



LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

AGENDA

17th Meeting, 2018 (Session 5)

Wednesday 23 May 2018

The Committee will meet at 9.30 am in the James Clerk Maxwell Room (CR4).

1. **Alcohol licensing in Scotland:** The Committee will take evidence, in a roundtable format, from—

Laura Mahon, Deputy Chief Executive, Alcohol Focus Scotland;

Mairi Millar, Clerk, City of Glasgow Licensing Board;

Fiona Stewart, Depute Clerk, North Aberdeenshire Licensing Board;

Susan Elliot, Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Coordinator, NHS Borders and Member of the Scottish Borders Local Licensing Forum;

Stuart Wilson, Chairman, East Ayrshire Licensing Forum;

Chief Inspector Alison Kennedy, Safer Communities, Police Scotland;

Roger Colkett, Tollcross Community Council;

John Shearer, President, Scottish Licensed Trade Association;

John Lee, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Scottish Grocers Federation.

2. **Accessing greenspaces in Scotland:** The Committee will take evidence, in a roundtable format, from—

Julie Procter, Chief Executive, Greenspace Scotland;

Dr Matt Lowther, Head of Place and Equity, NHS Health Scotland;

Colin Rennie, Manager, Scotland, Fields in Trust Scotland;

Bruce Wilson, Scottish Environment LINK (and Scottish Wildlife Trust);

Kevin O'Kane, Greenspace Officer, Fife Council;

John Kerr, Chair, Edinburgh Green Spaces Forum.

3. **Alcohol licensing in Scotland (in private):** The Committee will consider the evidence heard earlier in the meeting.
4. **Accessing greenspaces in Scotland (in private):** The Committee will consider the evidence heard earlier in the meeting.

Jane Williams
Clerk to the Local Government and Communities Committee
Room T3.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
Tel: 0131 348 5232
Email: jane.williams@parliament.scot

The papers for this meeting are as follows—

Agenda item 1

Note by the Clerk

LGC/S5/18/17/1

PRIVATE PAPER

LGC/S5/18/17/2
(P)

Agenda item 2

Note by the Clerk

LGC/S5/18/17/3

PRIVATE PAPER

LGC/S5/18/17/4
(P)

Local Government and Communities Committee

17th Meeting 2018 (Session 5), Wednesday 23 May 2018

Alcohol Licensing in Scotland: Note by the Clerk

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 31 January 2018 the Committee agreed to hold a one-off round table evidence session on Alcohol Licensing in Scotland in order to explore the ability of communities to engage with and influence alcohol licensing decisions in their areas.

Background

2. The key legislation that controls the sale of alcohol in Scotland is the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. Subsequent Acts that have also had an impact on the sale of alcohol are the Alcohol etc. (Scotland) Act 2010, the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010, and the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2015.
3. In a [letter to the Committee in November 2017](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Justice indicated that the Scottish Government is currently working on updating the statutory guidance for alcohol licensing. It is expected that this work will be completed by mid-2018.
4. This evidence session relates to the Committee's strategic priority 3: Power to the people (empowering local communities).

Licensing Boards

5. Decisions on the provision of alcohol licences are the responsibility of Licensing Boards in each local authority area. These are quasi-judicial bodies consisting of locally elected councillors, with support from local authority staff, including a qualified solicitor who provides legal advice. Licensing Boards are entirely separate legal entities from local authorities.
6. Licensing Boards are now required to produce an annual income and expenditure report on their activities. The first reports by Licensing Boards were published in late 2017. Licensing Boards are now also required to produce a report on their functions. These reports must be published three months after the end of the financial year.

Local Licensing Forums

7. Under the 2005 Act Local Authorities were required to establish Local Licensing Forums (LLFs). The role of LLFs is to review the operation of the licensing system in their area and to give general advice to the Licensing Board. They cannot comment on individual applications.

8. Membership of LLFs includes the Licensing Standards Officer for the area and a representative of the local health board, as well as others in the community with an interest in licensing matters.
9. At the round table key issues for exploring include:
 - a. the transparency, accountability and public participation in the decision making process for the licensing system;
 - b. how LLFs operate across Scotland, including differences in practice between different local authorities; and
 - c. how appropriate levels of licensed premises in local areas are determined.

Witnesses

10. The following individuals have agreed to take part in the round table session:
 - Roger Colkett, Tollcross Community Council;
 - Susan Elliot, Scottish Borders Licensing Forum;
 - Chief Inspector Alison Kennedy, Police Scotland;
 - John Lee, Scottish Grocers Federation
 - Laura Mahon, Alcohol Focus Scotland;
 - Mairi Millar, City of Glasgow Licensing Board;
 - John Shearer, Scottish Licensed Trade Association
 - Fiona Stewart, North Aberdeenshire Divisional Licensing Board; and
 - Stuart Wilson, East Ayrshire Licensing Forums.

Written submissions

11. Participants at the roundtable were given the opportunity to submit written evidence ahead of the session should they wish to do so. This written evidence can be found at Annexe A.
12. In addition to inviting witnesses to attend a round table session the Committee also sought written views from Licensing Boards and Licensing Forums across Scotland. This written evidence can be found in Annexe B.

Graeme Donoghue
Assistant Clerk
May 2018

Annexe A**Written Submission from Mairi Millar, Clerk, City of Glasgow Licensing Board**

The views expressed in this paper are my own and not necessarily that of Glasgow City Council or the City of Glasgow Licensing Board.

PART ONE – TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS FOR THE LICENSING SYSTEM**1. BACKGROUND**

Licensing is an important issue for both businesses and local communities. For many individuals, partnerships and companies, it is the access point to starting up a new business venture, often bringing investment, employment and regeneration to different areas throughout the city. However, for local residents and communities it can often be a source of anxiety and concern as to how a licensed activity will impact upon their lives and the amenity of the local area, with issues such as anticipated noise, nuisance and antisocial behaviour common themes of objections to new licence applications.

The licensing process is often seen as having to play a balancing act between these competing interests, by ensuring that the process for gaining permission to carry out a licensed activity is not unduly difficult or lengthy, but at the same time ensuring that it is controlled and regulated in such a way that it does not impact negatively on the local community.

This paper sets out my own views on issues relevant to the decision making process for alcohol licensing and explores the opportunities to improve community engagement, including how we can assist in enabling and empowering local elected members and community councils to effectively represent their constituents in the licensing process.

2. DECISION MAKING – MEMBERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 provides that a Licensing Board is responsible for the licensing and regulation of the sale of alcohol in each council area in Scotland. The Act requires that Licensing Board members are councillors within the relevant council area.

While there are specific types of applications which require to be determined by the Licensing Board at a hearing held in public (including all new alcohol premises licences and major variations of alcohol premises licence), there is also a scheme of delegations which allows for certain lower level and non-contentious applications to be determined by the Clerk to the Licensing Board who must be a solicitor appointed by the council for this purpose.

All licensing decisions taken by the Licensing Board are subject to the rules of natural justice, with a statutory right of appeal to the Sheriff Principal in the first instance.

The issue of the potential for a new type of licensing tribunal comprising representatives from various interested organisations and community representatives was considered as part of an independent review of alcohol licensing instructed by the Scottish Government in 2001. The review panel was chaired by Sheriff Principal Gordon Nicholson and the resulting report was published in 2003, forming the basis for the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.

One of the issues raised by consultees during the review was that Licensing Boards should be replaced by a new kind of tribunal which would be composed of representatives from a range of bodies and organisations with an interest in the operation of licensing law. It was suggested that this could include representatives from the licensed trade, local residents' groups, police, public health and so on. However the review panel was not persuaded that a representative body, drawn from a variety of backgrounds, would in fact be an effective and coherent decision making body. The panel found that there would inevitably be a risk of competing sectional interests, which could adversely prejudice the consistency and continuity of decision making.

The Nicholson Report concluded that elected councillors are well suited to being members of Licensing Boards on account of their local knowledge and their democratic accountability to the electorate and therefore the report did not recommend changing the statutory requirement regarding membership.

Given the above findings by the independent review panel led by Sheriff Principal Nicholson, and the fact that licensing hearings are subject to the rules of natural justice, with decisions being subject to appeal to the Sheriff Court, it is essential that there continues to be sufficient accountability in the decision making process for licensing.

The required degree of accountability is provided by Licensing Board members being subject to the Standards Commission Code of Conduct in their capacity as councillors. The Code of Conduct sets out specific guidance on the conduct of members in relation to quasi-judicial bodies such as licensing and planning. It is respectfully submitted that it would be more difficult to achieve the same level of accountability in relation to the conduct of lay-members or trade representatives.

3. DECISION MAKING – TRANSPARENCY AND EVIDENCE BASED DECISION MAKING

In terms of taking into account the views of the local community, any objections or representations to an application, including representations in support, must meet the criteria set out in the 2005 Act. Generally, any objection or representation must be in writing (which includes emails) and must relate to one or more of the grounds for refusal.

It is not enough that local residents “*don’t want*” another alcohol licence in their area, there must be some evidence or causal link between the specific application and a statutory ground for refusal, for example that there is sufficient probability that the premises, if licensed, will adversely impact, or exacerbate, issues in the area in relation to alcohol related public health, public nuisance, public safety or crime and disorder.

Where objections lack the necessary detail or relevant reasoning, it can often lead to frustration amongst local residents who feel that their views have not been taken into account.

However, giving weight to objections which fail to meet the statutory criteria is likely to lead to a decision being overturned on appeal if there is insufficient material on which to justify a decision to refuse an application for a new licence or major variation of an existing licence.

4. DECISION MAKING – STATUTORY PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and various statutory instruments set out the processing requirements for the different types of alcohol licence applications, including the consultations to be carried out, the procedures for making objections and representations and the grounds on which applications can be refused.

The Licensing Procedure (Scotland) Regulations 2007 provide that details of these applications must be advertised either on the Licensing Board’s website for a period of 21 days or in a newspaper circulating throughout the area of the Board.

A site notice containing details of the application must also be displayed at or near the premises.

Neighbourhood notification letters must also be issued to all owners/occupiers of neighbouring land within 4 metres of the applicant premises.

The last date for representations and objections to an application must not be earlier than 21 days after the date on which the application was first advertised.

In Glasgow, our practice is to set the last date for representations and objections as 28 days after the date on which the application was first advertised, which allows submission of responses up to 7 days after the date on which the site notice can be taken down.

Concerns have been expressed that the consultation period for responding to new premises licence or major variations does not tie in with community council meetings and therefore does not allow sufficient time for proposals to be properly scrutinised and discussed.

In any discussion as to whether the period for objections and representations should be extended, consideration should also be given to the impact that this could have on increasing the length of time that applications take to be determined so as not to unfairly prejudice the applicant for a new licence.

A fair balance should be achieved.

With regard to the extent of neighbourhood notification, again there have been suggestions that the 4 metre distance set out in the regulations should be increased. The number of notification letters triggered by this requirement can vary dramatically depending upon the nature of the locality in which the applicant premises are situated.

In Glasgow the average number of neighbourhood notification letters issued is around 10, however this can substantially increase if the premises are located in a tower block or in a shopping centre. Where the applicant premises are situated in a stand-alone building, it may be that no neighbourhood notification is triggered.

As with many issues, finding the right balance across all licensing board areas can be difficult, and one option may be to allow each individual licensing board to set the appropriate distance for neighbourhood notification.

5. EMPOWERING LOCAL ELECTED MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE LICENSING PROCESS

In addition to any changes which may be made to procedural issues within the 2005 Act or regulations, it is important to consider how we can look to assist in enhancing the role of local elected members and community councils as the gate-keepers for community engagement in the licensing process.

As the main consultees for licence applications involving the use of premises for the sale of alcohol, elected members and community councils are intended to represent the views of local residents and to make objections or representations to applications where there is either concern or support for an application within the local community.

There are a number of ways in which we can seek to assist in enhancing the role that elected members and community councils play in representing the views of local residents:-

- Training sessions for elected members and community councils on specific areas of alcohol licensing, with practical advice on making more effective objections and representations to better represent local communities
- Making more information available on-line regarding licence applications and licences in force in order to enhance awareness of new licensing proposals and the regulation and control of licensed activity
- Publishing annual performance reports on how we have delivered the licensing service to businesses and local communities, with a particular focus on the promotion of key licensing objectives in relation to public

health, protecting public safety and preventing public nuisance and ensuring greater awareness of these reports

- Improve the information provided to elected members and community councils in consultation letters in order to enhance understanding of the nature and extent of proposed licence activity
- Further develop the role of Licensing Standards Officers to create improved links and engagement with elected members, community councils and local residents on issues arising from the operation of licensed premises
- Additional training and information for elected members and community councils will also seek to enhance awareness as to how local residents can raise concerns regarding the operation of licensed premises to allow for more effective use of early interventions so as to avoid an escalation of issues.
- Changing and improving the way in which we consult on the development of new licensing policy statements to provide more opportunity for direct input from local residents and businesses, with community engagement events being held in different localities throughout the licensing board area
- Licensing should work in conjunction with community planning partners to examine opportunities to better align service delivery with the wider community empowerment strategy to identify where changes to licensing legislation or procedures are required

PART TWO – HOW LOCAL LICENSING FORUMS OPERATE ACROSS SCOTLAND, INCLUDING DIFFERENCES IN PRACTICE BETWEEN DIFFERENT LOCAL AUTHORITIES

1. THE ROLE OF LOCAL LICENSING FORUMS

Under the 2005 Act, each council must establish a Local Licensing Forum consisting of between 5 and 21 members, to include a local Licensing Standards Officer, a person nominated by the Health Board, a representative of the Chief Constable, and other persons considered to be representative of the interests of persons or descriptions of persons who have an interest in the licensing function.

The membership should include representatives of premises licence holders, persons having functions relating to health, education or social work, young people and persons resident within the Forum's area.

Meetings of the Local Licensing Forum must be held in public and there should be at least one joint meeting each year with the Licensing Board.

Local Licensing Forums have responsibility to:-

- (i) keep under review the operation of the Act in the Board's area;

- (ii) keep under review the exercise by the Licensing Board of its functions under the Act; and
- (iii) give such advice and make recommendations to the licensing board in relation to those matters which the Forum considers appropriate.

2. EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL LICENSING FORUMS

Concerns have been expressed that in some areas Local Licensing Forums are not fulfilling their statutory purpose, with irregular meetings due to a lack of participation by some members.

The experience in Glasgow, however, has been a positive one, with quarterly meetings which are well attended and include various presentations and contributions on a range of licensing topics across different areas of the licensed trade, with regular reports from Licensing Standards, Community Safety and the Clerk to the Licensing Board.

The Local Licensing Forum has also successfully established a sub-group to make comprehensive evidence based recommendations to the Licensing Board on the key policy issues of licensed hours and overprovision, using the knowledge and expertise of a number of organisations represented on the Forum.

There are also regular discussions on licensing legislation, for example the implementation of minimum unit pricing and how it will be monitored and enforced across the city.

The development of an agreed annual work plan has proved particularly effective in maintaining a focus for the Forum and ensuring that there is a plan in place to ensure that members remain up to date with issues of changes in licensing legislation and local policy.

The Local Licensing Forum in Glasgow has offered officials in other council areas an opportunity to attend meetings in Glasgow and to meet with officials involved in the organisation of the Forum in order to share examples of good practice.

PART THREE – OVERPROVISION OF LICENSED PREMISES

1. PROACTIVE ASSESSMENT OF OVERPROVISION

The development of a proactive assessment of overprovision is one of the key parts of a Licensing Board's Licensing Policy Statement. Each licensing board is under a statutory duty to include a statement in its licensing policy as to the extent to which it considers there to be an overprovision of licensed premises, or licensed premises of a particular description, in any locality within the Board's area.

In carrying out this assessment, the Licensing Board must consult with the Chief Constable, the relevant health board and such persons as appear to it to be representative of the interests of holders of premises licences in the area and of persons resident in the area.

2. CONSULTATION AND EVIDENCE GATHERING

In Glasgow, the Licensing Board has developed a comprehensive approach to the development of its new licensing policy statement, particularly in relation to the key issue of overprovision.

The consultation process has involved the following:-

- Consultation document issued to key stakeholders and interested parties, seeking views on the effectiveness of the current policy statement, what works well and what can be improved. This included seeking comments in relation to the Board's general approach to overprovision and the impact that the policy on overprovision has had in localities throughout the Board's area.
- Evidence Sessions to hear directly from various individuals and organisations, with particular focus on the criteria used to assess overprovision and to establish views on whether certain areas of the city should be identified as an area of overprovision.
- Meetings with young persons at two of the city's secondary schools to seek the views of young people on licensing policy and what it means to them.
- Meeting with Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships to hear views from medical experts involved in both the prevention and treatment of alcohol related harm and from social work services in terms of care and assistance provided to those with alcohol dependency.
- A Focus Group Event attended by 50 representatives of community councils and premises licence holders to discuss and share views on licensing policy and in particular overprovision and the impact that higher concentrations of licensed premises can have on a local community as well as the licensed trade itself.

The Focus Group event was attended by Licensing Board Members, facilitated by the Clerk to the Board and supported by Licensing Standards Officers, licensing Police and Community Safety Glasgow. The event provided an opportunity to better understand the impact of licensing policy from both a licensing trade and community perspective, as well as giving an insight into the challenge faced by the Licensing Board in balancing often competing interests in the development of its policy statement.

- Analysis of the recommendations made by the Local Licensing Forum on areas to be considered as overprovision localities based on alcohol related health information and alcohol related crime and disorder statistics.

3. NEXT STEPS

The next stage of the consultation process will be to prepare the draft policy statement, including the draft overprovision assessment that will identify proposed

overprovision localities (including the evidence obtained to justify identifying those localities) which will be issued for full public consultation.

It is likely that the Licensing Board will hold a number of events throughout the city to encourage members of the public and premises licence holders to share their views on the draft policy.

Mairi Millar
Clerk
City of Glasgow Licensing Board

Written Submission from Tollcross Community Council

Introduction

Tollcross Community Council (TXCC) covers an area in the South West of the Edinburgh City Centre; it has a relatively high number of licensed premises of various types. Most months there will be one or two applications in our area either for a new licence or for a variation to an existing licence. If we think that there are genuine grounds for objecting and that there is a chance that our objection will be successful, then we submit our objection to the Licensing Board and speak to our objection at the meeting of the Board during which the application in question is considered. None of us is a member of the Edinburgh Licensing Forum but one of us usually attends as a member of the public.

Our comments on the matters that this session is to look at

1. The transparency, accountability, and public participation in the decision-making process for the licensing system
 - a. Lack of public availability of information regarding alcohol licences
 - There is no easily available register of existing premises licences in Edinburgh.
 - The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) website provides no information on how to complain about existing licensed premises.
 - Notice of licensing applications is provided to residents of immediately adjacent premises only, even though the effect of the application may well impinge on the lives of residents in a much wider area.
 - b. Insufficient information to community councils regarding licence applications

Although CEC notifies each community council (CC) of licensing applications in their area, only a summary of each application is provided (and that is all that is available on the CEC website). A member of the CC must visit the CEC's offices and ask to see the layout plan and operating plan of the premises in question to assess the impact of what is being applied for.

- c. Procedure at Licensing Boards favours applicants over objectors

The current convener of the Edinburgh Licensing Board has made the process less intimidating to objectors but there are still problems.

- Most applicants are accompanied by an experienced legal adviser who speaks on their behalf but objectors – many with little or no experience of licensing law or the Board's procedures – must speak for themselves.
- Applicants are provided with a copy of each objection, but objectors are not provided with a copy of the application.
- Objectors must speak first, in ignorance of the arguments the applicant's adviser will deploy, but are not allowed to speak again unless asked by a Board member.

2. How Local Licensing Forums operate across Scotland, including differences in practice between different local authorities.

Our comments relate to the Edinburgh Licensing Forum.

- a. Concerns regarding Transparency and Governance

A review of the Forum membership, including consultation with the existing membership at the time, took place during 2017. The Council approved a revised constitution and membership in November. In April 2018, in the light of concerns about the scope of consultation on the revised constitution and the lack of transparency regarding the process by which individual members are selected and appointed, the Council's Governance, Risk and Best Value committee called for a further review of the constitution and membership. That review is still in progress. Meanwhile the existing Forum continues to meet with its membership unchanged and with several vacancies among the residents who feel outnumbered by the members of the trade. And it will be this Forum, with its unamended constitution and membership, that is likely to be consulted on the Licensing Board's Statement of Policy.

- b. Public accessibility

In theory meetings of the Edinburgh Licensing Forum are held in public. In practice its meetings are always held during the working day and are not webcast; so, excluding anyone who has a fulltime job with normal hours. Meetings are always held in the same room. Forum members sit round a long table and everyone else who attends has to sit behind them against the walls where, there being no microphones, only those with the acutest hearing can comfortably follow the proceedings

3. How appropriate levels of licensed premises in local areas are determined.

- a. Previous Board

When the previous Board was provided with statistics showing the areas of Edinburgh with very high levels of alcohol-related crime & disorder or morbidity & premature mortality, instead of designating those areas as areas of overprovision it designated them as areas of "serious, special concern", a pointless exercise as it gave no grounds for refusing a licensing application in terms of the Act and any refusal could be overturned on appeal.

- b. Current Board

As far as the new Board is concerned, as they have yet to formulate their policy statement and are in fact still consulting, time alone will tell. Who knows, maybe the current board members will recognise that promoting economic development is not one of the five Licensing Objectives listed in the Act.

c. What we hope for

We at TXCC are persevering in seeking to persuade the Board that the area of overprovision should be extended to include those streets in our area with the greatest number of licensed premises, particularly where those premises are within residential tenements.

