

Neighbourhood Fund Proposals

Following a Call for Projects to deliver a Clean it, Green it programme across the Coalfield area, to improve areas of greenspace across the whole area and involve members of the community and volunteers to help maintain the improvements. Applications received were assessed and scored against the project brief and scoring criteria. The following project received the highest score. It is recommended for approval from the previously aligned £100,000 Neighbourhood Fund budget.

Application No. 1

Funding Source	Neighbourhood Fund
Name of Project	Clean and Green Coalfield
Lead Organisation	Springboard

Total cost of Project	Total Match Funding	Total NF Application
£109,000	£9,000	£100,000 (previously aligned)

Project Description:

Working in partnership with Community Opportunities, who have led similar projects in other areas of the city, Springboard intend to utilise our strengths and deliver the project in the following way:

Environmental Improvements

Working closely with existing services and local stakeholders; local elected members, Gentoo, Police, TWFRS and HALO project we will work together to identify what improvements are needed and develop an action plan to ensure we achieve maximum impact. This will be balanced across the whole area to ensure a fair distribution of projects are undertaken within the time available. There will be a blend of low level litter picking and community clean up engagement activities to more intense works that require mechanised support, strimmer's, grass cutters, chippers or rotavators. We have the skills and tools to provide a strong starting point and together with Community Opportunities we will foster community ownership of the newly renovated areas to continue to look after and maintain them in the ways they have been shown.

Working with Communities and Partners

To date we have consulted with those listed in the partnership working below and we will consult with communities and partner organisations using our collective links in the different wards of the Coalfield. Examples will include the Elemore Project and identifying which areas were identified in the 'Lets Talk Elemore' consultation, from there we can plan an integrated approach, supporting local groups to take lasting action in their areas. New areas of priority will be added to as the project develops and the main stakeholders will feed into this at regular intervals, coordinated by the programme manager. With our partner Community Opportunities, we will be working with associations, community and resident groups to create solutions with them, empowering them and their users to be involved and continue to be integral to their improvement and maintenance beyond the 2 year life of the project.

Improving the Visual Appearance of the Coalfield

Together with partners and in particular our horticulture trainees we will make visual improvements to identified areas and dramatically improve them so that there is a clear change in a short period of time. We will do this by using our powered machinery as well as expertise in training people on their use. Once an area is in a better state it is less of a challenge to maintain for local resident and volunteer groups. We will carry out adjustments to areas where possible to minimise the ongoing workload. Litter and fly tipping are key contributing issues for the decline in Coalfield areas, educating people on these messages is key to success in this project.

We will employ a programme manager 4 days per week to lead the programme supported by Community Opportunities who will employ a volunteer and engagement facilitator on a part time basis. The roles will include adopting and managing agreed shrub beds and open green spaces as well as paths and tracks. We grow plants from HLCP and have links with garden centres who donate plants; we also receive plants from environmental services that are end of season which we re-pot and reuse. We will also be encouraging groups to follow the 'Incredible Edible' ethos which supports

groups to create opportunities for growing produce in their communities. As a starting point we will use some of the adopted shrub beds to grow community herb gardens.

Our strength is our ability to train and inspire people in horticulture, cleansing and grounds maintenance. Our trainers and assessors will be running accredited training for people who would like to take the lead locally; our 'Clean Green Champions' will allow them to train new recruits as they are recruited once the project is established and for the future sustainability.

All volunteers will be supported to develop skills and funnelled through a pathway to ensure that they are safely inducted into the project, understand what the plan is and are assessed verbally and practically to ensure they are involved in appropriate activities for their ability. Both of the staff involved will supervise closely and coach participants on technique and coach any practice that is not correct. At the start of each session participants will be given a tool box talk refreshing regular attendees of safe use. The groups will be involved in risk assessment both from a health and safety point of view and also environmentally as well.

Alongside the improvements we will provide local residents with information and education on the work that is going on as well as ways to be involved. The education element will reduce the decline in local amenities by informing residents of the types of behaviour that are negative for their area. Free and low cost ways of disposing of waste by the City Council, identifying genuine waste disposal operators as well as charities that recycle furniture and upcycling to avoid items going to landfill. These educational messages will be delivered in person with those who engage face to face but also by localised leaflet/flyer distribution and also targeted social media posts both organic and paid ads from Springboard's marketing team. This will involve working with Primary and Secondary schools in the Coalfield to organise for pupils to attend workshops on waste management and recycling and also taking direct action supporting our community clean up days.

There will be many success stories on the journey of this project and we intend to celebrate those both online via social media but also in print in our regular newsletter catch ups. We will also talk with local press to ensure that people in the community are recognised for the work that they do.

We will be creating an equipment bank for use by groups which will be based at Hetton Lyons Country Park, in our secure equipment store. This will be added to our kit log to ensure it is maintained and safety checked at the correct intervals as well as to monitor its use and location. This will be monitored by the programme manager to ensure it is fairly distributed, used by volunteers who have been through the volunteer pathway and signed off as competent. We have allowed for natural damage / breakage and maintenance into the budget. The project aligns with the cities low carbon framework by being directly in the communities it is serving.

To summarise, by building on our existing partnerships and expertise in horticulture training we will deliver this project to the whole Coalfield, with the aim of leaving a lasting impact with a sustainable legacy.

All work will be arranged in close co-ordination with Julie McBurnie and her team. Any changes to areas will be pre agreed and will support their work and be sustained by volunteer groups. Some work will allow environmental services to complete their regular work more easily and may enable the ongoing routine maintenance to be added to their schedule only if capacity allows.

There will be positive implications for the SCC environmental services team, they will have additional capacity by the Clean and Green project taking on some of the work load that currently falls to them. The high standard of our work is proven, we have achieved the Green Flag award consistently at Hetton Lyons Country Park since 2012.

We will be replicating our current process with the environmental services team that is tried and tested at HLCP.

There are a range of groups both formal and informal across the Coalfield that already exist that are a variety of shapes and sizes. We will be working with as many of these groups as we can so not to duplicate good work that is already going on. Where we can, we will support these groups to create a wider and more sustained impact and offer them access to training, equipment and people.

Community Opportunities will be our main partner in this project, we have discussed plans and integrated approaches with The Chief Executive and Community Manager to complement our strengths. CO will be creating volunteering links and opportunities with local groups and residents; they have experience of similar projects in other parts of the city.

Consultation has taken place with the following groups who have agreed to work in partnership:

Groundwork, Durham Wildlife Trust, Gentoo, ELCAP, ShARP, Friends of Hetton Lyons Country Park, Elemore Country Park Project, HALO, Mindful Walks NE, Hetton Wombles, Shiney Row Community Association, Penshaw Community Centre and Community Garden, Friends of Herrington Country Park

The project will deliver the following outputs over a 2 year period

Data Field	Output Target
A Dynamic Smart City Output	
number of low carbon initiatives supported	12
number of Adults moved into Employment or undertaking training	20
A Healthy Smart City Output	
number of community cleans up carried out	36
number of litter picks carried out	400
tonnage of waste cleared from neighbourhoods	80
amount of greenspace sites improved by area (m2)	8000
Issues reported via www.sunderland.gov.uk/report-it	600
A Vibrant Smart City Output	
number of volunteers recruited and participating	130
number of external organisations involved or supported	16

Recommendation – Approve. The project meets the objectives of Coalfield Neighbourhood Investment Priority ‘Improve Local Greenspace’