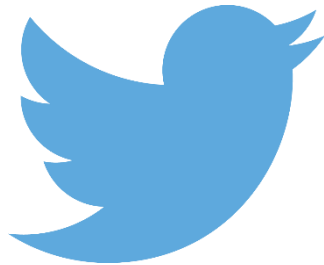


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Parks Action Group Update

- Created as a response to the Parks Inquiry of 2017
- Government set up sector expert group and cross government working group to look at future management of urban parks and greenspaces
- Work streams identified:
 - Community empowerment
 - **Additional resources for local authorities**
 - **Future Parks Accelerator**
 - **Skills and Knowledge for 21st Century Parks Managers**
 - Knowledge Sharing
 - Standards
 - **Pocket Parks Plus**
 - Spending review
 - Business case for parks

Future Parks Accelerator

- The National Lottery funding body, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), and the National Trust joined forces to find and back ambitious and sustainable solutions to protect and enhance public parks and greenspaces.
- UK-wide **£11 million** strategic initiative to enable up to **eight local authorities** and **communities** to develop and implement **bold and innovative funding and management solutions** for all their green spaces across their place, against a challenging backdrop of financial uncertainty.
- The **eight places chosen**, covering a population of five million people, submitted ambitious and creative strategies to put green spaces right at the heart of local communities.
 - Birmingham
 - Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole;
 - Bristol;
 - Cambridgeshire (county-wide, covering seven council areas);
 - Edinburgh;
 - Islington and Camden
 - Nottingham
 - Plymouth

What the projects will deliver

The projects will:

- make green spaces central to everyday community life
- give the public a bigger role in how they are managed
- ensure parks contribute more to the public's mental and physical health
- transform the way parks are funded to secure their futures
- For instance, in Islington and Camden the councils will focus on using parks and green spaces to improve health and wellbeing by developing closer links to the NHS, health providers, doctors and health charities.
- The eight selected places will now join **Newcastle**, a founding city of Future Parks, which has successfully developed a new parks and allotments trust

Over the **next two years**, the eight places will work together to develop tools, approaches, skills and finance to create their new way of managing green space as well as sharing their experience with other councils

Additional resources for local authorities

- **£9.7 million** of new funding for day-to-day maintenance costs to essential playground repairs and the creation of new green spaces, which will give local leaders and communities resources to better maintain, protect and increase their recreational spaces.
- **£1 million** 'pocket parks' fund to help communities transform neglected and derelict spaces and establish over 80 new green spaces in urban areas across the country. Additional **£2.75 million** will also be made available for the pocket parks plus programme to support communities to take the lead in transforming their neglected and derelict spaces.

"This latest funding will support bold proposals to help renovate and restore existing parks and create new vibrant, safe green spaces for our communities".

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP

Finance Report

- Difficult to gain true comparisons on actual spend on parks by authority. (different definitions and also as to what's included)
- Over a quarter parks budgets lost across England since 2010/11
- Slightly more than losses against similar neighbourhood services
- Losses most marked in urban authorities
- Significant benefits to investing in parks - £1 investment gave £36 worth of benefits (Sheffield study)
- Increasing reliance on income generation and external funding

Impact of cuts

Immediate impacts:

- Reduced maintenance
- Closure of facilities and buildings
- Lack of staff – increase in ASB and vandalism

Long-term impacts:

- Loss of skills and public liaison capability
- Lack of support for Friends groups and volunteers
- Further reduction in funding and community involvement
- Visual decline and reduced feelings of safety
- Loss of mental and physical well being benefits

Developing the modern parks professional.

- New skills and competencies now being clearly identified with varying levels of confidence against them.
- Concern about loss of horticultural skills
- Gaps in training provision in areas such as commercial acumen, marketing of assets, influencing policy makers and stakeholders and championing the service.
- Need for development of a competency framework linked to supportive training programme which will support staff at different levels to create career pathway

Work being undertaken

- Development of competency framework and training matrix
- Liaise with training organisations to look at 'filling gaps' and creating modular training packages.
- Consideration of more creative use of Apprenticeship Levy at all levels.
- Better use of 'experts' within the industry to support and mentor parks professionals.
- Identification of senior champions within organisations to speak up for parks service and its cross-cutting benefits.
- Profile raising campaign to promote attractiveness of parks and greenspaces career.

Nurturing Skills For 21st Century Parks

Final Report now completed and presented to MHCLG.
Will be published with Finance Report shortly.

Extracts from the report now available.

- Executive Summary
- Conclusions and Recommendations
- Competency Framework

Consultation on the report still welcome on line,
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3T36TDT>

Hard copies available to complete during lunchtime or by sending in to APSE.

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