Also, in view of the clarification by the Air Weapons and Licensing Act of 2015 that the locality constituting an area of overprovision may be the whole of a Board's area and given that the objective of protecting and improving public health has never in our experience been invoked as a reason for refusing a licence application, we have proposed that, with over 70% of alcohol sold in Scotland being bought from off-licensed premises and most of that from the large supermarket chains, the whole of Edinburgh should be designated an area of overprovision of off-licensed premises where alcohol is sold in the same shop as food and other normal household products.

The adoption of such a policy would curtail the creeping normalisation of alcohol whereby generations of children have grown up seeing alcohol sold alongside bread, potatoes, milk etc, just like any other product; it would also prevent the further proliferation of premises that promote the impulse buying of alcohol by people who have found their favourite tipple being promoted in the shop that they've popped into to buy their tea.

Unfortunately, we don't know exactly how much alcohol is sold through individual examples of such chains because that information is "commercially confidential" but if premises of that type wanted to appeal against a refusal to grant a licence as part of such an overprovision policy, the onus would be on them to provide statistics on which to base their challenge.

R. Colkett
Tollcross Community Council

Written Submission from Borders Alcohol & Drugs Partnership (ADP)

This paper provides information on local experiences from Scottish Borders ADP Senior Development Officer who is a member of the Local Licensing Forum (LLF). The purpose of this paper is to help inform the Local Government and Communities Committee's roundtable session on alcohol licensing to be held on 23rd May 2018.

Summary

Transparency, accountability and public participation in the decision making process for the licensing system

- Annual function reports by Licensing Boards will support LLFs in reviewing the operation of the licensing system, however no information on the content of these has been received.
- There is a potential role for strategic bodies involved in community planning to be aware of licensing policies, the impact availability of alcohol can have on local areas as well as knowledge and understanding of potential involvement they can have in the decision making process.

How Local Licensing Forums operate across Scotland, including differences in practice between different local authorities

- Guidance developed for LLFs was mainly around the setting up of the groups and no further updates or guidance has been provided. There is a need for guidance to be updated.
- No training is provided for LLFs despite mandatory training required for all other stakeholders involved in Licensing.
- Positive working relationships and strong leadership locally has supported the work of the LLF with dedicated time outwith meetings to support specific pieces of work e.g. alcohol profile

How appropriate levels of licensed premises in local areas are determined

- Alcohol related harm is outlined in an alcohol profile by intermediate zones which is provided by the LLF to the Licensing Board. The Licensing Board Policy considers this evidence within the Alcohol Profile but will also take into account the immediate adjoining areas.

1. Transparency, accountability and public participation in the decision making process for the licensing system;

Public participation in the decision making process has been a challenging area with overly formal processes and Licensing Board meetings across Scotland. In Borders the venue of the Board meeting was reviewed and relocated with the seating arrangements allowing a friendlier layout and names of all participants shown. This was viewed as a positive approach by members of the trade who sit on the Local Licensing Forum (LLF). As part of the role of the LLF, to keep under review the operation of the licensing system, all members of the LLF are encouraged to attend and observe the Licensing Board, however, timings of meetings can make this

difficult for members. As recommended in the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2015, the annual functions report will also help with transparency and accountability however to date the LLF has not received any further information on this.

Policy statements are often written in legalistic language making them challenging to read. On occasion information can be included on areas that are not relevant to the policy. Locally a short life working group of the LLF was set up in Scottish Borders to make initial comments on the Licensing Board Policy Statement 2013-16 in view of the forthcoming update. Comments included ensuring the language was understandable to the wider community to allow public participation. Positive working relationships have also allowed discussion between the Alcohol and Drug Partnership Support Team and Licensing Team on developing a set of questions to use when consulting on the new Policy Statement.

Support provided by the Licensing Standards Officers to individuals making applications to ensure their application is compliant with Policy and Licensing Objectives works well in Borders and can avoid inappropriate applications being submitted.

While it has not necessarily been noted in Borders it is the case that decisions could be influenced by an awareness of potential legal challenge from well-resourced organisations should an application be refused. This is likely to be a concern for Board members.

Increasing Community Awareness on Licensing

Alcohol Focus Scotland recently launched a new toolkit in 2017 to help people raise concerns about the impact of alcohol in their local community. All Licensing Boards, LLFs and Licensing Standards Officers have been sent copies of the toolkit to help with dissemination. The Scottish Borders Licensing Standards Officers supported dissemination and awareness raising in Scottish Borders communities of this toolkit by working with the ADP to deliver presentations to all Area Forums. However, it is recognised that community engagement is low despite attempts to increase knowledge. In 2016 a community engagement event was held in an area by the ADP with high level of community activists and high levels of alcohol harm. The findings from this work suggested a disconnect between Public Health perspectives on alcohol related harm and community views and experience relating to what is safe and 'normal' in response to alcohol.

A way forward to increase community engagement may be initially to ensure all strategic bodies involved in community planning are aware of licensing policies, the impact availability of alcohol can have on local areas as well as knowledge and understanding of potential involvement they can have in the decision making process. Locally the Licensing Board Chair is a member of the ADP and ADP is a member of the LLF. Strategic partnerships such as Children & Young Peoples Leadership Group have received a presentation on the role that they can have in influencing licensing decisions to ensure the protection of children and young people. Other methods of engaging with communities could include the use of social media platforms. Members of the Scottish Borders Local Licensing Forum have previously

held surveys with communities on licensing via Facebook which was included within the Alcohol Profile (further details below).

Joint Working

A lack of understanding around the Public Health Objective has been raised nationally. Locally, positive working relationships between Public Health, ADP Support Team and Licensing Standards Officers has allowed a good understanding of their respective areas in licensing and health and allowed opportunities to work together to improve knowledge and understanding in communities.

Public Health routinely review all applications and variations and are alerted to any occasional licenses that may go against the objective of protecting children and young people from harm to ensure there is the opportunity to make representation to the Board.

2. How Local Licensing Forums operate across Scotland, including differences in practice between different local authorities

Scottish Borders LLF has membership including communities, trade, health and police; however, it is challenging to engage new members, particularly young people representation. Many 'core' members have been involved with the LLF from 2009. The LLF has a rotating chair which is supported by the Alcohol & Drugs Partnership (ADP) Senior Development Officer and the agenda is set with support from this officer and Licensing Standards Officers. Further support is provided by these officers to ensure an annual report is prepared as well as identifying any training needs and providing leadership within the LLF.

A challenge for the forum is that the Guidance developed for Local Authorities around LLFs was mainly around the setting up of the groups and no further updates or guidance has been provided. Having core members on the group has helped keep its focus, however, updated guidance for LLFs and how they can improve their role in effective scrutiny of the licensing system would be welcomed.

The LLF has been active in ensuring members are clear about the role and function which has included self assessment, joint training with Licensing Team and inputs from external speakers including Alcohol Focus Scotland (AFS).

A key role of the LLF is to develop an annual Alcohol Profile that provides statistical information to support the Licensing Board in its development of Licensing Policy Statement including overprovision and decision making. The Alcohol Profile is produced by the ADP Senior Development Officer and a Business Analyst from Scottish Borders Council. The Profile provides data against the five licensing objectives from a range of local and national sources including:

- Scottish Health Survey
- National Services Scotland, Information Services Division
- Police Scotland
- NHS Borders
- Scottish Borders Council Legal and Licensing Team

Members of the LLF are encouraged to attend the Licensing Board to witness the discussion and decision making but it is recognised that this can be challenging for members due to the timings of the Board meeting. Minutes of all Licensing Board meetings are a standing item on the LLF agenda.

Positive working relationships exist on the LLF, however, it is recognised that despite opportunities being created to give communities greater input to licensing there is further work required to improve public engagement.

Continuous professional development

No training has been provided nationally for LLF's, however, networking events held by Alcohol Focus Scotland have allowed sharing of good practice. National events/training for LLF members would be welcome due to the variance across the country and responsibility for this lying locally with a few individual members. As there is no training provided for LLFs it provides an additional challenge for new members who join the LLF and this is met locally by the ADP and LSO. As all other stakeholders must complete mandatory training (Licensing Boards/Personal Licence Holders), it would make sense to ensure the body whose role is to keep under review the operation of the act should also receive mandatory training.

Locally the LLF is kept up to date on national licensing developments including updates on MESAS (Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's Alcohol Strategy Final Annual Report) and Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act (2012) through the ADP and LSO. A request has also been made to allow a joint CPD session on the new Policy Statement with the Licensing Board once developed.

3. How appropriate levels of licensed premises in local areas are determined

There is no clear guidance around what constitutes over provision and leaves this difficult for local areas to influence. However when considering overprovision it is clear that this is not about reducing the number of licensed premises in an area but instead about being clear on the correlation between areas with high alcohol outlet availability and harm. Therefore overprovision is about preventing further increase of alcohol availability.

Local area profiles have been created looking at the relationship between alcohol outlet availability and harm by the Centre for Research on Environment, Society and Health (CRESH) at the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. This will be utilised by the ADP when considering applications and overprovision.

Scottish Borders Policy notes that, when considering applications for a particular type of premises in a particular area, the Board will consider the locality as the Intermediate Geographies detailed in the Alcohol Profile as the area within which the premises are situated, but will also take into account the immediate adjoining areas. The Board will also take into account the overall availability in the Borders.

Susan Elliot
ADP Coordinator

Written Submission from Alcohol Focus Scotland

This briefing provides information in advance of the Scottish Parliament Local Government & Communities Committee Evidence Session on Alcohol Licensing on Wednesday 23 May 2018. You can read the AFS report *Taking Stock: Views and experiences of alcohol licensing in Scotland in 2016/17* [here](#).

Summary

Alcohol Focus Scotland has a keen interest in alcohol licensing as the main mechanism for controlling the availability and sale of alcohol. We undertake research, provide information, resources, support, training and qualifications to many stakeholders in alcohol licensing. Our main stakeholders in this work include Scottish Government, members of the licensed trade, Licensing Board Members, Licensing Standards Officers, Health Boards, Alcohol & Drug Partnerships, Local Licensing Forums and members of the public. This support is intended to promote the five licensing objectives, increase transparency and accountability within the licensing system, ensure the licensing system is evidence-led and promote and encourage public participation.

- Along with controls on the price and marketing of alcohol, controls on the availability of alcohol are amongst the most effective and cost-effective policies for reducing the burden of alcohol harm.
- The alcohol licensing system is the main tool that we have in Scotland to control alcohol availability.
- The MESAS evaluation of the implementation of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 concluded that there was a lack of compliance with provisions of the Act aimed at generating accountability and transparency in the licensing system.
- AFS held a series of regional licensing events during late 2016 to consider the findings of the MESAS evaluation of the licensing system and provide an opportunity for licensing stakeholders to comment and suggest recommendations in response to the findings.
- Local Licensing Forums have the potential to play an important role in public participation, scrutiny and accountability but have faced numerous challenges including a lack of support and resources which has limited their role and potential contribution.
- Defining and determining overprovision of licensed premises continues to be an area of challenge within the licensing system.
- Clearer national direction and guidance from Scottish Government is essential for improvements to the licensing system and to ensure it is contributing to efforts to reduce alcohol harm in Scotland.

The Role of Alcohol Licensing in Reducing Alcohol Harm

Along with controls on the price and marketing of alcohol, controls on the availability of alcohol are recognized by policy experts around the world, including the World Health Organisation (WHO), as being the most effective and cost-effective policies for reducing the burden of alcohol harm. Over 50 studies published since 2000 find

an association between alcohol availability and alcohol-related problems¹. The greater the availability of alcohol, the more people drink and correspondingly, harms increase.

The alcohol licensing system is the main tool that we have in Scotland to control availability. It works to reduce the possible harms caused by alcohol by controlling the overall availability of alcohol through deciding the number, type and operating hours of licensed premises, and by regulating the way in which individual licensed premises do business.

At the heart of the alcohol licensing system in Scotland are the five licensing objectives:

- Preventing crime and disorder
- Securing public safety
- Preventing public nuisance
- Protecting and improving public health
- Protecting children and young people from harm

Licensing boards must seek to promote the licensing objectives in a policy-driven approach to alcohol licensing. The promotion of the licensing objectives signifies the purpose of the licensing system to reduce harm. Licensing boards are required to publish a statement of licensing policy (SLP) within 18 months of local government elections². The SLP should set out their approach to promoting the objectives and operating the licensing system in their jurisdiction. SLPs must also include a statement on overprovision of licensed premises within the board area³.

Alcohol strategy and the contribution of licensing

In 2009, the same year that the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 came into force, the Scottish Government published its alcohol strategy, *Changing Scotland's Relationship with Alcohol: A Framework for Action*. This established a whole population approach to reducing alcohol harm and identified action on availability as one of three key mechanisms – alongside price and marketing – to achieve this.

The Scottish Government-commissioned NHS Health Scotland project, *Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's Alcohol Strategy (MESAS)* evaluated the implementation of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and undertook a subsequent documentary review of developments in licensing since 2012. MESAS found a number of areas of challenge including: a lack of transparency and accountability; limited involvement of the public leading to a lack of scrutiny; and a limited role for Local Licensing Forums. MESAS concluded that there remains a lack of compliance with provisions in the 2005 Act aimed at generating accountability and transparency in the licensing system⁴.

¹ Alcohol Focus Scotland (2017) Licensing Resource Pack.

² The next Statements of Licensing Policy are due for publication by Scottish Licensing Boards in November 2018.

³ Alcohol Focus Scotland (2017) Licensing Resource Pack.

⁴ 2 x MESAS evaluations Beeston, C., Reid, G., Robinson, M., Craig, N., McCartney, G., Graham, L. & Grant, I. (on behalf of the MESAS project team) (2013). *Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's*

Transparency, accountability and public participation

Given the public interest purpose that underpins alcohol licensing, it is essential that communities are empowered to participate in the licensing process, and feel that their contributions have been given due regard. It is therefore of particular concern that the interlinked issues of the lack of public participation, and lack of transparency and accountability in the system are key findings of both the MESAS evaluations⁵, and of AFS's work with communities and other licensing stakeholders⁶. Some of the main problems identified have been:

- Inconsistencies in policy and practice by licensing boards, with a lack of transparency about the factors determining boards' decision making, and challenges in monitoring those decisions. Our work with communities has shown that many feel that their views are not taken into account by licensing boards, leaving them feeling disempowered and with a lack of faith in the accountability of the system.
- An inability to access comprehensive data about licensed premises in local areas, including information on the decisions being made, the number of licences, the capacity of premises and their opening hours.
- Failures to comply with key provisions of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, such as adhering to required timescales for productions of statements of licensing policy and overprovision statements⁷. Such failures create uncertainty for all interested parties, undermines confidence about the consistency of decision-making, and potentially leaves boards more open to legal challenge.
- The perceived poor accessibility of licensing processes acting as a barrier to meaningful engagement, including overly formal processes, intimidating licensing hearings, and a lack of accessible information about the work of licensing boards.

Transparency and accountability are key to building public trust in the licensing process and encouraging public engagement; this in turn should improve the responsiveness of the licensing system to local needs. It is to be welcomed, therefore, that some steps are being taken to address the issues identified:

- We have supported the new requirement for licensing boards to produce an annual functions report, including data reporting. This should enable greater

Alcohol Strategy. Third Annual Report. Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland

<http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/22621.aspx>

⁵ 2 x MESAS evaluations Beeston, C., Reid, G., Robinson, M., Craig, N., McCartney, G., Graham, L. & Grant, I. (on behalf of the MESAS project team) (2013). *Monitoring and Evaluating Scotland's Alcohol Strategy. Third Annual Report.* Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland
<http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/22621.aspx>

⁶ Alcohol Focus Scotland (2017) Taking Stock

⁷ AFS's analysis of the 2013 statements of licensing policy found that despite being due in November 2013, by April 2014 only 25 of 36 policy statements were available. Six of the 25 did not include the overprovision statement. Alcohol Focus Scotland (2014) Review of Statements of Licensing Policy 2013 to 2016

scrutiny of the licensing process, making it easier to monitor how licensing boards are undertaking their functions⁸.

- AFS has produced a toolkit to support communities to engage in the licensing process. This has been well received by communities and licensing stakeholders, including licensing boards, forums and LSOs⁹.
- We are seeing examples of improved consultation processes as licensing boards begin to prepare their new statements of licensing policy and overprovision policies, due in November 2018.
- The Scottish Government is currently consulting on new licensing procedure regulations, including issues relating to community engagement, such as notification distances and timescales.

Nevertheless, further action is required to ensure the licensing system facilitates public engagement and proper scrutiny:

- We are disappointed that the opportunity was not taken to consult widely, particularly with communities, on the form and content of the annual functions report. While we recognise the need for a reporting mechanism which is not unduly onerous on licensing boards, it is essential that this new requirement meets the objective of increasing transparency and accountability by improving the information available to the public. We believe the Scottish Government should seek feedback on the reports published this year, with a view to providing further guidance/regulations on the form and/or content if required.
- To improve the accessibility of licensing data, we recommend that the Scottish Government create a publicly accessible, national database of personal licence holders and premises licences, including a breakdown of the types and capacity of licensed premises.
- Licensing boards should ensure that their administrative processes provide transparency and accountability, for example by: having a set of published standing orders; board papers and minutes being published on time; board minutes recording the names of board members voting for/against a decision; and holding hearings on statements of licensing policy.
- The Scottish Government should hold licensing boards and local authorities to account where they fail to fulfil their duties, such as failing to produce reports within required timescales, or failing to establish a licensing forum.

The role of Local Licensing Forums: A missed opportunity

Local licensing forums were introduced by the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 with the purpose of keeping the operation of the licensing system in their area under review and giving advice and recommendations to the Licensing Board. Forums have the potential to play an important role in providing for public engagement in, and scrutiny of the licensing system. While the 2005 Act does not require forums to have community membership, they must seek to ensure so far as possible that their membership is representative of the interests of persons resident in the forum's area.

⁸ The first Annual Functions Reports are due for publication in June 2018.

⁹ Alcohol Focus Scotland (2016) Alcohol licensing in your community: how you can get involved

However, the MESAS evaluations identified that forums are not functioning effectively¹⁰ and this was a key topic of discussion at the regional seminars held by AFS in 2016. A number of problems preventing forums from fulfilling their role in the licensing system were identified by stakeholders:

- A lack of resources, support and training for forums, causing a significant constraint on their effective functioning.
- A lack of awareness and shared understanding of the role and remit of licensing forums amongst existing members.
- Concern about poor communication between forums, boards and communities.
- Concern that forums' lack of any real powers risked them being tokenistic.
- Difficulties in attracting and retaining members.
- Competing interests can make reaching consensus hard for forums¹¹.

Where forums are able to provide valuable input and have influence within the licensing system, it would appear that this tends to be in areas where staff resources have been committed to the forum or where there is leadership provided by one or two key members with good knowledge of licensing law and practice.

Regional seminar participants made suggestions for addressing the problems identified, including the introduction of mandatory training for local licensing forums and diversification of membership. However, given the range of problems identified, AFS has recommended that the Scottish Government commission a thorough review of the function of Local Licensing Forums, prior to implementing any actions intended to improve their functioning. This should provide recommendations on how to improve their role in ensuring effective scrutiny and accountability within the licensing system.

Forums, however, should not be viewed as a panacea for ensuring community engagement in licensing. While they have the potential to provide a structured format for regular involvement and scrutiny, communities must be supported in other means of participation, including providing input on licence applications and commenting on licensing policy and overprovision statements.

How many is too many? A question of overprovision

The overprovision assessment is intended to give licensing boards power to act in the public interest to restrict the number of licensed premises or premises of a particular type in areas where there is concern about alcohol-related harm, or the potential for the licensing objectives to be undermined. An overprovision statement can create a rebuttable presumption against the granting of further licences to premises or premises of a particular type in any given locality within the licensing board's area. This has the potential to 'cap' the number of licensed premises.

¹⁰ Beeston, C. et al (2013), op cit.

¹¹ Alcohol Focus Scotland (2017) Taking Stock

Recent research conducted by the universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow for Alcohol Focus Scotland has added to the evidence base on relationship between alcohol availability and harm. This research found that areas with the most places selling alcohol had four times the crime rate, double the alcohol-related death rate and almost double the alcohol-related hospitalisation rate of those areas with the fewest outlets¹².

Sixteen licensing boards have currently identified some or all of their area as having overprovision of alcohol outlets.

Licensing boards have a duty to consult with members of the community when assessing overprovision. The overprovision policy therefore is a key mechanism through which communities can attempt to influence licensing by providing views on the impact of alcohol in their community. However, we know that many licensing boards report difficulties both in defining and determining overprovision¹³¹⁴. While our most recent work shows confidence is growing, there is continued concern about licensing boards failing to adhere to existing policies, or implementing them inconsistently. There was consensus at the regional licensing events in 2016 that out of date statutory guidance was contributing to the inconsistency in approach and some of the other challenges outlined above.

Work to update the statutory guidance has begun and has focused initially on updating the sections on SLPs and overprovision assessments. Draft interim guidance was issued to Licensing Boards in February 2018 to assist them in the policy development process during 2018. This followed time-limited consideration and review by a group of advisors including commercial licensing lawyers, licensing clerks, LSOs, AFS and health board representatives. We are disappointed that the opportunity was not taken to engage more widely with the full range of interested stakeholders. Whilst the appointed advisors have sought to provide necessary update and clarity, we are aware that some licensing stakeholders feel excluded from this process.

