to cleaning products.

We will ensure that our financial resources are used in a way that aligns with our commitment to Sustainable Development, in particular ensuring that our investments are managed in a way which minimises environmentally harmful activities.

- **People management**

We will encourage and support our staff, volunteers and trustees to be advocates and champions of sustainable development. Our commitment to sustainable development will be embedded in our induction process and we will support a sustainability group providing opportunities for staff to consider and be consulted on how our organisation could improve its practice and performance in this regard. We will encourage all staff to participate in Carbon Literacy Training, and schedule refresher sessions to help maintain knowledge and culture.

We will support the wellbeing of our employees by supporting staff-led activities and campaigns to promote good mental health, physical activity and healthy eating and will encourage and support our employees to build stronger communities through flexible working arrangements and time off for public duties.

- **Programme development**

Groundwork UK's charitable purpose is to promote sustainable development and deliver regeneration and this will guide the contracts we bid for and the partnerships and programmes we develop.

In deciding which grants and contracts to bid for we will assess the degree to which they align with Groundwork's overarching aims and strategy, which prioritise sustainable development. We will also assess the risk of delivery leading to harmful environmental impacts, and ensure it meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations.

In addition, we will seek to influence partners, stakeholders and funders to prioritise sustainable development in their activities and programmes in order to generate more resources focused on delivering environmental education, protection and improvement and building stronger local communities.

- **Fundraising**

Groundwork UK seeks and secures funding from a wide range of sources to support local project delivery. Our fundraising policy sets out how we ensure high ethical standards in terms of where our funding comes from and how we source it.

We will pro-actively develop funding and programme proposals that allow us to support and deliver more work to build stronger communities and to educate and enable people and businesses to act more responsibly with regard to natural resources and the quality of local environments.

- **Supply chain management**

Groundwork UK operates as a managing agent, delivering impact in communities by providing grants and subcontracting with local organisations, including Groundwork Trusts. We will support and influence this wider network of delivery partners to demonstrate best practice in terms of sustainable development. This will include embedding sustainable development in due diligence arrangements for major contracts by ensuring that delivery partners have appropriate policies in place and assessing the implementation of these policies through our performance management framework. Where this can be agreed, it will also include using the promotion of sustainable development as part of the criteria for assessing grant applications.

We will continue to work with our funding partners to encourage them to resource a support service for grant recipient organisations to help them consider how to embed sustainable development into their project activities and management processes.

- **Purchasing**

Groundwork UK has a number of arrangements in place with service suppliers and we recognise that we can influence the behaviour of these suppliers through what we purchase and the way we procure services.

We will adopt the principles of sustainable procurement, using environmental responsibility as one of the criteria for assessing tenders and choosing products and services that minimise

environmental impacts while supporting local economies and communities, recognising the need to balance 'buying local' with best environmental practice.

## **6. Leadership and reporting**

We see promoting and supporting sustainable development as an integral part of what we do and how we do it. It is both our purpose and our practice.

Ensuring adherence to this policy will be a shared responsibility of the senior management team, each of whom will ensure sustainable development is embedded in our corporate services, programmes, contracts and fundraising activities. The Chief Executive will take overall responsibility for ensuring that the organisation is achieving the highest possible standards in each. We will undertake an annual carbon footprinting exercise to calculate our carbon emissions for the year, and seek to reduce this year on year.

In order to demonstrate our commitment and to evidence implementation of this policy we will include a summary statement in our annual report of the ways in which our activities and the way we deliver them have minimised harmful environmental impacts, delivered positive environmental benefits and strengthened local communities and local economies.