Clearer national direction and guidance from Scottish Government is essential for improvements to the licensing system and to ensure it is contributing to efforts to reduce alcohol harm in Scotland. AFS and partners made a series of recommendations for the alcohol strategy refresh due for publication during 2018 including a clearer expectation of how licensing can and should contribute to reducing consumption and harm in Scotland. We provided further specific recommendations on improving the licensing system in our Taking Stock report in 2017. Transparency, accountability and public participation are at the heart of these recommendations and our ongoing work in alcohol availability and licensing.

¹² CRESH profile

¹³ MESAS

¹⁴ Taking stock

Annexe B**Written submission from North Ayrshire Licensing Board**

The main themes mentioned in the letter of 6 April 2018 from the Convener to the Local Government and Communities Committee to the Chief Executive were:

- 1 "the transparency, accountability and public participation in the decision making processes for the licensing system"
- 2 "how LLFs operate across Scotland"
- 3 "how appropriate levels of licensed premises in local areas are determined"

The Board's submission follows.

1 "the transparency, accountability and public participation in the decision making processes for the licensing system"

Distinguish:

- (a) Premises Licence grants and Non-Minor Variations (commonly called "Major Variations")
- (b) Personal Licences, Occasional Licences, Minor Variations, Extended Hours Applications

1(a) Premises Licence grants and "Non-Minor Variations" (commonly called "Major Variations")

Transparency:

The Agendas for Licensing Boards are publicly-available on the Board's website. The Agendas contain Reports detailing the individual proposal. In the case of a grant, the Report will describe the proposal, the operating hours, the nature of activities apart from the sale of alcohol, and the arrangements for access by under-18s. In the case of a Major Variation, the Report will set out the exact Variation requested.

The Board is always obliged to place a notice of the Application on its website.

The Board is always obliged to send either the whole Application or at least a Notice of it to any functioning Community Council, as well as the Council itself (done by sending all the Application, the Operating Plan and Layout Plan, to the Council's Chief Executive).

Applicants are always obliged to display a Site Notice at or near the Premises setting out their proposals.

Decisions on these Applications occur following a public hearing (Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, Schedule 1, Paragraph 12). The Law which permits a Licensing

Committee to hold proceedings in private (for example to avoid the public disclosure of a person's convictions or confidential information) (Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975, Section 50A and Schedule 7A) does not apply to Boards.

Accountability:

Boards are composed of elected local Councillors.

Public participation

As there is website advertisement, the Application is publicly accessible.

Anyone (not limited to neighbours or particular bodies or interest groups) can state an Objection or Representation (Section 22) and can speak or be legally represented at Board meetings.

1(b) Personal Licences, Occasional Licences, Minor Variations, Extended Hours Applications

Transparency

(i) Personal Licences: There is only consultation with the Police and Licensing Standards Officer.

(ii) Occasional Licence Applications are published on the Board's website for 7 days (where the Convenor is satisfied that a particular case is urgent, the legislation permits this period to be reduced to 48 hours). Even with the full 7 day publication, objections or representations from the public are very rare.

(iii) Minor Variations: There is no consultation with anyone (such as Police, Licensing Standards Officer, Health Board, or a Council Department). Since the legislation makes the grant of a "Minor Variation" mandatory, the decision can be made by a Board or by an officer acting under Delegated Powers.

(iv) Extended Hours: There is only consultation with the Police and Licensing Standards Officer. The absence of public consultation is not so significant as the words 'no consultation' might suggest, because Extended Hours relate to Premises which are already Licensed. If the conduct of the Premises or its patrons during the Extended Hours period gives a cause for complaint, that may be raised with the Board through the usual Premises Licence Review procedure - the Board dealing with a Review would have the same powers to Revoke, Suspend, Vary or issue a Written Warning as it would in any other Review. Extended Hours Applications are determined in accordance with the Board's Policy, which will already be publicly set out in its Licensing Policy Statement.

Accountability

The great majority of these matters are dealt with under Delegated Powers granted by the Board, where decision-making can be made within acceptable parameters, and are not the subject of a Board Hearing. In the rare cases where the matter calls

at a public hearing of the Board, this is likely to be because of a comment by the Police or Licensing Standards Officer (for example, the Police might report that the Applicant has criminal convictions).

Public participation

There is Public participation only with Occasional Licences.

2. "how LLFs operate across Scotland"

Local Licensing Forum participation varies widely across Scotland. In North Ayrshire, the Forum faded away as attendance by members declined. The legislation envisages a membership of up to 21 but in North Ayrshire membership has rarely exceeded half of that, and often the Forum was kept going by the persistence of the LSO. In late 2017 the Forum was reconstituted with new members who have not had previous experience of Licensing, so their ability to contribute to the development of the LPS in late 2018 and to carry out the other statutory functions of the Forum is yet to be seen.

Forums were created in time for the 2005 Act commencing fully in September 2009. The Forum in North Ayrshire has not contributed greatly to the Licensing process.

3. "how appropriate levels of licensed premises in local areas are determined"

This is a matter for individual Boards:

- (a) Some Boards have no Overprovision Policy at all,
- (b) other Boards apply Overprovision in discreet geographical areas only,
- and
- (c) others apply an Overprovision Policy throughout their area.

North Ayrshire Licensing Board is in category (c) - it has an Overprovision Policy covering its whole area. The Board adopted the Policy after receiving data from the Health Board and the Police and Fire Authorities. Although the Board carried out the mandatory consultation, no member of the public commented and one Community Council made a brief comment.

The Policy is applied differently depending upon the Locality involved. The Policy divides the Board's area into six Localities, corresponding to the Community Planning Partnership areas. The Policy creates a presumption of refusal in all cases, but the presumption is graded:

- it is harder for an Applicant to overcome it if the proposed Premises are in 4 of the 6 Localities where health figures are poor,
- it is less hard if the Premises are in the other 2 Localities;
- the presumption of refusal becomes harder still for an Applicant to overcome if the proposed Premises are an off-sales shop;

- but it is weaker if the proposed Premises are on-sales such as restaurant or hotels (places where the primary function is the provision of food or accommodation).

The Board's website is:

<https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/business/licences-and-permits/food-alcohol-gambling-licences/licensing-board.aspx>

This includes the current LPS. The Overprovision Policy is Annex E. The Policy is supported by several documents (listed (a) to (g) on that website). The Board's approach is illustrated by Document (b) ("Neighbourhood Areas") which is a short EXCEL colour-coded spreadsheet survey of the 38 Intermediate Zones in North Ayrshire. Each Intermediate Zone has a measure of ten indicators drawn from NHS data, comparing the local measures with the Scottish average, and colour-coding the results accordingly.

The 10 indicators used are drawn from about 50 available. The Board chose these as they were considered by the Board to be most relevant to alcohol licensing:

1. Life expectancy - males
2. Life expectancy - females
9. Patients hospitalised with alcohol conditions
38. Population income deprived
39. Working age population employment deprived
40. Working age population claiming Jobseeker's Allowance
41. Dependence on out of work benefits or child tax credit
43. Crime rate
44. Prisoner Population
46. Patients hospitalised after an assault

A 'Traffic Light' system colours each indicator:

red : Statistically significantly 'worse' than Scottish average

white : Statistically not significantly different from Scottish average

blue : Statistically significantly 'better' than Scottish average

Therefore each of the 38 Intermediate Zones has 10 indicators, a mixture of red, white and blue. The Policy divides the Board's area into 6 "Localities" (5 on the Mainland and one for the Isle of Arran). The Mainland Localities are groups of Intermediate Zones, coinciding with the areas of the Community Planning Partnership. Some Localities have a preponderance of red, whereas other areas do not.

The result is that the spreadsheet provides a readily-understood visual explanation of why the Board applies the Overprovision Policy more strongly in some areas.

Written Submission from South Ayrshire Licensing Board

I have been asked to write to you on behalf of South Ayrshire Licensing Board following your letter of 6th April.

Transparency, accountability and public participation in the decision making process for the licensing system

The Board felt that there had been little public participation in the decision making process. Very few applications have attracted either objections or representations from the public; the only exception recently being objections to occasional licences from a neighbour where there noise issues. The Board is surprised that Community Councils have not taken more interest in decisions and wondered if, in part, this was due to the time limit for objections/representations being too tight for such organisations. It considered that this might be resolved by extending the time limit for objections for premises licences, provisional premises licences and non-minor variations to 42 days although it accepted that this would have a knock on effect on businesses keen to start operating.

How LLFs operate across Scotland

The South Ayrshire Local Licensing Forum is active and meets quarterly; however, there is a high turnover of membership. It is challenging to acquire “young people” to sit on the Forum due to exams, university, etc. The LSO who attends the Forum advises that Forum members had a lack of understanding of their role and a frustration at the restriction of the role. The Board feels that it might be advantageous to have a National Forum which could address the problems faced by individual local licensing forums.

How appropriate levels of licensed premises in local areas are determined.

At present the Board does not have an overprovision policy but this is currently being considered as part of the Board’s review of licensing policy. However the Board members are concerned that from their local knowledge they know that people do travel outwith their immediate neighbourhood to buy alcohol- whether this is driven by price or convenience (buying alcohol when doing other shopping).

Ideally the Board would like to see changes in the legislation which would mean that alcohol could only be purchased in dedicated off sales facilities rather than be seen as a “normal” purchase along with the weekly or daily groceries. It does however accept that this would be a major shift in national policy.

Yours faithfully

Morag Douglas
Team Leader (Licensing)

Written Submission from Orkney Local Licensing Forum

I refer to your letter dated 6 April 2018 and would advise that it was considered by the Orkney Local Licensing Forum on the 24 April 2018.

With respect to the main themes to be considered by the Local Government and Communities Committee on the 23 May 2018 I have been asked to comment as follows on behalf of the Convener of the Orkney Licensing Forum.

The transparency, accountability and public participation in the decision making process for the licensing system

It is recognised that applications are made public, Board and Forum meetings are held in public and determinations are also publicly available. Board members consist of elected Councillors and are therefore publicly accountable. Licensing Forum membership is encouraged across wide representation encompassing licensing control, health, commercial interest and public interest. Board policy is subject to public consultation. We see no issue.

How LLFs operate across Scotland

LLFs perform their duties meeting and scrutinising Board policy. Although recognised that administrative support is required to be provided by the Local Authority, the level of support will vary across Authority areas. In the current and future economic climate this support will be under pressure.

Orkney Local Licensing Forum supports the establishment of a National Licensing Forum to promote best practice and would seek Scottish Government to fully support its support.

How appropriate levels of licensed premises in local areas are determined

The Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board's current Statement of Alcohol Licensing Policy contains the following statement in relation to overprovision:

"On 14 March 2013, the Board determined:

- That there are no specific localities within the Board's area which should be assessed in relation to overprovision and that Orkney should be treated as a whole; and
- that there is no overprovision of licensed premises or licensed premises of a particular description within the locality of Orkney defined by the Board.

The Board concluded that there was not a dependable causal link between the evidence provided to the Board and the operation of licensed premises, to suggest that a saturation point had been reached, or was close to being reached, within the locality of Orkney defined by the Board."

With each application being determined on its own merits against the licencing objectives and a Board's policy statement, it is difficult for Boards to evidence that a

particular application will lead to overprovision or would be inconsistent with one or more of the licensing objectives. It is the providing of a dependable causal link between the evidence and the operation of licensed premises in a locality that is difficult. With respect to saturation of an area this is mainly down to market forces.

Placing emphasis on the applicant to demonstrate how their application will not cause overprovision and how it meets licencing objectives may restore some balance.

Yours sincerely

David Brown
Environmental Health Manager
(on behalf of the Convener of the Orkney Licensing Forum)

Written Submission from West Dunbartonshire Licensing Forum

Having consulted Members of West Dunbartonshire Licensing Forum, the undernoted view is submitted on behalf of the Licensing Forum:-

The Forum's view is that the proposals, as suggested, are unnecessary and would add another level of bureaucratic interference. The Forum is also concerned that such a process could lead to bad decision-making. The view is that the forum is the body for the public to express views on licensing policy and licensing decision-making. This is one of the main purposes for establishing local licensing forums in the first place and to add to that in some other way is, as has been stated, adding another level of unneeded bureaucracy. It is further the Forum's view that it is exclusively for licensing boards to make decisions on licensing matters. As we know, forums are there to inform, and in some cases guide licensing boards, but the decision-making should rest with the board and the board alone.

Nuala Borthwick
Committee Officer
West Dunbartonshire Council

Written Submission from Fife Licensing Board and Fife Licensing Forum

I refer to your letter of 6 April to the Chief Executive of the Fife Council inviting the Licensing Board and Licensing Forum to submit comments on the themes set out in your letter to be discussed by your committee at their session on Alcohol Licensing in Scotland on May 23.

The Fife Licensing Board and the Fife Licensing Forum discussed the matters set out in your letter at their joint meeting on 26 April and I have been asked to convey the views of the Board and Forum to you.

The Board is made up of elected members of Fife Council representing wards across Fife and the Forum has a membership who represent wide ranging interests in the regulation of the sale of alcohol in Fife. The Members of both the Board and the Forum have a good awareness of the views of their communities in relation to licensing and were not aware of any local feeling or perceptions that Board proceedings were not transparent or that local people were deterred from commenting on licensing applications. The meetings of the Board are held in public and the local press are usually in attendance to report on the proceedings. Members of the public can also attend.

The Fife Licensing Forum has met regularly since it was formed under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and has given useful advice to the Board over the years on a number of topical matters relating to the regulation of the sale of alcohol. The Forum's input on policy and general licensing matters has been very useful to the Board in carrying out its functions. Meetings of the Forum are also held in public but members of the public do not normally attend. At the joint meeting, members of the Forum have agreed to look at some initiatives such as creating a social media or other online presence to make local people more aware of the Forum and the work it does. In particular, the Forum has found it difficult to recruit young people to its membership and wishes to find ways to encourage young people to get involved.

It was noted that one of the topics your committee is to consider is how appropriate levels of licensed premises in local areas are determined. This is a matter that is under active consideration by the Board at the moment in reviewing its Statement of Licensing Policy. The position that the Board finally adopts will be informed by evidence from stakeholders including health agencies and the police and wide ranging consultation with local people and organisations. The Forum will play a key part in the consultation. However the Boards and Forum have identified that the impact of restricting alcohol outlets in local areas is reduced by the ease by which alcohol can be delivered to homes from outwith local areas. The regulation of online sales may be a matter which your committee would wish to consider.

Yours sincerely

June Barrie
Legal Services Manager

Written Submission from West Dunbartonshire Licensing Board

West Dunbartonshire Licensing Board would submit the following comments for the Committee's consideration:-

- In terms of transparency, accountability and public participation in the decision making processes for the licensing system the Board are very keen to ensure public participation and engagement. The Board will continue to look at new ways to engage and advertise its functions to the local community, as far as it can in terms of the current legislation. The Board welcomes the introduction of the requirement for a Functions report which will hopefully help to increase the transparency, accountability and public participation in licensing matters.
- In terms of the operation of Local Licensing Forums across Scotland, the West Dunbartonshire Licensing Forum works well at a local level. The Board have observed it to be very well attended and engaged in local licensing matters. This is reflected in the annual meetings that the Board has with the Forum and also, the involvement of the Forum in engaging and responding to the Board's Policy Statement and also, the Forum's assistance in the Nightzone West initiative. Accordingly, from the West Dunbartonshire Licensing Board's perspective the Local Licensing Forum operates very well.
- West Dunbartonshire Licensing Board has taken an evidence based approach to policy matters in conjunction with considering representations made by all respondents to its consultations, including the local community and the Local Licensing Forum. This provides the Board with a full range of views on the level of licensed premises within the area.

Raymond Lynch
Depute Clerk to the Licensing Board

Written Submission from West Lothian Licensing Board

The West Lothian Licensing Board has been invited to comment on the following main themes:

- The transparency, accountability and public participation in the decision-making processes for the licensing system;
- How LLFs operate across Scotland; and
- How appropriate levels of licensed premises in local areas are determined.

The transparency, accountability and public participation in the decision-making processes for the licensing system

1. The Board recognises the importance of community engagement in the licensing system and the need to ensure that the licensing process is accessible to all. The Board is committed to conducting its business in an open and transparent manner. All Board meetings are held in public and are advertised in advance on the Council's website along with the agenda for the meeting. Minutes of Board meetings are published on the council's website afterwards. The Board provides extensive guidance and information on its website for members of the public who are engaged with the alcohol licensing system or wish to object to an application. Information to the public is also provided by the Board in its statement of policy. This policy is currently under review and as part of this the wider community in West Lothian is being invited to contribute to this review by responding to a detailed online consultation regarding the policy.

2. The Board notes that the Scottish Government is currently consulting on an update to the Licensing (Procedure) Scotland Regulations 2007 with a view to improving community engagement. These regulations provide for various procedural matters under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, relating to, amongst other things, the notification of licence applications, objections, representations, determinations and hearings. The Board will respond to this consultation in detail in due course.

3. The Board would draw the Committee's attention to a recent decision by the Sheriff Court in South Lanarkshire - Martin McColl Ltd v South Lanarkshire Licensing Division No 2 (East Kilbride Area), 21 August 2017 (HAM –B233-17). In this case the Sheriff overturned on appeal a decision of the Licensing Board to refuse a premises licence under the licensing objectives, preventing public nuisance, and protecting children from harm. Fifteen objections had been received regarding the application and the Sheriff's decision contains a detailed analysis of all the objections received by the Board which had been taken into consideration by the Board when refusing the application. The Sheriff rejects all the objections as irrelevant to the licensing decision. The Board highlights this case as it reflects the Board's experience that a large number of objections received in relation to licensing applications, both from members of the public and other stakeholders such as the NHS, are not based on matters that can be considered by the Board in terms of an alcohol licensing decision under the 2005 Act. Therefore legally they cannot be used to justify a ground of refusal under the 2005 Act.

4. The Board would observe that this suggests that there is a general lack of understanding of the alcohol licensing system amongst the wider public and other stakeholders. The Board observes that this leads to inevitable frustration among objectors when they are told by the Board that the objection cannot be taken into account. The Board would welcome any measures that could be introduced to promote better understanding of the licensing system particularly with regard to objections. The Board would encourage the Scottish Government to publish guidance for members of the public across Scotland to promote a better understanding of the system. This may improve the quality of objections and representations made and prevent the submission of groundless objections and frustration by objectors. This may improve the efficiency of the system.

5. The Board notes a proposal in the consultation to extend the notification requirements for premises licence applications under the 2005 Act. In view of the above concerns the Board questions whether extending notification arrangements is necessary. The legislation is complex and hard for the public to understand. The Board considers that advisers particularly Police Scotland are best placed to raise concerns about applications to the Board. The Board would also invite the Committee to consider the likely impact on administrative and advertising costs to Boards resulting from increased notification requirements which costs require to be passed on to licence holders.

How LLFs operate across Scotland

1. West Lothian Licensing Board has a properly constituted Local Licensing Forum (LLF) operating in the area. The LLF for the West Lothian area experiences many of the same issues seen with LLFs across Scotland.

Membership

2. There has been an increasingly difficult challenge of appointing a Chair and this is in part due to the membership of the Forum.

3. Despite extensive attempts to encourage applications to join the Forum, there still remains a heavy imbalance toward Council and Health officials, with very little engagement from the licensed trade or general public itself.

4. Many of these officials are reluctant to Chair the Forum due to the commitment that would be required for the position. As such, the Forum is now failing to drive forward any meaningful body of work that could help shape the way licensing operates in the West Lothian Board area.

Training

5. It is a concern that training is not mandatory for Forum members. The 2005 Act, its many regulations and the caselaw arising from it are extremely complex. It is the Board's view that the LLF has expectation levels based upon information, particularly from Alcohol Focus Scotland that Boards simply "rubber stamp" applications and that having an overprovision policy is the best way to solve this. This is not correct and

the grounds for refusal of applications and the presumption of grant contained in the legislation are not understood.

6. The Board is of the view that the role of the Forum should be reviewed and training for Forum members from an independent source should be mandatory.

How appropriate levels of licensed premises in local areas are determined

1. The only method by which numbers of licensed premises can be controlled by a Licensing Board is by refusal of applications on the grounds of overprovision. The legislation provides that Boards must have regard to statutory guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers in exercising its functions and where it does not follow the guidance must give ministers notice of the decision and the reasons for that.

2. The guidance states that the Board has a duty to carry out wide ranging consultation prior to the formulation of an overprovision statement. It goes on to state that “the results of all consultation should be evaluated to identify robust and reliable evidence which suggests that a saturation point has been reached or is close to being reached *always provided that a dependable causal link can be forged between that evidence and the operation of licensed premises in a locality*”. This is a test which is very difficult to meet and was originally written to target on sales premises which are decreasing.

3. The guidance has been reviewed recently but the revised version has not been formally approved yet by Ministers. In any event although the document provides clearer guidance in some respects the test remains the same.

4. This test is not readily understood by Licensing Forums and NHS Boards. In West Lothian we have noted a great deal of frustration on the part of the Forum and NHS Lothian staff who are of the opinion that as there is evidence that people in West Lothian are drinking to harmful levels the Board should be able to find evidence to formulate an overprovision policy.

5. The Board is of the view that it is not as simple as that and whilst it shares the concerns of those working in public health about drinking habits it does not believe that it has powers to introduce measures to reduce consumption of alcohol.

6. The other difficulty is that as West Lothian has for several years had a steadily increasing population whilst the numbers of licensed premises has remained static it is hard to see how it could be argued that a saturation point has been reached or is close to being reached. In addition, without a change in the law to allow Boards access to sales volumes and information about where local people purchase alcohol it is difficult to see how evidence can show that a dependable causal link can be forged between evidence of saturation and the operation of licensed premises in a locality.

7. The Board is of the view that the overprovision legislation needs to be completely reviewed.

Written Submission from South Lanarkshire Council

I refer to your letter of 6 April 2018 and write to update you.

South Lanarkshire Licensing Board as you might be aware is divided into four licensing divisions. Therefore, I have consulted with and included responses from each specific Division to ensure all of their views are represented.

Licensing Forums are statutory bodies set up under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 to advise the Board if it so wishes. The Council's Finance and Corporate Resources Committee is responsible for agreeing the framework (number of members etc) and the operational side is dealt with by Licensing and Registration Services. The Forums are made up of publicans, members of the public, community council representatives, young people, licensed grocers etc. There is one elected Councillor on the Hamilton Local Licensing Forum but they do not hold this position as a result of their Council position.

South Lanarkshire Licensing Division No. 1 (Clydesdale area)

The Division wished to stress that a large part of its area is rural and therefore, its policies differ from mainly urban licensing divisions. The Division is satisfied that all their processes including those involving applications are transparent and accountable. Currently, the Division is in the process of reviewing their Statement of Licensing Policy (as are the other Divisions) and have asked members of the public for views on overprovision by way of a pre-consultation survey which was available on the Council website and via social media. This increased the responses normally received.

It is intended that a further consultation will take place later in the year.

With regard to the Local Licensing Forum for the Clydesdale area, the Division is disappointed that the forum in Clydesdale Division is not currently operating as it has insufficient members due to a lack of interest from the general public. In South Lanarkshire the Council's then Corporate Resources Committee agreed the criteria and framework for the forums which are then administered by the Licensing and Registration team within Legal Services. The Clydesdale Division deal with the lack of an active forum by extending any consultation to include a more diverse group of people than it would if the forum was active.

The Division deals with each application on its own individual merits by taking into account the information before it. There are currently no localities deemed overprovided for in the Clydesdale area.

South Lanarkshire Licensing Division No. 2 (East Kilbride area)

Like the Clydesdale Division the East Kilbride Division undertook a pre-consultation survey also available on social media to try and increase public participation in the reviewing of the Statement of Licensing Policy particularly in respect of overprovision. As in the case of Clydesdale, East Kilbride also operates an "opt-in" list to notify those persons who are interested in any applications in their area.

However, despite the availability of the “opt-in” list being advertised in the local press there has been no uptake to date. Information on the “opt-in” list will shortly be available online.

The Local Licensing Forum in the Division is not as proactive as the Board had hoped it would be. However, it is hoped that when the reviewed policy goes out to full consultation, the Forum will engage with the Licensing Division particularly in respect of any possible localities identified by the Division as overprovided.

Similar to the Clydesdale Division, all applications are dealt with on their own merits by taking into account the information before it while ensuring the applicant is given the opportunity to respond to any local knowledge which the Division is intending to take into account in the decision making process.

South Lanarkshire Licensing Division No. 3 (Hamilton area)

The Division also undertook the survey referred to above as well as a pre-consultation exercise. While all four divisions took part in a pre-consultation exercise (in addition to the survey) only one response was received which related to the East Kilbride Division. Like the other Divisions the Hamilton Division operates the “opt-in” list facility. Even though there is no-one on the list, its availability is advertised in the local press as well as notifying objectors or persons complaining about licensed premises of its availability. Information on the “opt-in” list will shortly be available online.

The Division would like the Local Licensing Forum to have more interaction with the Division than it currently has. It is anticipated that this will improve/increase when the draft policy is issued for consultation later in the year.

The Hamilton Area Licensing Division had designated two localities in its area as overprovided. Generally all applications are dealt with on their own individual merits on the information before the Board members. It is ensured that, as in all of the four Divisions, the principles of natural justice are always adhered to.

South Lanarkshire Licensing Division No. 4 (Rutherglen/Cambuslang area)

The Division did not wish to comment at this time due to the fact that most of the members are relatively new to the Board.

However, it is worth noting that all of the procedures referred to above are also followed by the Division which also participated in the pre-consultation survey and exercise.

I trust the above information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

Lindsay Freeland
Chief Executive

Local Government and Communities Committee

17th Meeting 2018 (Session 5), Wednesday 23 May 2018

Accessing greenspaces in Scotland

Introduction

1. This paper provides background information on the Local Government and Communities Committee's roundtable evidence session on accessing greenspaces in Scotland.

Background

2. The Scottish Government recognises the importance of greenspace and states that it is committed to supporting the provision of an environment which contributes towards well-designed, sustainable places with access to services and amenities.
3. In Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) the Government states that one of the principles that should guide all planning policies and decisions is "protecting, enhancing and promoting access to natural heritage, including green infrastructure, landscape and the wider environment". In addition, the Scottish Government provides investment to support key greenspace initiatives, such as the Central Scotland Green Network.¹
4. Since 2013, the Scottish Government has tracked progress against [a national indicator to improve access to local greenspace](#). It does so by recording percentage of adults within 5 minutes walking distance of their nearest local greenspace. It states that the indicator is important because greenspace has substantial environmental and health impacts, but also links to community aspects, such as community cohesion, social connectedness and community resilience. Being able to access high quality greenspace can improve the health, wellbeing and confidence of people and communities.
5. Performance against this indicator has remained fairly static over the years, however when last recorded in 2016, 65.4% of adults lived within a 5 minute walk of their nearest greenspace, compared to 67.6% in 2013.
6. The Scottish Government is in the process of reviewing the National Performance Framework and the Scottish Parliament is in the process of scrutinising the draft outcomes, which were published on 29 March 2018. As currently drafted, the Scottish Government have proposed to include an indicator to measure "Access to green and blue space."²

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/indicator/greenspace>

² http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S5_Local_Gov/Inquiries/Updated_National_Outcomes.pdf

Greenspace Scotland's report

7. Much of the above is explored further in the publication of Greenspace Scotland's February 2018 report entitled [Third State of Scotland's Greenspace report](#) which it states was supported by the Scottish Government. Greenspace Scotland is a social enterprise and an independent charitable company. It works with national and local partners to improve the quality of life of people living and working in urban Scotland through the planning, development and sustainable management of greenspaces as a key part of the green infrastructure of towns and cities.
8. The report reveals the extent and type of urban greenspace in all 32 Scottish local authority areas. It also provides summary information from the 2017 Greenspace Use and Attitude Survey and the Improvement Service Local Government Benchmarking Framework.
9. The report provides some best practice examples from Local Authorities on assessing the quality and accessibility of land, but determines that there is an opportunity to look at ways of better assessing the national picture of the quality of greenspace land using more comparable methods of collecting local data. It also highlights that work is ongoing to explore the potential to develop a more robust method of assessing greenspace accessibility using the new OS (Ordnance Survey) Greenspace products.
10. The report sets out how access to greenspace impacts communities by contributing to the Scottish Government's strategic objectives (set out below) through some further best practice examples.
 - A wealthier and fairer Scotland
 - A smarter Scotland
 - A healthier Scotland
 - A safer and stronger Scotland
 - A greener Scotland
11. Amongst its main findings, the report states that whilst many Scots continue to value the importance of greenspace and that most local authorities have open space strategies in place, the quality of Scotland's parks and greenspaces is in decline and fewer people are using their local greenspaces regularly.
12. The report find that adults living in the most deprived areas are more likely to live further away from their nearest greenspace (at least 11 minutes away), less likely to be satisfied with their nearest greenspace and less likely to use their nearest greenspace as people are more likely to use greenspace if it is close by and of good quality.

Local Government and Communities Committee Consideration

13. The Committee will take evidence in a roundtable format from the following listed below at its meeting on 23 May 2018. Following the session, the Committee will consider in private, the evidence heard and any further action it wishes to take in

relation to this matter. Written submissions from those attending are attached at **Annexe A**, alongside a submission received from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Written Submission from greenspace Scotland

Access to greenspace

Greenspaces make a big difference to our quality of life and quality of place. They are our natural health service, our children's outdoor classrooms and our cities' green lungs. Over 90% of urban Scots say it is important to have greenspace in their local area.

But all is not well with Scotland's greenspaces. The quality of Scotland's parks and greenspaces is declining and fewer people are using their local greenspaces regularly. As a non-statutory service, budgets for parks and greenspace services are under pressure.

Our written evidence draws on the views and experience of the wider greenspace network, Park Managers Forum and responses to a short online survey.

1. Policy context to local action

Greenspaces contribute to urban quality of life in many different ways and play an important role in developing a healthier, safer and stronger, wealthier and fairer, smarter and greener Scotland – see illustration in Annex 1.

The important contribution of greenspace is recognised and embedded in a wide range of national policies from planning and regeneration, health to early years, climate change to community empowerment.

↻ Whilst the national policy framework for greenspace is strong, there continues to be a gap between rhetoric and reality. Action on the ground is failing to deliver on the ambition of national policy and the aspirations of local communities.

2. Greenspace for people – use and attitudes

The 2017 Greenspace Use and Attitudes survey found:

- **greenspace matters:** over 90% of respondents agreed that it is important to have greenspace in their local area
- **greenspace is a universal service:** nearly half (43%) of urban residents visit their local greenspace once a week or more often, and only 4% said they never visit local greenspaces
- **parks and greenspaces are in decline:** 40% of people think the quality of their local greenspace has reduced in the last 5 years (up from 33% in 2011) and this

figure rises to 50% for people living in the 15% most deprived areas (up from 35% in 2011)

- **gap between expectations and local realities:** local greenspaces continue to fall short of people's expectations for them to be good places for children to play, safe places for physical activity, and somewhere to relax and unwind
- **quality impacts on use:** quality ratings and greenspace use both peaked in 2009, since then the percentage of people using greenspace weekly has fallen by 20 percentage points, from 63% (2009) to 43% (2017)
The 2017 survey recorded the lowest weekly frequency of greenspace use since the survey began in 2004.

➡ There is an urgent need for coordinated action to reverse these depressing declines in greenspace use and quality – and the negative impacts they will have on our health, our communities and our environment.

3. Access to greenspace – proximity and quality matters

The 2017 Greenspace Use and Attitudes survey found that:

- almost half (44%) of urban Scots reported they live within a 5 minute walk of their nearest greenspace
- people who live within a 5 minute walk of their local greenspace are significantly more likely to visit once a week or more often, compared to those living further away

The Scottish Government's national indicator is the 'percentage of adults within 5 minutes walking distance of their nearest greenspace'. The current measure from the Scottish Household Survey shows that 67% of adults in Scotland live within a 5 minute walk of greenspace.

Work is underway in Scottish Government to develop a more objective and robust measure using the new OS MasterMap Greenspace Layer. Early results indicate that on a mapping basis, the percentage of people living within a 5 minute walk of greenspace may be higher than current figures from the Scottish Household Survey. The Third State of Scotland's Greenspace Report² shows that **greenspace covers 54% of the urban land area**. The total area of greenspace is 1,593 square kilometres – equivalent to the area of 22 Loch Lomonds or one-third of the Cairngorms National Park.

➡ For many areas of urban Scotland the key issue is not access to greenspace or shortage of greenspace, but the quality of the spaces.
The national indicator should be amended to '*improving access to quality greenspace*'.

4.1 Finances - parks feeling the pinch

Whilst most local authorities have open space strategies, as austerity continues to impact on public sector spending, Council expenditure on parks and greenspace (as a non-statutory service) has declined.

- Improvement Service's Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)³ shows that net **expenditure on parks and greenspace per 1000 people has reduced in real terms by 24.3%**, from £28,520 to £21,581 from 2010/11 to 2016/17
- spending on only three other services (roads, planning and street cleansing) has fallen further than parks and greenspaces

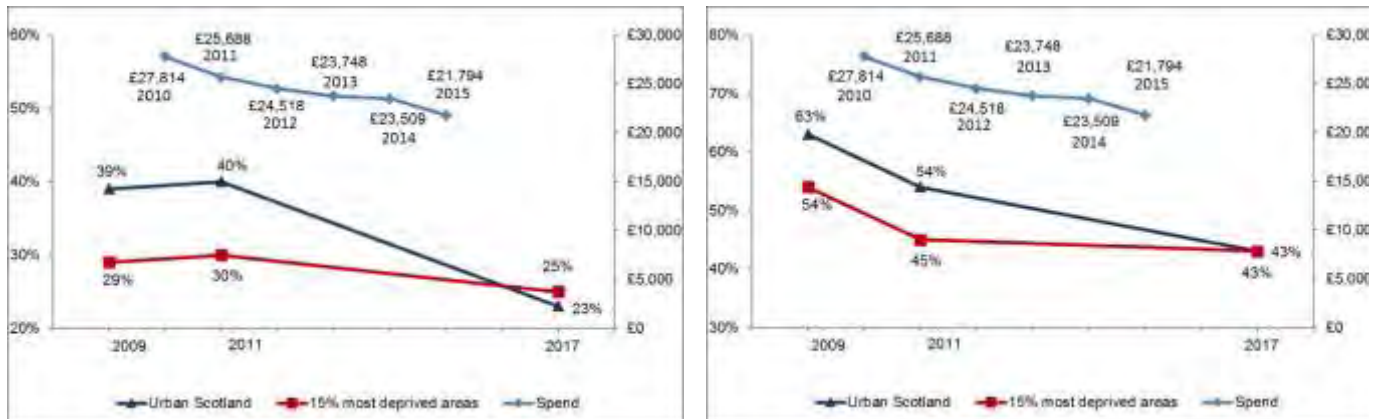
Putting park expenditure into context

According to Improvement Service figures, in 2010/11, £190 million was spent on parks and open spaces in Scotland. By 2014/15, that had fallen to £167 million. The average cost of a mile of new motorway is £30 million pounds. So, for the cost of one mile of new motorway we could return parks expenditure in Scotland to 2010 levels – and the annual cost of Scotland parks and open spaces is equivalent to about 6 miles of new motorway!

The M74 extension was even more expensive (£138.4 million per mile) and at 5 miles long that would have funded all of Scotland's parks for 3½ years.

According to the LGBF measure, there has been little change in the average satisfaction ratings for Council parks services, with levels generally remaining high. This may lead Council leaders to conclude that there is scope for further cuts without impacting on the public's experience of parks. The LGBF parks satisfaction measure does not tally with experience on the ground or the results of the 2017 greenspace survey. As Figure 1 shows, the downward trends in quality and use closely mirror cuts in local authority budgets.

Figure 1: Council expenditure on parks and greenspace services (LGBF) compared to quality ratings and use frequency (2017 Greenspace Survey)



How satisfied are you with the Quality of your local greenspace? Data for respondents answering 'agree strongly'

Frequency of visiting local greenspaces – Data from respondents answering 'once a week or more often'

4.2 Impact of reductions in local authority parks and greenspace budgets

The impact of reduced budgets has been **reduced grounds maintenance**, reduced investment in infrastructure and facilities, and **reduced support for community involvement**. Parks are beginning to show signs of decline in quality and structural problems are being stored up for the future.

With some Councils reporting a **70% reduction in capital budgets** over the next 5-7 years, this will have a significant impact on the ability to refurbish existing sites and assets. It will result in closures of play areas, bridges and other assets which are already well beyond routine revenue maintenance budgets.

Across Scotland there has been a **marked reduction in greenspace staff** and particularly a loss of specialist skills and apprentice programmes. Some Councils report their workforce has been reduced to a third in the last 5 years and there are larger cuts to come over the next year. There are concerns that local authorities will no longer have the skills they need to manage greenspaces and parks in the future.

The reduction in parks budgets not only affects staffing, vehicles, infrastructure and maintenance; it also reduces Councils' ability to provide match-funding for external grant bids.

➡ Across Scotland's park managers, Friends groups and many park users, there is general support for parks and greenspaces to become a statutory service. It would also be necessary to ensure that a statutory parks service is adequately resourced.

4.3 New approaches to resourcing and managing greenspaces

The parks and greenspace sector has risen to the challenge of ‘doing more with less’. A key strand of greenspace scotland’s activity is **pioneering new approaches to resourcing and managing greenspace**. Across Scotland there are many examples of innovative and inspiring approaches to the management and resourcing of our parks and greenspaces, including **climate change parks** in Aberdeen and a **Living Landscapes** approach to management in Edinburgh.

There are a range of **additional and alternative approaches to generating revenue**, including: hosting events and activities, leasing space for commercial activities, running cafes, crowdfunding through MyParkScotland, etc but even combined none of these sources of income are sufficient to maintain a fit-for-purpose greenspace service.

An additional challenge is that revenue generated from parks is not ring-fenced and so goes into general council accounts.

MyParkScotland – crowdfunding and endowment

MyParkScotland www.mypark.scot provides a new way for people to discover, enjoy and support parks. As Scotland’s only crowdfunding platform specifically for parks and greenspaces it provides a new way for individuals and businesses to make donations to support projects, parks and greenspaces. It was developed by greenspace scotland and partners, in response to the funding challenges facing Scotland’s parks, with funding support from Nesta and HLF as one of 11 UK Rethinking Parks projects (the only project funded in Scotland).

A new campaign is underway to develop an Endowment Fund to support Scotland’s parks. HLF have pledged £500,000 to match £ for £ monies raised for the first £1million.

Financial constraints are now requiring Councils to develop a **charging policy** and identify other opportunities to **commercialise parks** to generate additional revenue. There is increasing concern amongst Friends groups and park users about the commercialisation and privatisation of greenspaces.

Partnerships with community groups, third sector organisations and public bodies have provided opportunities to access funds that are not available to Councils.

Innovative approaches to energy and heat generation are being explored involving ground source heat systems and micro-hydro schemes – this builds on pioneering feasibility work by greenspace scotland with the City of Edinburgh Council. An application has been made to the second round of Rethinking Parks to scale up this work Scotland-wide.

Funding schemes like **Nesta's Rethinking Parks** can provide a powerful catalyst for innovation but with just £2 million available for the UK-wide scheme, its impact in Scotland will be limited. Councils need support to develop and trial new approaches.

➡ A Scottish Greenspace Innovation and Transformation Fund could stimulate and support the development of alternative delivery models, innovations in greenspace management and resourcing, park endowments, community land transfers, skills and capacity development for the sector and community groups.

4.4 Greenspace - a good value investment

In times of austerity, difficult decisions on priorities have to be taken. Greenspace is an example of **'preventative spend'** - where spending money now saves money later. But with many parks valued at just £1 on Council balance sheets there has been a disincentive to prioritise investments.

A substantial body of evidence demonstrates the positive impact that greenspace has on our quality of life and particularly on health and wellbeing

- a study of **Edinburgh's parks**⁵ found that **every £1 invested in the city's parks and greenspaces delivered £12 return in social and environmental benefits**, with individuals gaining health and wellbeing benefits worth around £40.5 million
- the Natural Capital account for London⁶ found that London's public greenspaces have a gross asset value of more than £91 billion, providing services valued at £5 billion per year

➡ Changes to local government financing practices are needed to ensure the true value of parks and greenspaces is recognised.

The health and social benefits of people actively using and/or participating in the management of public parks and greenspaces should be recognised in strategy and funding decisions, along with the wider environmental and economic services provided by greenspaces.

This could be achieved through the adoption of a Natural Capital Accounting approach.

5. Greenspace – a strategic approach

Significant progress was made on improving greenspace provision and quality following publication in 2007 of Scottish Planning Policy 11: Open Space and Physical Activity. This placed a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare open space strategies. SPP11 was superseded by Scottish Planning Policy in 2010 and this duty was lost with the change to: "planning authorities should take a strategic and long term approach to managing the open space in their area".

The HLF State of UK Public Parks reports note that parks are generally better in Councils which have an Open Space or Parks Strategy.

Local authorities now have a duty to produce Local Food Growing Strategies, under the Community Empowerment Act, but not to prepare a strategy for parks and other open spaces.

There is concern that changes proposed in the Planning (Scotland) Bill could lead to loss of the greenspace/green infrastructure detail currently located within Open Space Strategies and Supplementary Guidance.

➡ Producing a greenspace strategy should be a statutory requirement for all local authorities (and health boards).

6. Communities and greenspace

There are **willing partners in communities** across Scotland. The 2017 Greenspace Survey found significant increases in people wanting to have more of a say in how their greenspace is managed and to get involved in activities to improve their local greenspace.

Partnerships between Councils and Friends Groups are on the increase and communities are increasingly doing more for, and with, their greenspaces. The biggest growth in membership of greenspace Scotland is from friends and community groups. But a survey of these groups found they face significant challenges too, particularly in terms of resourcing and securing practical and technical advice and support. This was previously provided by local authorities but many no longer have the staff capacity to adequately support groups.

Friends of groups are a powerful force for good, but they need support.

With the new **provisions of the Community Empowerment Act 2016**, requests for community asset transfer and community management agreements may increase.

The 2016 HLF State of UK Public Parks report found **limited appetite among Friends groups to take on more formal responsibility for managing sites**, with less than 10% stating they would consider taking on formal and long-term responsibilities for the management and maintenance of their site though full asset transfer. Experience with the Big Lottery Fund Growing Community Assets programme found that few applications for urban greenspaces were successful because of the challenges of developing financially sustainable and resilient business models.

➤ Opportunities and support should be available for communities to get involved in the management of greenspaces, but service provision should not rely on volunteers.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

The challenge for Scotland is not so much about improving access to greenspace but about improving access to quality greenspace. The parks and greenspace sector has risen to the challenge of 'doing more with less'. Across Scotland there are many examples of innovative and inspiring approaches to the management and resourcing of our parks and greenspaces, but we are rapidly approaching the tipping point leading to the downward spiral of reduced maintenance, poorer quality greenspaces and lower levels of use – meaning we are at risk of losing the wonderful health, social, environmental and economic benefits that quality parks and greenspaces provide.

This is not a uniquely Scottish problem: across Britain parks are under pressure and in 2016/17 the Communities and Local Government Select Committee at Westminster held an Inquiry into England's Public Parks.⁷

There is an opportunity for Scotland to take a lead in demonstrating bold, decisive and meaningful action to safeguard, secure and realise the benefits of Scotland's parks and greenspace.

In summary, we recommend:

- The multiple social, environmental and economic services and benefits that parks and greenspaces project should be fully recognised and resourced accordingly. Changes to local government financing practices are needed to ensure the true value of parks and greenspaces is recognised.
- Parks and greenspaces should become a statutory service, resourced with adequate budgets, and supported by mechanisms to engage, involve and empower communities and wider partners in their sustainable management and use to ensure they continue to be freely available, valuable and vibrant community assets for today and for future generations to enjoy.

Specifically, in relation to the Local Government and Communities Committee:

- The national indicator on improving access to greenspace should be extended to include a measure of **quality**
- Producing a **greenspace strategy** should be a statutory requirement for all local authorities (and health boards)
- A Scottish **Greenspace Innovation and Transformation Fund** would stimulate and support the development of alternative delivery models, innovations in management and resourcing, park endowments, community partnerships and land transfers, skills and capacity development for the sector and community groups

We would encourage the Committee to hold a more in-depth inquiry into greenspace and green infrastructure.

We would also like to extend an invitation to Committee Members to join us on a study tour to meet with community groups and other partners to hear more about the importance of greenspace, see action on the ground, and explore at first-hand, some of the challenges and the opportunities.

Julie Procter
Chief Executive

About greenspace scotland

greenspace scotland is Scotland's parks and greenspace charity; an independent charitable company and social enterprise. Since 2002, we have provided a national lead on greenspace working with national and local partners to shape policy and promote good practice.

Our goal is that everyone has easy access to quality greenspaces that meet local needs and improve quality of life.

The **greenspace scotland network** connects over 200 organisations (from public, private, third and community sectors) who have a role in creating, managing and using greenspaces.

We also support the Scottish **Park Managers Forum** which provides a professional network for park managers and officers from Scottish local authorities.

References

1. greenspace scotland (2017) Greenspace Use and Attitude Survey 2017 <http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/greenspace-survey-2017.aspx>
2. greenspace scotland (2018) Third State of Scotland's Greenspace Report http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/Data/Sites/1/media/docs/sosgreport/3rdstateofscotlandsgreenspacereport_010218.pdf
3. Improvement Service (2018) Local Government Benchmarking Framework <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/documents/benchmarking/cultureleisure.pdf>
4. Heritage Lottery Fund (2016) State of UK Public Parks <https://www.hlf.org.uk/state-uk-public-parks-2016>
5. City of Edinburgh Council (2015) The Value of City of Edinburgh Council's Parks http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20064/parks_and_green_spaces/1300/the_value_of_city_of_edinburgh_councils_parks
6. Mayor of London (2017) London's Greenspace Natural Capital Account <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/parks-green-spaces-and-biodiversity/green-infrastructure/natural-capital?source=vanityurl#acc-i-49961>
7. Communities and Local Government Committee (2017) Public Parks <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons->

[select/communities-and-local-government-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/public-parks-16-17/](#)

Read greenspace scotland and the Scottish Park Managers Forum's evidence to the Committee

[http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/communities-and-local-government-committee/public-parks/written/39126.pdf](#)

Annex 1: Greenspace delivering for Scotland’s people and communities



Written Submission from NHS Health Scotland

Access to Greenspaces

About Us

NHS Health Scotland is a national Health Board working with public, private and third sectors to reduce health inequalities and improve health.

Our corporate strategy, [A Fairer Healthier Scotland](#), sets out our vision of a Scotland in which all of our people and communities have a fairer share of the opportunities, resources and confidence to live longer, healthier lives.

Our mission is to reduce health inequalities and improve health. To do this we influence policy and practice, informed by evidence, and promote action across public services to deliver greater equality and improved health for all in Scotland.

Contact Details

Nick Hay
Senior Communications and Engagement Officer

We are content for our response to be made available to the public and to be contacted in the future.

Key Messages:

- There is now a wealth of good quality national and international evidence demonstrating the positive impact that natural environments (including greenspaces) can have on physical and mental health
- There is some evidence to suggest that greenspaces can help mitigate the health impacts of socio-economic inequality
- Whilst quantity and quality of existing greenspace is important, providing equitable access to (and use of) good quality greenspace for everyone in Scotland is a priority

Health impacts of greenspaces

There is now a wealth of good quality evidence³ demonstrating the positive impact that natural environments (including greenspaces) can have on physical and mental

³ It has to be noted that much of the evidence is derived from cross-sectional studies which means it can only show association and not causation. In other words it can only show that people living next to greenspace are generally healthier than those who don't. It doesn't show that living next to greenspaces causes people to become healthier. It is possible (and plausible) that because living next to greenspaces is desirable it attracts those who can afford to move there. And we know from the inequalities literature that the more affluent generally enjoy better health⁴. So it is plausible that affluence/desirability is confounding the relationship. In order to show that living next to greenspace

health. The World Health organisation conducted a large review of the evidence in 2016¹ and identified a number of positive health benefits associated with urban greenspace. These include:

- Improved mental health and cognitive function
- Reduced cardiovascular morbidity
- Reduced prevalence of type 2 diabetes
- Improved pregnancy outcomes
- Reduced overall mortality.

There is also emerging evidence that exposure to nature has significant therapeutic benefits so could be used as part of the treatment for some conditions².

In 2017 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH) published an evidence statement³ on the links between the natural environment and health. They summarise the direct links between natural environments and human health at the individual and population level as follows:

- *“An extensive and robust body of evidence suggests that living in greener environments (e.g. greater percentage of natural features around the residence) is associated with reduced mortality. Reduced rates of mortality have been found for specific population groups including men, infants and lower socio-economic groups. There is evidence to suggest that health inequalities in mortality may be reduced by greener living environments.*
- *Several studies have shown positive associations between self-rated health and natural environments. Self-rated health has also been shown to be higher in those living in places with a greater proportion of good quality natural environments (indicators included bird species richness and percentage of protected and designated landcover).*
- *There is relatively strong and consistent evidence for mental health and wellbeing benefits arising from exposure to natural environments, including reductions in stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression, together with evidence that these benefits may be most significant for marginalised groups. Socioeconomic inequality in mental wellbeing has been shown to be 40% narrower among those who report good access to green/recreational areas, compared with those with poorer access. Although many studies assessed short term outcomes, the use of longitudinal data and stronger study designs have resulted in more robust evidence and indications of a causal relationship.*
- *There is consistent evidence from birth cohort studies which shows exposure to green space during pregnancy is associated with foetal growth and higher birth weight. Some of the strongest evidence concerns the importance of direct contact with nature to the development of a healthy microbiome. The human microbiome, the consortium of microorganisms that cohabit the human*

actually improves health we require studies that measure change and effects over time (so-called cohort or longitudinal studies). However these are much more difficult to do and are much more expensive and time consuming hence the reason there are relatively fewer of them².

body, typically consists of around 10,000 species with eight million protein-coding genes (Bernstein 2014). Human babies are born essentially sterile (Hough 2014) and studies have determined that exposure to diverse natural habitats is critical for development of a healthy microbiome. Following this, evidence suggests an unambiguous causal relationship between exposure to natural environments and the maintenance of a healthy immune system and reduction of inflammatory-based diseases such as asthma (Sandifer et al. 2015). This is a major beneficial effect of green space and neglected ecosystem service.

- There is evidence to suggest that rates of obesity tend to be lower in populations living in greener environments. Across eight European cities, people were 40% less likely to be obese in the greenest areas, after controlling for a range of relevant factors.
- Exposure to natural environments has been linked with more favourable: heart rate; blood pressure; vitamin D levels; recuperation rates; and cortisol levels.
- Greenspace may also help to reduce the prevalence of type 2 diabetes”.

Pathways linking urban greenspace to improved health and well-being

The World Health Organisation review¹ identified a number of pathways with which urban greenspace improves health and wellbeing. These include:

- Improved relaxation and restoration
- Improved social capital (i.e. strengthening of community bonds and social relationships)
- Improved functioning of the immune system
- Enhanced physical activity, improved fitness and reduced obesity. Studies have found that specific natural environments such as woodlands, gardens, parks, grassland and farmland, are supportive of vigorous activity³.
- Anthropogenic noise buffering and production of natural sounds (i.e. ability of greenspace to reduce/buffer noise pollution)
- Reduced exposure to air pollution
- Reduction of the urban heat island effect (i.e. large areas of concrete retain heat and are subsequently bad for public health; heat-related morbidity is a major public health concern)
- Enhanced pro-environmental behaviour (such as maintaining/protecting greenspaces) which in turn can help increase environmental sustainability and reduce the impact of climate change which in turn is beneficial to health.
- Optimized exposure to sunlight and improved sleep

Characteristics of urban greenspace associated with specific health benefits or hazards

The World Health Organisation review¹ also identified a number of characteristics of urban greenspaces associated with health benefits. These include:

- Perceptions of greenspace accessibility, safety and quality – generally if people perceive greenspaces to be safe, aesthetically pleasing, have lots of

amenities, are well maintained and are easy to get to/close to home, they are more likely to increase levels of physical activity. Conversely concerns over safety, violence, graffiti, vandalism, litter, noise, pollution and dog fouling have negative associations with park use and physical activity.

- Size of greenspace - the size of greenspace is likely to influence the levels and types of activity people undertake within it. There isn't a huge body of evidence but what there is suggests that large areas of greenspace are more beneficial (in terms of physical activity behaviour) compared to a number of smaller areas.
- Presence of specific facilities for certain activities – again not a huge body of evidence but there is some to suggest that certain types of park facilities such as marked/paved trails, water areas, and playgrounds were effective at increasing levels of physical activity.
- Tree cover and canopy density – generally the evidence would suggest that greater density equals greater benefit. However, some qualities of greenspaces associated with tree cover, especially when overgrown or unmanaged, may increase levels of anxiety due to fear of crime, resulting in a negative impact on people's wellbeing.

The DEFRA and ECEH review³ identified a number of additional characteristics:

- *“The quality of the environment may influence health outcomes; biodiverse natural environments and those that are well maintained (e.g. free from litter and in which people feel safe) are associated with good health and wellbeing.*
- *Although much of the evidence relates to urban greenspace there is evidence to suggest that exposure to other types of natural environment (broadleaf woodland, arable and horticulture, improved grassland, saltwater and coastal) result in greater health gain.*
- *There is a significant volume of evidence showing that a greater quantity and proximity of the natural environment (mainly in relation to living environment) is consistently positively associated with health outcomes. Understanding of a potential dose-response relationship is limited but growing”.*

Greenspace and health inequalities

Health inequalities are the unfair and avoidable differences in people's health across social groups and between different population groups. They represent thousands of unnecessary premature deaths every year in Scotland, and for men in the most deprived areas nearly 25 fewer years are spent in 'good health' than men in the least deprived areas; for women this is 22 years.

Those living in areas of greater deprivation are more likely to be exposed to harmful environmental factors, such as poor air quality, and less likely to have access to beneficial ones, such as greenspace⁵. So at present those suffering the worst health outcomes (i.e. the most deprived) have less access and exposure to health enhancing environments and more exposure to health damaging environments.

For some health outcomes, particularly mental health, research shows that greenspaces can help mitigate the health impacts of socio-economic inequality⁶. There is evidence to suggest that this is also the case for all-cause and circulatory disease mortality⁷. In other words, the benefits of greenspace are greater for those worse off in society. So it appears greenspaces can help narrow the gap in health outcomes caused by socio-economic deprivation.

Geographical/contextual/gender variation

It is important to note potential geographical/contextual differences. In 2014 the Scottish Government commissioned a large scale review⁷ (so-called Greenhealth review) of the relationship between greenspace and health with a view to assessing whether optimal policies and policy priorities are in place to ensure that investment in the environment enhances people's health and wellbeing. Also whether investments in the environment can be targeted better to enhance public health and wellbeing. Given the relevance of this review to the aim of the Committee we think it would be helpful to directly quote the overall conclusions and policy implications from the final report:

"Overall conclusions

Our research cannot prove that greenspace per se protects mental health; it does echo findings from small-scale laboratory and field experiments, providing more confidence in our results. While our research does not show a causal relationship between greenspace and health and wellbeing, it suggests that the amount of greenspace in the residential environment contributes to the health and wellbeing of residents of deprived urban communities in Scotland, particularly those likely to spend more time in and around the home. Increasing confidence that there is a protective relationship between regular use of greenspace and risk of poor mental health is an important result.

We found that the social contexts through which greenspaces are encountered and understood are multiple and complex. What greenspaces mean to dominant groups can result in the accepted uses of the spaces which might enhance wellbeing for some individuals or groups but marginalise or exclude others. Individuals, representatives and community officers all expressed desire for communities to have greater responsibility for managing areas of greenspace for community benefit and in delivering locally identified priorities. This is consistent with the development of community planning.

Our research indicates that policies and policy priorities to ensure that investment in the environment enhances people's health and wellbeing are being put in place. Policy areas are increasingly conceptualising key issues of equalities in the access, use and management of greenspace in ways that should result in better public health and wellbeing. In practice, implementation should ensure that the contribution of

greenspace to public health and wellbeing becomes a key component in Scottish public policy.

Policy implications

So can investments in the environment be targeted better to enhance public health and wellbeing? Simply increasing the amount of greenspace available in urban areas is unlikely to have impacts on population mortality rates or socio-economic health inequalities. Our findings do suggest that increasing greenspace in deprived areas where little is present could contribute to reducing stress levels and increased wellbeing for some residents, especially those who spend more time around the home. However, other aspects of greenspace which impact on perceptions and use, such as quality and safety, how power and knowledge affect meaning, and how different groups are positioned in relation to these resources, must also be taken into account. Helping people to become and stay regular users could be a useful additional means of protecting and enhancing mental health. Our findings with regard to policy recommendations are summarised below:

- Policy makers, planners and greenspace managers should ensure that communities have access to a range of different kinds of greenspace, to allow all to enjoy the wellbeing benefits of using these spaces.
- The identification of sub-areas of the greenspace which support compatible functions could increase the overall effectiveness of such spaces in delivering multiple functions, and safeguard its value for relaxation and escape.
- Those who use greenspaces as children are far more likely to do so as adults. Schemes proven to be effective in introducing and encouraging children to use these spaces should be expanded. This may produce a lasting, multi-generational impact.
- Evaluations of local walking groups have found them to be effective at introducing adults to, and maintaining their use of, greenspaces for physical activity. These should be promoted as a resource for mental as well as physical health.
- The effect of greenspace on stress may be mediated by gender, with a stronger positive effect in our sample of increasing greenspace on cortisol concentrations in women (meaning greenspace is having a more positive effect on stress regulation in women than in men). More research is needed to substantiate this for a wider sample and age range.
- There is community interest in having greater responsibility for the management of areas of greenspaces for local benefit; increased social wellbeing may be promoted through facilitating mechanisms of community engagement. Using newly available mapping and visualisation tools stimulates interest”.

Financial savings from greenspace

Given the significant positive health outcomes associated with greenspace it is clear that investment in greenspace could save the UK health system money and be a cost-effective health intervention. There have been many attempts to quantify this but these are mainly based on assumptions or small scale projects⁹ and it is important to note that this is a developing area and reliable values are limited³. However, Defra has estimated that the health system could save £2.1bn per year if everyone had access to sufficient greenspace¹⁰.

In addition to the health savings there a range of other savings potentially available through greenspace. A recent study by the Scottish Government¹¹ selected six major potential benefits that would be achieved if the aims of the Central Scotland Green Networks programme of work is achieved (see later section for outline of CSGN). These six benefits were selected due to the strength of supporting evidence, the ability to easily communicate how these improvements would affect people, and crucially, the existence of quantitative research that allows monetisation of their impacts. The following is a summary of the findings.

Benefit	Peak annual value of benefits	Estimated total net present value of benefits to 2050
Crime reduction	£25m	£513m
Improved physical health	£36m	£742m
Improved mental health	£62m	£1290m
Peatland carbon sequestration	£15m in 2050	£246m
Forest carbon sequestration	£129m in 2040	£2065m
Reduced flood damage	£43m	£1200m
Total	£310	£6062

As the table shows the report estimates that greening the central belt of Scotland could generate approximately £310m of benefits per year totalling £6bn by 2050.

It has recently been announced that Innovate UK (the UK Government agency supporting businesses to realise the potential of new technologies and commercial ideas) will be providing £1.2 million to a consortium (University of Exeter, Vivid Economics and Barton Willmore – a design and planning consultancy) to fund an urban greenspace valuation toolkit project. It will help put a monetary value on protecting, maintaining and creating green spaces, such as parks, gardens, street trees, rivers and canals which will help empower cities and developers to accurately assess the multiple benefits of green infrastructure, so as to make informed policy and business decisions.

The state of Scotland's greenspace

The Third *State of Scotland's Greenspace Report*¹² (published on 1 February 2018 by Greenspace Scotland) reveals the extent and type of urban greenspace in all 32 Scottish local authority areas. Key findings include:

- Scotland's towns and cities are more green than grey – 54% of the urban land area is greenspace;
- The total area of urban greenspace is 1,593 square kilometres – equivalent to 22 Loch Lomonds;
- This equates to 27 hectares of greenspace per 1000 people (excluding private gardens) – equivalent to a tennis court size of greenspace per person;
- 28% of greenspace is classified as private gardens and grounds, with amenity greenspace making up a further 37% - together these two types account for two-thirds of Scotland's greenspace;
- Public parks and sports areas (which are the accessible public spaces most often used in daily life) account for 4% and 9% of greenspace respectively;
- Scots love their parks and greenspaces - with over 90% saying it is important to have greenspace in their local area;
- Urban greenspaces are popular outdoor destinations - with nearly half (43%) of urban Scots visiting their local greenspace once a week or more often (but frequency of use has fallen from a peak in 2009 when nearly two-thirds (63%) visited weekly);
- Whilst most respondents (74%) were satisfied to some extent with the quality of their local greenspace, 40% agreed or agreed strongly that 'the quality of my local greenspace has reduced in the past 5 years' (up from 33% in 2011 – and rising to 50% for respondents from the most deprived areas);
- The falls in greenspace quality and use, mirror falls in expenditure – with Council expenditure on parks and greenspace falling from £27,814 per 1000 people in 2010/11 to £21,794 in 2015/16.

Current activity in Scotland

There are a wide range of organisations who have either a statutory or non-statutory role for Scotland's land management and greenspace. Examples include each Local Authority, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage. There are also a range of third sector groups and organisations who have either a direct or indirect interest. Two such charities that have a direct interest are Greenspace Scotland and the Central Scotland Green Network Trust.

Greenspace Scotland

Greenspace Scotland is a social enterprise and an independent charitable company. They work with a wide range of national and local partners to improve the quality of life of people living and working in urban Scotland through the planning, development and sustainable management of greenspaces as a key part of the

green infrastructure of our towns and cities. Their goal is that everyone living and working in urban Scotland has easy access to quality greenspaces that meet local needs and improve their quality of life.

Their projects, programmes and services are about transforming urban places into people places. Their holistic approach recognises that greenspace is a 'vehicle' for delivering a wide range of quality of life and quality of place outcomes. They provide a range of services and projects through two overarching programmes: *demonstrating success* and *supporting delivery*.

Central Scotland Green Network Trust

The Central Scotland Green Network Trust was established in March 2014 and is a Company Limited by Guarantee and registered charity. They were created to provide capacity to help realise the vision for the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) which is:

'By 2050, Central Scotland has been transformed into a place where the environment adds value to the economy and where people's lives are enriched by its quality.'

The Trust has 5 strategic objectives:

- To drive forward and coordinate the delivery of the CSGN;
- To raise awareness of, and participation in, the CSGN;
- To provide support and capacity to others delivering the CSGN;
- To identify spatial and thematic needs to help target resources;
- To directly deliver with stakeholders projects on the ground.

The Trust is currently making the case for accessible, quality, multifunctional greenspace. It is working with partners and stakeholders to create the conditions (policy, strategy, spatial understanding, working practices, resources etc.) needed to improve access to quality greenspace across the CSGN and to identify and meet the support needs of communities seeking to be more involved in decision making and management of local greenspaces. It is promoting good practice in greenspace provision and management and prioritising the creation of both temporary and permanent greenspaces on sites currently designated as vacant and derelict land. It is also directly supporting projects on the ground – both through funding and through technical support input.

References

1. Urban greenspaces and health. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2016.
2. Houses of Parliament Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology; POSTnote 538 October 2016.
3. Maxwell S and Lovell R, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and the European Centre for Environment and Human Health University of Exeter Medical School Analysis Unit, 2017
4. Beeston C, McCartney G, Ford J, Wimbush E, Beck S, MacDonald W, and Fraser A. Health Inequalities Policy Review for the Scottish Ministerial Task Force on Health Inequalities. NHS Health Scotland. Edinburgh. 2014
5. Pearce JR, Richardson EA, Mitchell RJ, Shortt NK. Environmental justice and health: the implications of the socio-spatial distribution of multiple environmental deprivation for health inequalities in the United Kingdom. 2010;35(4).
6. Mitchell RJ, Richardson EA, Shortt NK, Pearce JR. Neighbourhood environments and socioeconomic inequalities in mental wellbeing. *Am J Prev Med* 2015;49(1):80.
7. Mitchell R, Popham F. Effect of exposure to natural environment on health inequalities: an observational population study. *The Lancet*. 2008;372(9650):1655-1660.
8. Scottish Government. Greenhealth contribution of green and open space to public health and wellbeing Final Report. James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen. 2014
9. Houses of Parliament Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology; POSTnote 538 October 2016
10. Defra. Defra's climate change plan. Department for Environment, Food and Rural affairs, London. 2010
11. Hume, J. 'CSGN Benefits Valuation Report', Scottish Government. 2010
12. The Third State of Scotland's Greenspace Report. Greenspace Scotland. 2018

Written Submission from Fields in Trust Scotland

Fields in Trust champions and supports our parks and green spaces by protecting them for people to enjoy in perpetuity. Because once lost, they are lost forever. Parks and green spaces in Scotland and across the UK are under threat and it is up to all of us to stem this cycle of disappearance and decline. We believe that everyone, irrespective of who they are and where they live should have the right to enjoy and benefit from local parks and green spaces; places where we can all move, breathe, run and play. Parks and green spaces are proven to help people stay physically and mentally well and are an important tool to drive social cohesion, combat loneliness and build community spirit.

Fields in Trust is an independent charity with over 90 years' experience protecting parks and green spaces. In Scotland we work with local authorities, green space landowners and other partners to champion the value of our parks and green spaces to achieve better protection for their future at both local and national level. To date 273 parks and green spaces are protected in Scotland making a total of 2,735 spaces UK-wide.

The Health and Wellbeing Benefits of Parks and Green Spaces

It is the view of Fields in Trust that few public services have such a wide-ranging, positive impact on local communities as parks and green spaces on which to play. Unfortunately, such spaces tend to be valued within local budgets according to their maintenance costs rather than their true dividend to local communities which vastly exceeds such sums because of their multiple benefits.

Fields in Trust has just published new research '**Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces: Measuring their economic and wellbeing value to individuals**' using a UK-wide representative sample of over 4,000 adult residents.

- Parks and Green Spaces contribute **£2.8 Billion per year** to Scotland's community health and wellbeing
- The average Total Economic Value to an individual in Scotland is **£27.96 per year**
- Using parks and green spaces equates to better general health which translates into a **£9.1million** saving to NHS Scotland per year because of fewer GP visits

Parks and green spaces can:

- Contribute to a preventative health agenda
- Reduce future Exchequer expenditure
- Reduce health inequalities

- Increase social cohesion and equality

As well as contributing to Scottish Government Outcomes including:

- Healthy and active lives
- Inclusive communities
- Protect and enhance our environment

As publicly owned assets parks and green spaces have something to offer all sections of the community from pre-school children through to retired adults. We now have a growing body of empirical evidence which confirms that they provide direct benefits to those who use them and, importantly, indirectly to those who don't. An active life is essential for physical and mental health and wellbeing⁴ and that access to local green spaces has a positive impact on health by encouraging people to be active every day. Evidence suggests that physical and mental health can be improved with greater access to green space⁵ and green and natural environments have the potential to reduce health inequalities⁶.

A World Health Organisation report⁷ evaluated the effects of green spaces on physical activity and their potential to reduce public health inequalities. It stated that "... access to public open space and green areas with appropriate recreation facilities for all age groups is needed to support active recreation". The provision of sufficient outdoor recreational spaces and green spaces will play an important role in helping public bodies achieve several health objectives.

In 2016, 65% of adults aged 16 and over were overweight, including 29% who were obese, and the proportion of children at risk of overweight (including obesity) was 29%⁸. Daily physical activity supported by parents and carers outside of school time is recommended and in Scotland the community-led *Daily Mile* campaign⁹ in schools and workplaces has been endorsed and supported by Scottish Parliament. The Institute of Health Equality¹⁰, 2014 found that older people live longer in areas where there is more green space close to their homes; children who live close to green spaces have higher levels of physical activity and are less likely to experience an increase in BMI over time and people living in the most deprived areas are ten times less likely to live in the greenest areas.

⁴ Public Health England Getting everybody active every day, 2014

⁵ Public Health England improving access to green space, 2014, Health Equity Briefing 8

⁶ NHS Health Scotland www.healthscotland.scot/health-inequalities/place-and-communities/place

⁷ World Health Organisation 2013, Physical activity promotion in socially disadvantaged groups: principles for action

⁸ Obesity Indicators, Scottish Parliament, 2016

⁹ www.beta.gov.scot/news/scotland-a-daily-mile-nation/

¹⁰ Natural Solutions to Tackling Health Inequalities, Institute of Health Equality, 2014

The Scottish Parliament recognises that green space has substantial environmental and health impacts, but also links to other aspects, such as community cohesion, social connectedness and community resilience, and has set an aim to “Improve access to local green space” in response to findings that in Scotland, people living in the most deprived areas are less likely to live within a five-minute walk of their nearest green space than people in less deprived areas¹¹. Parks and green spaces improve community cohesion by offering shared spaces for community connections and to tackle social isolation (Cohen-Cline et al., 2015; Hartig et al., 2014; White et al., 2013). *The Marmot Review*, 2010¹² recommends that improving the availability of good quality green spaces across the social gradient will help reduce health inequalities.

However, despite the evidence of the benefits of parks and green spaces and the policy demand for these benefits, funding cuts and skills shortages have led to a significant decline in the quality of parks in recent decades¹³.

Revaluing Parks

Parks and green spaces are typically free at the point of access and this access is usually unregulated; spaces where people can move, breathe, play and run. However, these fundamental benefits historically made it difficult to quantify their impact in monetary terms, a crucial element of making a compelling business case to local authorities to support the ongoing funding and existence of parks and green spaces.

Fields in Trust’s new research provides a robust economic valuation of parks and green spaces in the UK as well as valuing improvements in health and wellbeing associated with their frequent use. Using HM Treasury approved best practice for valuing non-market goods this is the first time a research study on parks and green spaces has used welfare weighting methodology, allowing for more informed evidence-based policy decisions.

Our results show the Wellbeing Value associated with the frequent use of local parks and green spaces is worth an annual £2.8 billion to the Scottish population (the equivalent of £974 per individual, per year). This data, based on measurements of life satisfaction, quantifies the significant physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits that individuals derive from regular use of local parks and green spaces.

The average Total Economic Value to an individual in Scotland (capturing benefits gained from using local parks as well as their preservation for future generations) is

¹¹ www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/indicator/greenspace

¹² Fair Society, Healthy Lives, Marmot Review, 2010

¹³ Greenspace Scotland (2017) Greenspace Use and Attitude Survey 2017

£27.96 per year. A significant finding of this research is the clear demonstration that when welfare weighting is applied, lower socio-economic groups and Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups ascribe a much higher relative value to parks and green spaces than the national average. Lower socio-economic groups report a welfare weighted value of £51.84 per year and BAME groups value parks and green spaces more than double the UK average at £70.08 per year.

Further analysis shows that being a frequent park user is associated with a reduction in GP-related medical costs which is estimated to save NHS Scotland around £9.1 million per year, that figure is just a partial cost saving and does not account for other savings from reduced prescribing, referrals or social care costs.

Our data shows different drivers for using parks and green spaces across different user groups but there are clear social motivations for use, reinforcing the position that parks and green spaces improve community cohesion by offering shared spaces for community connections and a place to tackle social isolation.

Planning, Infrastructure and Fields in Trust

Ensuring that there is equitable provision of accessible parks and green space has been a key priority for Fields in Trust since the 1930s. Our *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play*¹⁴ is both respected and valued across the sector and the current version takes account of revised planning frameworks in Scotland.

Nation/Region	Green space provision (acres)	Green space per 1,000 population (acres)	Green space protected by Fields in Trust (%)
Scotland	52,843	9.9	10%
Glasgow	3,857	6.5	28%
Edinburgh	3,085	6.5	26%
Dundee	1,437	9.7	25%

OS Greenspace open data October 2017 has been used for this analysis which designates green space as playing fields, sport facilities (including bowling greens and tennis courts), play spaces, public parks and gardens per 1,000 population, it also includes national parks and common land hence an over-provision in rural areas.

¹⁴ Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard (Scottish edition) (2017) www.fieldsintrust.org/guidance

The planning process is crucial to ensuring a sufficiency of formal and informal recreation space but in isolation cannot ensure the future security of these spaces from development. In a move to create a legacy from the 2014 Commonwealth Games, Glasgow City Council¹⁵ protected 27 of its parks with Fields in Trust meaning the use is secured under legal agreement for recreation. This covers some well-known parks in the city including Cathkin Braes, Rosshall Park and Glasgow Green, as well as neighbourhood playing fields and recreation grounds. The City Council's Open Spaces Strategy recognises the health, wellbeing and play benefits these spaces provide as one of five key priorities and this will support the strategic direction for the Council's Parks and Maintenance strategy. By protecting green spaces in this way, the City Council has removed the possibility of non-recreational development proposals threatening these spaces in the future, at a time when there is pressure on land for housing and commercial development.

Key stakeholders such as Friends of the Park or community groups can also influence change, and on numerous occasions local park users have lobbied to get their local park protected for future generations to enjoy. Fields in Trust has found that securing the future of a green space through protection in perpetuity can catalyse community involvement in a local area and external grant funders often recognise the long-term commitment of a site that is legally protected and feels assured to make an investment. However, third party campaigns and individual lobbying could result in unequal provision and reflect a lack of consistency between local authorities – or areas within a local authority – if there is no base standard against which green space provision is judged. Areas with the most active campaigns secure protection of sites, whilst other neighbourhoods, equally in need, are less well served.

Whilst several models of innovative funding have been attempted, no one approach has proven effective in all circumstances. Community-led, commercial, sporting and heritage funding can each help redevelop parks and playgrounds. Not every neighbourhood is equally likely to generate the same level of community engagement – and often those who have arguably the greatest need for a universal free public service such as parks, can only access the poorest quality provision. Whilst some green spaces are fortunate to have an active volunteer network, they don't have the necessary infrastructure or funds to take on the role of local councils in the provision, maintenance and improvement of parks. Fields in Trust believe that such a fundamental change to the model of how parks are operated would result in inequality in terms of quality and quantity of provision between different councils and geographical areas.

¹⁵ Glasgow City Council (2016) News website [www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=19792 accessed Sep 12 2016]

A ground-breaking piece of legislation in the Welsh Assembly, The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015¹⁶, requires public bodies to consider long-term impacts of decisions they take and ensure communities are supported sustainably. Protecting outdoor recreational space means it will remain available for future generations to enjoy, forever. The Welsh Government has recognised that for children growing up in Wales, poverty is experienced not just as a financial constraint but can encompass “*poverty of experience, opportunity and aspiration*”. In response they have developed an anti-poverty strategy which places a legal duty on every local authority in Wales to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their area. *The Play Sufficiency Duty*¹⁷ requires each council to ensure that they review their provision for play; including parks, playgrounds and other outdoor spaces. Each authority must develop a plan to deliver it and report to the Welsh Government annually of the action they are taking.

Conclusion

Parks and green spaces are not simply nice to have; they are a necessity for healthy, happy communities positively impacting on a range of key wellbeing issues from physical and mental health, childhood obesity to social cohesion. Access to parks and green spaces can help us to stay physically and mentally well, reduce social isolation and instil pride in our local communities. Whether it is playing sport, socialising with friends or taking a moment for quiet reflection, parks and green spaces quite simply make us happier. Fields in Trust is seeking to change the conversation around parks and green spaces and consider how we measure their contribution to our communities, at a time when their future looks uncertain.

We know from evidence already referenced that improving the availability across the social gradient of good quality local green spaces very close to where people live and spend their day will help reduce health inequalities. The continued decimation of our parks and green space services will, according to the findings of our research, more negatively impact the lives of lower socio-economic groups than others.

The substantial and quantifiable health and wellbeing benefits detailed in our study help to make a robust, evidence-led business case for parks and green spaces to be considered in terms of their contribution to society rather than being assessed simply in terms of their cost. We have also been able to demonstrate in economic terms the contribution that parks and green spaces make to the preventative health agenda.

¹⁶ Welsh Government/Llywodraeth Cymru (2015) www.gov.wales/topics/future-generations-act/

¹⁷ Welsh Government/Llywodraeth Cymru (2015) *Wales: A Play Friendly Country* Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on assessing for and securing sufficient play opportunities for children [<http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/cyp/141007-wales-a-play-friendly-country-en.pdf> accessed Sep 29 2016]

We believe this new research will help to support more informed judgements when difficult choices must be made about how best to use land.

Fields in Trust recommend:

- At present there is disparity between areas where parks and open spaces have been secured in perpetuity – for example by a Minute of Agreement with Fields in Trust and others where no such safeguard is in place. **Fields in Trust support statutory provision of outdoor green spaces with a sufficient area for play, sport and recreation maintained to an agreed standard and available to all communities.** Fields in Trust also calls for the introduction of a statutory consultation process when development is proposed on parks and green spaces in contravention to local development plans and Scottish Planning Policy, mirroring the statutory consultee role that Sportscotland carry out with regards to playing fields.
- In response to the recommendations in the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry: The Future of Public Parks in 2016¹⁸, the UK Parliament has recently established a Parks Action Group to help England's public parks and green spaces meet the needs of communities now and in the future. Formed from sector professionals including Helen Griffiths, Fields in Trust Chief Executive, the group is tasked with applying their expertise to inform a new cross-departmental group including officials from across UK Government departments. **Fields in Trust recommends that an equivalent Parks Action Group is established in Scotland and would welcome the opportunity to further our work with colleagues across the sector.**
- The full report 'Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces: Measuring their Economic and Wellbeing Value to Individuals' and a summary paper will be made available to MSPs and will also available to download from the Fields in Trust website www.fieldsintrust.org. The new data quantifies the significant value of parks and green spaces to individuals in the UK. Our aim is to develop the research into a Local Valuation Model by applying the value to individual parks and green spaces. **Fields in Trust encourage local authorities to engage in the research findings to help direct future policy decisions and investment strategies relating to the continued provision of local parks and green spaces.**

¹⁸ www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmcomloc/45/45.pdf

Written Submission from Scottish Environment LINK and the Scottish Wildlife Trust

The Scottish Wildlife Trust welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the Local Government and Communities Committee

Key messages:

- High quality, biodiverse greenspaces close to where people live and work are vital for our health, well-being and the economy.
- Scottish Government should implement A National Ecological Network approach to help restore and protect Scotland's nature so it continues to provide the life support systems we all depend on, particularly in terms of our health, wellbeing and economic prosperity.
- **There is currently a loss in translation between high-level Scottish Government policy on greenspace and development and what actually happens in reality – this must be addressed**

Background

The Scottish Wildlife Trust has a long history of managing urban and semi urban wildlife reserves including for example Cathkin Marsh on the outskirts of Castlemilk¹⁹, a third of the greenspace in and around Cumbernauld²⁰, the Miley reserve in central Dundee²¹ and Duddingston Loch and Bawsinch reserve a 30 minute stroll from Parliament itself²².

Management of greenspace in urban locations presents a unique set of challenges but also brings huge rewards in terms of societal benefit and benefit for wildlife. In terms of the benefit accrued to humans it is sometimes useful to think of greenspace in terms of natural capital. In this instance the natural capital asset would be the greenspace and it is from this asset that we derive a whole range of services, referred to as ecosystem services, which we depend on. Examples of ecosystem services derived from greenspace include things like flood prevention, recreation, carbon sequestration and pollutant removal.

With Scotland population living in a predominately urban environment it is important that we allow urban biodiversity to flourish so that people of all ages can benefit from

¹⁹ See: <https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserve/cathkin-marsh/>

²⁰ See: <https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/our-work/our-projects/living-landscapes/cumbernauld-living-landscape/>

²¹ See: <https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserve/the-miley/>

²² See: <https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserve/bawsinch-and-duddingston/>

it. It is important that we avoid the notion that nature and greenspace are things that need to be driven miles and miles to experience and at best only at the weekend.

In the examples and evidence drawn out below greenspace is taken to mean high quality biodiverse greenspace as this delivers the greatest number of ecosystem services. However, the Trust does acknowledge there is also a place for amenity grassland for recreation and sport.

In our evidence we also talk about green infrastructure and we used the definition favoured by the European Commission and Scottish Government: *“the use of ecosystems, green spaces and water in strategic land use planning to deliver environmental and quality of life benefits. It includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, wetlands, road verges, allotments and private gardens. Green infrastructure can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, natural disaster risk mitigation, protection against flooding and erosion as well as biodiversity conservation.”*

Policy Context

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals²³ are a universal set of targets that UN member states have adopted to help frame their agendas and policies over the next 15 years. Scotland was one of the first countries in the world to sign up. Goals 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), Goal 13 (Climate Action) and Goal 15 (Life on Land) are particularly relevant to the access to greenspace debate and a lot headway could be made with regard to the SDGs by improving quality and access to greenspace and improving provision of strategic green infrastructure.

Planning

The Scottish Wildlife Trust believes that inappropriately located and badly designed developments without easy access to high quality biodiverse greenspace can have significant, detrimental impacts on people’s quality of life as well as Scotland’s biodiversity. We believe that delivering high quality sustainable places where people want to live can only be achieved by having a robust, well-resourced planning system which recognises that planning is about creating places for communities to flourish as opposed to just building houses.

²³ See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

The planning system is currently plan-led and should remain so. Scotland has good planning policies which are laid out in documents such as The National Planning Framework (NPF), Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), Creating Places, Planning Advice Notes and Circulars. However, these policies do not always translate into high quality sustainable developments on the ground.

With the new Planning Bill indicating that SPP will now be incorporated into the NPF the Trust is seeking assurance that the same high quality of guidance will be translated into the NPF. Specifically in relation to greenspace the Trust is seeking assurances that environmental policies relating to green infrastructure, biodiversity and promoting sustainable transport and active travel are incorporated properly into the NPF.

The Trust and our network of planning volunteers remain frustrated that we see all too many new developments coming forward where greenspace and green infrastructure is an after-thought. It would appear that many of the policies and procedures that apply to green infrastructure are termed as “the developer should” rather than “the developer must” this results in the provision of high quality greenspace often being treated as an optional extra by developers.

The Trust would like to see stronger measures employed by planning authorities to make sure that green infrastructure is planned into new development from the start. For an example of good practice regarding green infrastructure, Trust would like to highlight the South Cumbernauld Community Growth Area – Green Networks Guidance produced by the Cumbernauld Living Landscape.²⁴ This document gives a set of guiding principles to help better plan and execute green infrastructure in urban areas as well as site specific recommendations.

National Ecological Network

Related to the points made around green infrastructure is the concept of a National Ecological network for Scotland as referenced in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy²⁵ and National Planning Framework²⁶. A National Ecological Network approach can help restore and protect Scotland’s nature so it continues to provide the life support systems we all depend on, particularly in terms of our health, wellbeing and economic prosperity.

²⁴ See:

http://cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/docs/083_385_southcumbernauldcga_greennetworkguidance_webversion_1446561841.pdf

²⁵ See: <http://www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk/doing/strategy/>

²⁶ See: <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-3/>

It can do so by providing an overriding policy approach which allows for the consideration and integration of natural processes into the design of policies, proposals and funding streams that drive changes on the ground so that they can deliver a balanced range of public benefits. The National Ecological network would allow us to apply the same levels of strategic planning to our green and blue infrastructure as we currently apply to our digital and grey infrastructure.

Scottish Wildlife Trust and Scottish Environment LINK urge the Scottish Government to progress work on the National Ecological Network, particularly through the National Planning Framework, and make sure each new developments contributes towards a National Ecological Network. Tools such as the Scottish Wildlife Trusts **Natural Capital Planning Standard** (expanded below) can help by allowing planning authorities to set requirements in terms of green infrastructure for a new development and allowing developer's flexibility to meet this standard.

The Natural Capital Standard for Green Infrastructure

To address the inconsistency in quality of green infrastructure between developments, the Scottish Wildlife Trust is developing a tool - The Natural Capital Standard for Green Infrastructure - which assesses the quality and quantity of green infrastructure within a specific development, be it new housing, a school, a retail park or an industrial zone. The tool scores the quality of the total green area based on the estimated ecosystem services provided by the types of green infrastructure within the development. For example native trees and shrubs score more highly than non-native (because they deliver a greater range of ecosystem services). Sustainable urban drainage systems which are designed to be attractive to wildlife (and also have high aesthetic appeal) score more than those that are based on hard engineering (due to the greater range of ecosystem services they deliver). Hard surfaces score less because they do not deliver as many ecosystem services as permeable surfaces.

The relative scorings given to each type of green infrastructure can be edited by the planning authority. For example if flooding is a particular issue, extra emphasis may be put on green infrastructure that delivers benefits in terms of flood prevention / alleviation i.e. rain gardens, green roofs, trees and sustainable urban drainage systems.

This type of tool has been used by planners in Berlin, Malmo, Seattle and Chicago²⁷. In some of these places it is statutory, in others it is not, but developers are

²⁷ See: GRaBS Project Website <http://www.grabs-eu.org/>

incentivised to use it because it helps process their application in the planning system.

The Trust believe the Natural Capital Planning Standard contributes to the Scottish Government's ambition to deliver high-quality places for Scotland. Because it uses ecosystem services as a weighting factor it helps quantify (in terms of green infrastructure) how a particular development is delivering benefits for people (and wildlife) and integrates with the Place Standard.

The 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity

This 2020 Challenge is a supplement to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (2004), and is focused on desired outcomes for 2020 and meeting our internationally binding Aichi Biodiversity Targets by the 2020 deadline.

Scotland's 2020 Challenge aims to:

- Protect and restore biodiversity on land and in our seas, and to support healthier ecosystems.
- Connect people with the natural world, for their health and wellbeing and to involve them more in decisions about their environment.
- Maximise the benefits for Scotland of a diverse natural environment and the services it provides, contributing to sustainable economic growth.

Improving access to and crucially the quality of greenspace helps meet all of these aims but particularly connecting people to the natural environment and improving their health and wellbeing and this is supported by the evidence outlined below.

Health, well-being and confidence benefits ²⁸

Local greenspace and nearby nature are vital for everyone and it doesn't matter if this is an urban park or a more rural area with a wilderness feel to it²⁹. Being close to nature, either deliberately or incidentally, plays an important role in human health and wellbeing.³⁰

Improved general health has been found to be related to increased access to green space regardless of the socioeconomic status of individuals and income related

²⁸ The Wildlife Trusts and Exeter University have produced some invaluable resources in this area and this can be found in full here: <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/living-landscape/nature-health-and-wild-wellbeing>

²⁹ Barton J, Hine R and Pretty J (2009). The health benefits of walking in green spaces of high natural and heritage value. *Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences*, 6: 61-278.

³⁰ Pretty J, Peacock J, Sellens M and Griffin M (2005). The mental and physical health outcomes of green exercise. *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*, 15: 319-337.

inequality in health is moderated by exposure to green space.³¹ Even a perception of an element of greenness, be this a street tree or expansive urban wildlife reserve, is strongly associated with better mental and physical health, with those living in highly green areas being between 1.37 and 1.60 times more likely to have better health.³²

Good health into old age is also associated with access to green space.³³ Research has identified links between the amount of accessible green space in an area and mental wellbeing, indicating that accessible green space helps recovery from stress, protects from future stress and improves concentration.^{34 35 36 37 38} People living in urban areas with larger amounts of green space show significantly lower mental distress and higher well-being³⁹; a recent Scottish based study⁴⁰, reported lower levels of stress and steeper decline in cortisol secretions in individuals living in greener urban areas of Scotland.

³¹ Allen J and Balfour R (2014). Natural solutions for tackling health inequalities. London: Natural England. Available at:

<http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/naturalsolutions-to-tackling-health-inequalities>

³² Sugiyama T, Leslie E, Giles-Corti B and Owen N (2008). Associations of neighbourhood greenness with physical and

mental health: Do walking, social coherence and local social interaction explain the relationships?

Journal of Epidemiology

and Community Health, 62: e9.

³³ Tanako T, Nakamura K and Watanabar M (2002). Urban residential environments and senior citizens longevity in

megacity areas: the importance of walkable green spaces. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 56: 913-918.

³⁴ Maller C, Townsend M, Brown P and St Leger L (2002). Healthy parks healthy people: The health benefits of contact

with nature in a park context. Melbourne: Deakin University and Parks Victoria.

³⁵ Tanako T, Nakamura K and Watanabar M (2002). Urban residential environments and senior citizens longevity in

megacity areas: the importance of walkable green spaces. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 56: 913-918.

³⁶ De Vries S, Verheij RA, Groenewegen PP and Spreeuwenberg P (2003). Natural environments-healthy environments? An exploratory analysis of the relationship between greenspace and health. *Environment and Planning, A*: 35: 1717-1731.

³⁷ Nisbet EK and Zelenski JM (2011). Underestimating nearby nature: Affective forecasting errors obscure the happy path

to sustainability. *Psychological Science*, 22: 1101-1106.

³⁸ Roe JJ, Aspinall PA, Mavros P and Coyne R (2013a). Engaging the Brain: The Impact of Natural versus Urban Scenes Using EEG Methods in an Experimental Setting. *Environmental Sciences*, 1(2): 93-104.

³⁹ White M, Alcock I, Wheeler B and Depledge M (2013). Would you be happier living in a greener urban area? A fixed-effects analysis of panel data. *Psychological Science, Psychol Sci.*, DOI: 10.1177/0956797612464659, 24(6): 920-928.

⁴⁰ Roe JJ, Thompson CW, Aspinall PA, Brewster MJ, Duff EI, Mitchell R and Clow A (2013b). Green Space and Stress: Evidence from Cortisol Measures in Deprived Urban Communities. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 10(9): 2086-4103.

A recent study in the Lancet by Dr Chinmoy Sarkar ⁴¹ showed that increased urbanisation and the associated reduced contact of individuals with natural environments have led to a rise in mental disorders, including depression. Greener neighbourhoods can help prevent depression and other mental illnesses. Researchers cancelled out other factors, such as disparities in wealth, to discover that exposure to nature alone can cut the odds of serious depressive disorders by more than 5%. Women, people under the age of 60 and those living in poorer neighbourhoods are the most likely to benefit from parks and other leafy local areas.

“There is an impending necessity for urban planning and public health to join forces towards the creation of healthy places and cities,” - Dr Chinmoy Sarkar, assistant professor at

With the year of Young People well under way it is important to bear in mind that nature close to the home is also important for the wellbeing of children^{42 43 44}, increasing their ability to cope with stressful life events, directed attention and cognitive function^{45 46}. It is not only in our homes that the presence of nearby nature is important, access to nature in health care settings also benefits mental wellbeing via increases in relaxation and the ability to cope, improvements to mood and reductions in stress levels^{47 48}.

⁴¹ Residential greenness and prevalence of major depressive disorders: a cross-sectional, observational, associational study of 94 879 adult UK Biobank participants Sarkar, Chinmoy et al. The Lancet Planetary Health , Volume 2 , Issue 4 , e162 - e173

⁴² Kaplan R and Kaplan S (1989). The experience of nature: a psychological perspective. New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁴³ Thomas G and Thompson G (2004). A child’s place: Why environment matters to children. London: Green Alliance/ Demos Report.

⁴⁴ Ward Thompson C, Aspinall P and Montarzino A (2008). The childhood factor: Adult visits to green places and the significance of childhood experience. *Environment and Behaviour*, 40: 111-143.

⁴⁵ Wells NM (2000). At home with nature: effects of “greenness” on children’s cognitive functioning. *Environment and Behaviour*, 32: 775-795.

⁴⁶ Wells NM and Evans GW (2003). Nearby Nature: A buffer of life stress among rural children. *Environment and Behaviour*, 35: 311-330

⁴⁷ Cooper-Marcus C and Barnes M (1995). Gardens in health care facilities: Uses, therapeutic benefits and design recommendations. CA: The Centre for Health Design.

⁴⁸ Whitehouse S, Varni JW, Seid M, Cooper-Marcus C, Ensbarg MJ and Jacobs JR (2001). Evaluating a children’s hospital garden environment: utilisation and consumer satisfaction. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21: 301-314.

The more plants and trees in an area the more people will use and enjoy these⁴⁹ and this access to local greenspace can also encourage healthier behaviours such as increased physical activity levels and enhanced social interaction. Individuals with easy access to nature are three times as likely to be active^{50 51} and the level of 'greenness' in a neighbourhood is associated with greater participation in moderate to vigorous physical activity⁵²

The benefits for children are more pronounced, with access to nature during school being associated with increased levels of physical activity and with children who are exposed to green spaces for more than 20 minutes per day engaging in five times more moderate to vigorous physical activity⁵³. Access to nearby nature can facilitate social interaction, providing direct benefits for health^{54 55} and greener neighbourhoods have been shown to give rise to stronger neighbourhood ties⁵⁶.

Economic and wider community benefits

It is estimated that the damage caused by river flooding costs the Scottish economy £32 million every year⁵⁷. If towns and cities were made more permeable by 'designing in' green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs, street trees, parks, and sustainable urban drainage systems) water movement would be slowed down and flood risk would be substantially reduced.

⁴⁹ Kuo FE, Sullivan WC, Coley RL and Brunson L (1998). Fertile ground for community: Inner-city neighbourhood common spaces. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 26: 823-851..

⁵⁰ Wells NM, Ashdown S, Davies EHS, Cowett FD and Yang Y (2007). Environment, design and obesity. Opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborative research. *Environment and Behaviour*, 39: 6-33.

⁵¹ Bowler DE, Buyung-Ali LM, Knight TM and Pullin AS (2010). A systematic review of the evidence for the added benefits to health of exposure to natural environments. *BMC Public Health*, 10: 456-466.

⁵² Almanza E, Jerrett M, Dunton G, Seto E and Pentz MA (2012). A study of community design, greenness, and physical activity in children using satellite, GPS and accelerometer data. *Health and Place*, 18: 46-54.

⁵³ Almanza E, Jerrett M, Dunton G, Seto E and Pentz MA (2012). A study of community design, greenness, and physical activity in children using satellite, GPS and accelerometer data. *Health and Place*, 18: 46-54.

⁵⁴ Ward Thompson C (2002). Urban open space in the 21st Century. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 60: 59-72.

⁵⁵ Coley RL, Kuo FE and Sullivan WC (1997). Where does community grow? The social context created by nature in urban public housing. *Environment and Behaviour*, 29: 468-494.

⁵⁶ Kuo FE, Sullivan WC, Coley RL and Brunson L (1998). Fertile ground for community: Inner-city neighbourhood common spaces. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 26: 823-851.

⁵⁷ Morris, J. & Camino, M. (2010). Economic Assessment of Freshwater, Wetland and Floodplain Ecosystem Services, Report to the Economics Team of the UK National Ecosystem Assessment. UK National Ecosystem Cranfield University. Cambridge: Assessment.

In terms of the ecosystem services they provide Edinburgh's trees are worth £348 million annually⁵⁸ with the annual contribution they make to reducing air pollution alone being £2.3m⁵⁹.

Greenspace near home also reduces the risk of crime, aggression and domestic violence^{60 61 62 63}. Residents living in areas with high levels of vegetation report less aggressive and violent behaviour; evidence has identified a 52% reduction in property and violent crimes in areas rich in nature^{64 65 66 67 68}.

The type of nature close to where individuals work has also been found to be an important factor in quality of life⁶⁹. Access to nearby forest environments (either in rural or urban settings) has also been identified to benefit wellbeing at work^{70 71 72}.

⁵⁸ <http://www.tree-time.com/>

⁵⁹ <http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A1413427.pdf>

⁶⁰ Kuo FE and Sullivan WC (2001a). Environment and crime in the inner city: does vegetation reduce crime? *Environment and Behaviour*, 33: 343-367.

⁶¹ Kuo FE and Sullivan WC (2001b). Aggression and violence in the inner city: Effects of environment via mental fatigue. *Environment and Behaviour*, 33: 543-571.

⁶² Brisman A (2007). Toward a more elaborate typology of environmental values: Liberalizing criminal disenfranchisement laws and policies. *New England Journal on Criminal and Civil Confinement*, 33: 283.

⁶³ Billitteri TJ (2008). Reducing your carbon footprint: Can individual actions reduce global warming? *CQ Researcher*, 18: 985.

⁶⁴ Kuo FE and Sullivan WC (2001a). Environment and crime in the inner city: does vegetation reduce crime? *Environment and Behaviour*, 33: 343-367.

⁶⁵ Kuo FE and Sullivan WC (2001b). Aggression and violence in the inner city: Effects of environment via mental fatigue. *Environment and Behaviour*, 33: 543-571.

⁶⁶ Brisman A (2007). Toward a more elaborate typology of environmental values: Liberalizing criminal disenfranchisement laws and policies. *New England Journal on Criminal and Civil Confinement*, 33: 283.

⁶⁷ Billitteri TJ (2008). Reducing your carbon footprint: Can individual actions reduce global warming? *CQ Researcher*, 18: 985.

⁶⁸ Pretty J, Wood C, Hine R and Barton J (2013). Nature for rehabilitating offenders and facilitating therapeutic outcomes for youth at risk. In: (South N and Brisman A) *International Handbook of Green Criminology*.

⁶⁹ Chiesura A (2004). The role of urban parks for the sustainable city. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 68: 129-138.

⁷⁰ Li Q, Morimoto K, Nakadai A, Inagaki H, Katasumata M et al. (2007). Forest bathing enhances human natural killer activity and expression of anti-cancer proteins. *International Journal of Immunopathology and Pharmacology*, 20: 3-8.

⁷¹ Park BJ, Tsunetsugu Y, Kasetani T, Kagawa T and Miyazaki Y (2010). The physiological effects of shinrin-yoku (taking in the forest atmosphere or forest bathing): evidence from field experiments in 24 forests across Japan. *Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine*, 15: 18-26.

⁷² O'Brien L and Morris J (2013). Wellbeing for all? The social distribution of benefits gained from woodlands and forests in Britain. *The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability*, DOI:10.1080/13549839.2013.790354

Case study 1 – Wild Ways Well in Cumbernauld

“The financial cost of mental health in Scotland is in excess of £10 billion. **Source** Scottish Parliament Information Centre (2014) Mental Health in Scotland”

The Wild Ways Well project trialled a new programme of environmental activities for those at risk of mental ill health. The project is based on the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions created by the New Economics Foundation (NEF). NEF were commissioned by the UK Government to bring together a range of evidence from psychological and economic literature regarding actions people can take that are strongly associated with improved mental health and wellbeing. This framework has been adopted by the NHS and the major mental health charities.

Numerous studies have shown the benefits of exposure to nature for good mental health. For Wild Ways Well, each of the five actions has been adapted to an outdoor, green environment:

Be Active – Take part in health walks and practical outdoor activities. Explore your local paths, woods and greenspaces.

Connect – Meet new people. Connect with the people, the wildlife and the nature that’s all around us.

Give – Your time to be in nature. Give something back by sharing experiences and undertaking conservation tasks.

Take notice – Note the changing cycles of life. Use your senses. Listen to birds, smell the flowers, live in the moment.

Learn – Identify plants and wildlife, try new crafts, learn new skills. Discover things about nature and about yourself.

For the Pilot the Wild Ways Well approach was trialled with three participant groups, each taking part in a multi-week programme. A variety of session outlines, lengths, and locations were trialled over the course of the pilot. The majority of sessions however ran for between 2 and 3 hours, and all took place outdoors, in a natural, green environment.

Early results

Early results, particularly those from face to face discussions with participants and partner organisations, showed considerable potential for Wild Ways Well. The pilots were successful in breaking down some of the barriers participants experience in accessing greenspace, and showed a positive impact on:

Connecting with others
 Increasing confidence and independence
 Becoming more active and feeling better
 Gaining pleasure associated with learning
 Reducing anxiety

Case Study 2 – Health and well-being impacts of volunteering with Wildlife Trusts

The purpose of this project was to carry out an independent, academic evaluation of the health and wellbeing benefits of taking part in a sample of activities run by Wildlife Trusts.

Project participants were invited to take part in this research by completing questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered across three time-points: Baseline; 6-weeks (6-weeks after the baseline questionnaire was administered) and 12-weeks. Each questionnaire was a composite, of bespoke items designed to capture personal information and other project-related data, and internationally recognised, validated questionnaire measures.

Results

Analyses of the data revealed that Wildlife Trust projects are successfully accessing individuals with low levels of personal wellbeing; and that project attendance was associated with statistically significant improvements in individuals' mental wellbeing. The percentage of participants reporting low wellbeing scores (defined by UK norms) declined from 39% at baseline to only 19% at 12-weeks.

95% of participants with low wellbeing at baseline reported an improvement at 6-weeks, and for the baseline to 12-weeks sample, this figure was 83%. Participants also reported statistically significant enhanced levels of health, positivity, nature relatedness, pro-environmental behaviour and physical activity, and increased frequency of contact with greenspaces.

Case Study 3 – Engaging Communities to Enhance Urban Greenspace

In April 2015 the Cumbernauld Living Landscape partnership was awarded a grant of £75,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund under the Our Heritage scheme. Contributions from the Scottish Wildlife Trust, North Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire allowed us to deliver a programme of activities to connect people to and improve the quality of three important greenspaces. The Engaging Communities to Enhance Urban Greenspaces in Cumbernauld project built on the activities

implemented through the successful Living Windows project in Cumbernauld, which was funded by Sharing Heritage in 2014.

The project focused on encouraging young people from marginalised groups to learn about, value and celebrate their local natural heritage. It aimed at giving them the opportunity and skills to make real and lasting improvements to their environment. In addition, the project wanted to celebrate and promote the town's greenspaces to the wider community through activities, art and events.

In total, over 200 young people spent time learning about and improving their local greenspaces.

Our evaluation shows that the biggest impacts were:

An improvement in the confidence and employability of the young people involved, leading to more positive destinations.

The activities of the young people on the sites inspiring our community to take action, resulting in two new volunteer groups – one for practical volunteers and another for 7–12-year-olds.

An increase in our knowledge and understanding of the natural heritage and the community use of the sites. There is now a greater focus on active management and community participation.

Case Study 4 – Alive with Nature a Natural Capital Development Plan for Stirling

The City Region Deal for Stirling and Clackmannanshire is a unique opportunity to unlock investment, secure and grow the local economy, and demonstrate international leadership in developing natural assets across the urban area of Stirling City and beyond. In order to help decision makers consider natural capital a report was produced highlighting the economic and social benefits of investing in a healthy natural environment in Stirling.

The work carried out established that investment in natural capital considered in the project area assessment could bring net economic benefits worth £218m. The work showed that a large increase in accessible greenspace close to people's homes could bring annual health benefits to the local community worth at least £16k P.A. in the city park region and £280k along the river area.

What this means for decisions in Stirling

If the right balance can be struck in key decisions, the Stirling City Region Deal is a significant opportunity for Stirling to show leadership in implementing the Scottish Government's commitment to increasing natural capital, improving health and well-being, and strengthening social inclusion.

There will be significant benefits in terms of recreation, health, improving air quality, and reducing atmospheric carbon, along with numerous others.

The river in Stirling is a significant natural capital asset which for a long period has been undervalued. The City Region Deal proposals include ambitious plans to reconnect the city with its river and it will therefore be important to protect this key natural asset.

Written Submission from Fife Council

Fife Council welcomes the opportunity to give evidence on access to greenspace to the Scottish Parliament's Local Government & Communities Committee meeting of the 9th May 2018.

We have focused our evidence on issues that the committee members are interested in, which are:

- Council's approach to greenspace provision;
- Performance against national indicator;
- Views on the value of greenspace (particularly for communities);
- Issues raised in the 3rd State of Greenspace report;
- Other related matters of concern to Fife Council.

1 - Fife Council's approach to greenspace provision

Fife Council's current approach to greenspace provision started in 2007 when the Scottish Government's Scottish Planning Policy required local authorities to produce an open space audit and strategy. For the first time, the audit gave us, knowledge of provision in each town and village in Fife.

59% of Fife's population (363,460) had access to quality greenspace. Access to quality greenspace varied across the 134 settlements. Glenrothes (population 38,927) and Culross (population 395) had very good provision, and at the other end of the ratings was Auchtermuchty (population 2,028) with poor provision.

One of the reasons that Glenrothes has good provision is that greenspace was planned as part of the development of the new town. Culross and Auchtermuchty are both medieval villages, so provision wasn't planned. The quality of greenspace was poorer in towns with high levels of multiple deprivation such as in Methil and Buckhaven.

The evidence from the audit shaped the strategy. We listed the villages where greenspace needed to be protected due to poor provision and the greenspaces that needed to be improved. Making better use of our greenspace was another important aim.

To date the strategy has been very effective. Audit evidence has helped protect greenspace in villages with poor provision. Of the 95 greenspaces that needed to be improved, 45 are considered to be improving. The strategy has helped secure £3 million in grant funding. Community groups have also been really helpful in fundraising.

The strategy ran from 2011 – 2016. We are currently seeking resources to produce a second audit and strategy. We expect the second audit to show that there probably hasn't been a great deal of change in the quantity or levels of access to greenspace due to land use planning regulations. It is also likely that the quality of greenspaces will have reduced due to reductions in council funding.

1.1 Understanding greenspace provision - Fife Greenspace Audit

Access to quality publicly usable greenspace is made up of a number of elements, which come together to demonstrate greenspace provision. These are:

Quantity - The area of publicly usable greenspace in a settlement which people can use.

Access - The walking distance from a home to a publicly usable greenspace.

Quality - The quality of an acre of publicly usable greenspace.

Fife Council developed this method, as there was previously no available method for assessing greenspace provision.

1.2 Assessing greenspace provision

1.2.1 Defining greenspace

We first had to define what is meant by greenspace as this wasn't accurate at the time. Scottish Planning Policy 65 listed open space types which included private gardens. We defined greenspace as 'vegetated land in and around towns and villages which is publicly usable'. This included public parks and greenspace, residential greenspace, play space, sports areas excluding golf courses, cycle paths, natural spaces (beaches, woods, wildflower meadows), allotments and community gardens.

Other types of greenspace were classed as functional greenspace.

1.2.2 Quantity

With the help of funding from Greenspace Scotland we mapped greenspace in and around the 113 settlements. We were then able to calculate the quantity of greenspace in each settlement and find out how many hectares there were per 1,000 of the population. This figure came to six hectares per 1,000 people. This measure was then used to assess each settlement.

Glenrothes had 18 hectares per 1,000 people, compared to Auchtermuchty with two hectares per 1,000.

Knowing which settlements have greenspace deficits has been very useful, as we have been able to provide evidence on which greenspaces should be protected against building developments.

1.2.3 Access

We also assessed neighbourhood access to greenspace. This focused on space for children to play. There were two main factors to take into account: walkable distance and space to run around. The agreed assessment measure was a 250m walk from a home along a street or a path to a 0.2 hectare or above greenspace.

The access results were very mixed and not as clear as the quantity or quality audits. 84% of residents in Glenrothes had neighbourhood access to greenspace compared to only 23% in Auchtermuchty.

1.2.4 Quality

The Greenspace Scotland / Glasgow Clyde valley Green Network Partnership quality audit guide was used to assess 460, 0.4 hectare or above greenspaces.

The two main public parks (Beveridge Park (Kirkcaldy) Pittencrieff Park (Dunfermline) had a very high quality rating.

The quality audit also showed that there was a link to multiple deprivation and the availability of quality greenspace. Within Buckhaven and Methil, which have a combined population of 16,000 and have areas of multiple deprivation, there was only one reasonable quality greenspace out of a total of 22 surveyed. The audit helped Fife Council and its partners to gain funding to improve some of the greenspaces in the two towns.

2 Performance against national indicator – improve access to local greenspace

In our view, the national indicator needs to be changed so that it measures access to quality greenspace.

The data used for this indicator is based on a telephone survey, which asks people if they live within a five minute walk of a greenspace. This is not an accurate measure, as a person's perception of five minutes' walk can vary. It would be more accurate to measure five minutes' walking distance using mapping. We used the mapping approach for our greenspace audit (section 1.2.3). The area of the greenspace needs to be included, and we include this in our audit (section 1.2.3). For example, if a person walks five minutes to a

seating area (16m²) this has only very limited benefit compared to a 4,000 m²/0.4 hectare/ acre space. The *quality* of the greenspace also needs to be included. There also needs to be a definition of greenspace such as our term 'publicly usable greenspace'.

In our greenspace audit, 62% of properties were within a 2 ½ minute walk of a 0.2 hectare or above.

3 Views of the value of greenspace (Particularly communities)

3.1 Fife Council policies

Fife Council values greenspace, and there are policies in the Plan for Fife (the combined corporate and community plan) and the FIFEplan (the local development plan).

The Plan for Fife (2017 – 2017) has four priorities, one of which is 'thriving places'.

"Our thriving places will be places where people feel they belong to their community, enjoy their environment and have access to high quality open spaces; good, affordable housing; and community facilities."

Actions for 2017-2020 include:

- Implement measures to improve access to green recreation and play space, especially in more deprived communities, in order to maximise health, education and biodiversity benefits, and support initiatives that reduce social isolation.

The greenspace audit access measure was included in Making Fife's Places Supplementary Planning Guidance. Significant greenspaces were included in green networks, which are part of FIFEplan. The FIFEplan states that new development can protect, promote, and enhance the wildlife, recreational, landscape, and access value of green networks on and around the proposed development.

3.2 Communities

There are many people who value greenspace. We have some very active community councils and community groups who help improve greenspaces. Around 60 groups take part in our Beautiful Fife competition, which rewards community groups who are improving their local environment. Beautiful Fife is aligned to Beautiful Scotland (organised by Keep Scotland Beautiful) and Britain in Bloom (organised by the Royal Horticultural Society).

Many groups are mainly interested in a specific type of greenspace. For example, some groups just want to improve their local play park. We have also seen a growth in the demand for, and creation of, new allotments. This is

partly down to a proactive allotment officer and a growing interest in growing fruit and vegetables.

4 Issues raised in the Third State of Scotland's Greenspace Report

4.1 Funding greenspace provision

The biggest issue for Fife Council is the 25% reduction in funding for greenspace provision. This is a major challenge and is reducing the quality of greenspace.

The budget for Parks Streets and Open Spaces Services, which maintains all greenspace and street cleaning, has been reduced by 25%, or £3 million, in the last four years. This has led to a 25% reduction in the number of maintenance staff. There has also been a 40% reduction in the number of parks development staff who improved the quality of greenspace and there are 70% fewer countryside rangers.

The repairs budget has also been severely cut. This means less regular repairing of paths, benches and buildings and replanting of trees and shrubs. This is having an impact on the quality of greenspace, making it less attractive for people to use. This can lead to increased pressure to build houses on some greenspaces, as developers argue that they are poor quality and not well used.

Anti-social behaviour issues are harder to tackle with fewer officers and money.

5 Other related matters of concern to Fife Council

5.1 Private landowners

There is a need for more effective ways of ensuring that landowners maintain greenspace. Fife Council isn't the only provider of greenspace in Fife. There are other landowners who have publicly usable greenspace, and many of these are manage these assets responsibly.

However, to give one example, a landowner who is not maintaining a greenspace in a town. As a result, local residents are now unable to use the greenspace and it is a blight on the neighbourhood. The greenspace was created as part of a private housing development built 15 years ago, and for 10 years it was maintained by a factoring company. The company the sold the land on to an individual.

5.2 Funding programmes

There needs to be a consistent approach to funding programmes. The council and community groups are reliant on funding programmes to fund greenspace improvements. Both the council and community groups find funding processes time consuming and inconsistent. Last year we applied to a European funding programme administered by a public organisation. An officer spent a month preparing the application. The funder told us we were eligible once we submitted the application, and submitting 52 supporting documents.

The fund was competitive and the bid was unsuccessful successful

Funders also need to fund establishment periods for greenspace projects.

The Forestry Commission is currently the only funder providing funding for 5 year establishment costs, rather than just the initial capital grant. The establishment costs ensure that the trees are able to grow to a height where the wood starts to form. Most government funding is only for one-off capital grants.

5.3 Size and location of greenspace in new housing developments

There are many badly located, small greenspaces in neighbourhoods. Some greenspaces can be surrounded by houses with only one path, which can increase anti-social behaviour problems. It is a constant challenge to ensure there are larger well located greenspaces in new housing developments.

Written Submission from Edinburgh Green Spaces Forum

The community view from the Edinburgh Green Spaces Forum

The Edinburgh Green Spaces Forum (EGSF) is an umbrella organisation for all the Friends of Parks Groups that work alongside City of Edinburgh Council in Parks, Cemeteries, Natural Heritage Sites, Play Parks and other green spaces.

We are independent of the Council and aim to provide a collective voice for all the volunteers from the community who form the Friends Groups.

We share knowledge, experiences and problems with one another to make us more effective in our own park and, through the Forum, we aim to improve the dialogue with the Council and take every opportunity to have input to strategic issues affecting parks at a local and national level.

The **members of Friends Groups share a love of their park and a willingness to work** alongside the Council to improve it. We recognise the massive value of our parks as

- places to relax
- places to exercise
- places to walk our dogs
- places to cycle
- places to think

and, they are enjoyed by visitors and residents alike.

Many recent reports have identified that our parks play a vital role **in improving the mental and physical health** of everyone who uses them and **any money spent in parks will improve the health of the population and provide significant savings in health and welfare budgets in the longer term.**

How such an important contributor to the health and wellbeing of the population is not one of the statutory services supported by local or national government is astonishing, and parks will always lose when the budget discussion balances current expenditure on parks against the needs of schools, housing and care in the community.

We are **very fortunate in Scotland to have so many urban green areas** and few of us live far from a park or natural heritage site.

However, **many of these parks are becoming less and less attractive to visit.**

- Litter is increasing, partly because people need to be educated that taking your litter home is acceptable, and partly because the resources to empty what bins there are, is reducing.

- Weeds are increasing because there are insufficient ground maintenance staff to deal with them and the use of chemicals on our parks is correctly discouraged
- Invasive non-native species are a problem, particularly alongside rivers and waterways – they grow and spread rapidly and drive out our native plants
- Dog fouling is a constant problem. There are many very responsible dog owners, but it only takes a few less considerate individuals to cause a problem
- Professional dog walkers are increasing in number and while most follow the rules set out for them, it can be very intimidating for elderly people or people with children, to be confronted by a dog walker with 10 or 12 dogs, even if they are all on leads.

All these things contribute to making parks less inviting and there are an increasing number of complaints about the cleanliness and attractiveness of our parks. With more resources to address these problems our parks would be much more attractive for visitors.

Lack of maintenance generally prompted local communities, through Community Councils, to set up **Friends of Parks Groups** to work alongside Councils to maintain and improve the parks.

While Friends Groups are keen to work with Councils to improve our parks, the reduced budgets, the impact on staffing levels and the consequent increased workload are a constant barrier to progress, stopping or at best, slowing, many projects.

Within Edinburgh, there are 60 Friends of Parks Groups, spread across all areas of the city. Similar Groups exist in Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen, and possibly in other cities as well, though **lack of any national awareness of parks** means that these groups operate in isolation of one another from city to city.

However, this represents a **massive voluntary resource** available, and willing, to help with the maintenance and improvement of our parks.

Many of the Groups work on simple activities like litter collection, weeding and general maintenance. Other, more ambitious groups undertake projects to improve their park – improving children's play areas, installing benches and interpretation signs, planting trees, plants and bulbs.

Larger projects are also being undertaken. Within Edinburgh there is

- the regeneration of Saughton Park, where the Friends Group is working closely with the Council and has successfully applied for funding from the Heritage Lottery.
- the restoration of the walled garden on Corstorphine Hill – undertaken by volunteers
- the saving and restoration of the Walled Garden at the site of the historic Granton Castle, achieved through the determination and hard work of the local community
- the replacement of the physically challenging Salvesen Steps on the River Almond Walkway, a project which was initiated over 10 years ago but has only made progress thanks to the determination of the Friends Group.

Where necessary, Groups are also leading the process of applying for funding to pay for these projects and are becoming Registered Scottish Charities and SCIOs to assist with this.

The members of Friends Groups are happy to undertake this work, but we are also very conscious of the fact that we are all volunteers and as such, are doing something we enjoy and we feel provides a benefit to others. Consequently, Groups are reluctant to enter into any contractual commitment with Councils or other bodies to provide services in our parks, as this would change the whole dynamic of the Groups.

We are also very aware of the fact that, while there are volunteers of all ages, a significant proportion of the volunteers are retired people who have the time to devote to these activities. The need for people to continue in employment until later in life, will have an impact on the number of these people who are able to volunteer for Friends Groups.

We believe the support of Parks and other green spaces should be a statutory obligation for our Councils

We believe the importance of our parks should be recognised and a national level strategy to support and protect our parks should be developed

We believe Councils should be given the funding and resources required to properly support our parks and so they continue to provide the benefits to the physical and mental health of every community, throughout Scotland.

John M Kerr
Chair, Edinburgh Green Spaces Forum

Written Submission from the Heritage Lottery Fund

Dear Convener,

I am aware that the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee is hosting a round-table discussion on 9th May 2018 regarding 'access to green space' in Scotland. On behalf of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), I would like to provide your Committee Members with information which may be of interest to them ahead of the discussion. Please find attached a briefing note including information and insight on our support for parks and green spaces across the UK, including examples of partnerships and initiatives in Scotland to date. As a key partner, we have also provided Greenspace Scotland with this information to aid with their call for evidence submission.

The Heritage Lottery Fund delivers National Lottery funding for a broad range of heritage, including, since 1996, the UK's public parks and green space:

- Over the last 20 years, HLF has awarded over £950 million of National Lottery players' money to over 850 public parks across the UK, helping support and inspire communities and park managers to improve and manage public parks and cemeteries. In Scotland, we have invested over £57 million to over 60 park projects and green space initiatives;
- Our long-term support for parks and sector leadership, gives us extensive insight, reinforced by our recently published second review of the State of UK Public Parks 2016. Findings show that despite the many benefits parks provide, funding pressures continue to pose risks to the condition, maintenance and (in some cases) the very existence of public parks and green spaces in future;
- Whilst we believe public funding by local authorities must continue to be made, we recognise that local authorities face tough challenges. We have identified opportunities for community involvement, diversification of funding sources and innovation which may help to create a blended finance model critical to sustaining parks in the future.

We would welcome a discussion with you or your members about our current funding schemes and HLF funded projects, but in the meantime, if you have any questions regarding the information outlined above then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Casot

Head of Heritage Lottery Fund, Scotland

Katie Turbitt

Policy & Government Parliamentary Relations Manager - Scotland

Heritage Lottery Fund

Heritage Lottery Fund and heritage

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was set up in 1994 to distribute money raised by the National Lottery to heritage projects throughout the UK. Since 1994, HLF has supported over 42,000 projects with over £7.7 billion across the UK and over £835 million has been invested in over 4,000 projects in Scotland. HLF delivers funding for a broad range of heritage across the UK including, since 1996, the UK's public parks and green space.

- Over the last 20 years, HLF has awarded over £950 million of National Lottery players' money to over 850 public parks across the UK, helping support and inspire communities and park managers to improve and manage public parks and cemeteries. In Scotland, we have invested over £57 million to over 60 park projects and green space initiatives¹.
- Our long-term support for parks and sector leadership, gives us extensive insight, reinforced by our recently published second review of the State of UK Public Parks 2016. Findings show that despite the many benefits parks provide, funding pressures continue to pose risks to the condition, maintenance and (in some cases) the very existence of public parks and green spaces in future.
- Whilst we believe public funding by local authorities must continue to be made, we recognise that local authorities face tough challenges. We have identified opportunities for community involvement, diversification of funding sources and innovation which may help to create a blended finance model critical to sustaining parks in the future.

What we fund

Funding is available for parks projects through a range of programmes - Sharing Heritage (grants from £3,000 to £10,000), Our Heritage (grants from £10,000 to £100,000) and Heritage Grants (grants from £100,000 to £5,000,000).² Investments to date have included the principal historic parks of many urban centres, but also country parks, urban squares, marine esplanades and cemeteries. HLF funds the conservation of park features and facilities such as bandstands, monuments, lakes, paths, planting and wildlife habitats, as well as facilities to improve access and engage users and new audiences, such as play spaces, cafes, learning spaces and activities. We also offer grants to, help a community group take on the management of a park or green space.

Case studies:

- **Glasgow Green, Glasgow, £8,821,000** – this project, completed in 2007, revived heritage features in the park, encouraged environmental and educational opportunities, and recreation activities.
- **Saughton Park, Edinburgh, £4,191,100** – due to complete in 2021, City of Edinburgh Council is working in partnership with the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society (RCHS) and the Friends of Saughton Park group on this exciting project. Learning and educational activities for adults and children will be offered and new visitor displays introduced. Physical works include the

reinstatement of the bandstand, restoration of the Walled Garden, a new plaza and café for outdoor markets and events. Missing audiences, in particular older people and visitors with disability will be targeted using existing community networks. A Changing Places toilet facility will be introduced to provide an adult changing table with hoist. Partnership-working will ensure activities are widely accessible and inclusive. Children will benefit from having access to free outdoor classroom resources aligned to Scotland's CfE as well as children's horticulture and family fun activities.

- **Dean Castle Country Park, East Ayrshire, £3,384,400** - due to complete in the summer of 2018, this project has seen the restoration and extension of existing buildings to improve visitor facilities (including a Changing Places toilet) and accommodate the significant increase in visitor numbers. The project includes extensive habitat management to protect and enhance the ancient woodland within the site, better access and more comprehensive interpretation and education.
- **Duthie Park, Aberdeen, £2,634,500** – now complete, this project undertook conservation and improvement works, including the restoration of original Victorian features, while taking into account modern community needs and uses.
- **Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick, £2,662,300** – now in its final year, the former bandstand has been restored to its original design; existing war memorials and fountains conserved; and a new play park, café and footbridge introduced. The walled garden is now being used for a community food growing project.
- **Levensgrove Park, Dumbarton, £2,772,100** – this live project will see the expansion of the existing social work activity centre within the park, and see a wider range of people engaged with. Visitor numbers are expected to increase from 146,250 to approximately 200,000. The park already engages with more than 100 people with disabilities, and the expanded facility will be able to accommodate more users. Access improvements planned for the wider park, include the provision of mobility scooters, accessible interpretation, a hearing loop system in the pavilion and disabled parking. The existing Depot building, which serves as a base for the 'Well Connected' social work programme at Levensgrove, will be reconfigured to provide state-of-the-art facilities for service users with disabilities.

Wider support

We have supported the wider sector by building capacity and financial resilience, and supporting umbrella organisations, including The Parks Alliance UK (£10k), London Parks & Greenspaces Forum (£28k) and GreenSpace Scotland (£60k).

Greenspace Scotland has benefitted from around £60,000 of HLF funding to help develop its business model and funding strategy. Whilst much of its advocacy work is on valuing parks and green spaces, a current focus is on pioneer projects that break new ground through design, funding and management; responding to the effects of climate change to improve resilience. For example, the testing of innovative approaches to climate adaptation has been developed in partnership with Hazlehead Park in Aberdeen and the Dunfermline Public Park with its climate change park³. Other pioneering work includes the first comprehensive open data

national greenspace map.⁴ In 2015, Greenspace Scotland established the Scottish Park Managers' Forum to provide a professional network for park managers from Scottish local authorities - it is one of Greenspace Scotland's responses to the 'Call to Action' in the HLF's *State of UK Public Parks 2014* and is supported by a HLF start-up grant of around £10,000. It connects over 130 local authority officers from all 32 Scottish local authorities. The Forum supports the professional and operational development of park managers – enabling them to share practice across council areas, develop skills and explore challenges so that they can more effectively and efficiently manage Scotland's parks heritage.

Why we fund parks and green spaces

Of the estimated 27,000 parks in the UK, over 4,000 are thought to have significant cultural and/or natural heritage value. Investment by the National Lottery has led to a significant increase in both the technical and public understanding of their history and conservation. In 2015, HLF's *20 years in 12 places*⁵ research concluded that parks are some of the most recognised projects HLF has funded, that they generate local pride and direct personal benefit to users including National Lottery players.

Our two *State of UK Public Park* reports⁶ offer the only comprehensive assessment of the recent, present and likely future condition and funding of parks. The reports show that there is a growing deficit between their rising use and the declining resources that are available to manage them. Based on surveys, the findings show that while parks are highly valued by the public and usage is increasing, park maintenance budgets and staffing levels are being cut. The research calls for collaborative action to deliver new ways of funding and managing public parks to avert a crisis. Without urgent action the continuing downward trend in the condition of many of our most treasured parks and green spaces is set to continue. More support, shared learning and collaboration is needed to support those that manage public parks.

Case study: In 2011 Edinburgh City Council began to implement a three-year £90 million programme of savings, which included budget and staff reductions to their parks service. The loss of a £1 million annual capital fund was negatively affecting park infrastructure and the city becoming increasingly reliant on HLF investment for its park regeneration and development work. To improve the efficiency of park management, the city established a Living Landscapes Programme in 2012, run in partnership with the Scottish Wildlife Trust. The project has mapped living landscape features to provide a framework and management tool for developing more healthy and diverse ecosystems. The city has undertaken a detailed analysis of the social return on investment that its parks provide, finding that, for every £1 invested in parks, approximately £12 of benefits are delivered.⁷

Rethinking Parks

In 2013, HLF recognised that the sector would benefit from support to identify, explore and test new ways of financing and managing parks. With innovation charity Nesta and Big Lottery Fund we developed a two-year long innovation programme called Rethinking Parks. In 2015 the 11 prototype projects completed with all providing learning and some potential for new ways to fund and manage parks.

Building on what we have learnt we are again working with these partners and have launched a £2 million fund to support parks innovators approaches are required, but UK parks have little budget or time to invest in trialling new ways of working that could help alleviate this pressure. That is why our partnership has launched a call for proposals to Rethinking Parks; a two-stream innovation fund that will help support parks innovators⁸.

Case study: MyParkScotland project is one of 11 UK ‘park trailblazers’ to come out of our Rethinking Parks programme. The web-based platform combines elements of crowdfunding, for individual and business giving to support parks and parks projects, with an investment strategy to develop longer term sustainability and endowment funds. The interactive hub provides information about park events, facilities and activities. Greenspace is initially developing MyParkScotland in partnership with the City of Edinburgh, Glasgow City Council, Future Cities and the Edinburgh Friends Forum, with longer term intentions to extend it across Scotland.

Recommendations

Our public parks and green spaces continue to be a vital and popular public resource, but they face growing challenges. As outlined in *State of UK Public Parks 2016*, for our public parks and green spaces to serve both current and future generations, we recommend that the Government, local authorities, charities, funders, business and the park-using public need to work collaboratively to address the following five key themes of activity:

1. Continuing local authority leadership - local authorities have a pivotal role in ensuring the continued provision of quality parks and green spaces.
2. Promoting active partnerships - greater collaboration and coordination is needed between partners to share funding and expertise to maximise the efficient use of limited resources.
3. Supporting communities to play a more active role - additional support and assistance should be given to make the most of their contribution and ensure this collaboration is of mutual benefit e.g. engage the voluntary sector.
4. Developing new models of management and funding - the current climate provides the opportunity to experiment, test and refine new contemporary and possibly more cost-effective models of management and funding eg. using endowments.
5. Compiling, coordinating and updating data - whilst there have been some improvements in the collection of information, including the development of the long-awaited national green space map, many local authorities still have a limited understating of the detailed workings of their parks service.

Notes

¹ The funding includes the Parks for People programme and funding for parks awarded through other HLF programmes.

² More information on our open programmes can be found at www.hlf.org.uk/our-grant-programmes

³ Project specific reports have been published for both of these sites and provide further detail on these initiatives. <http://greenspacescotland.org.uk/greenspace-and-climate-change.aspx>

⁴ For further information on Scotland’s Greenspace Map see:

<http://greenspacescotland.org.uk/scotlands-greenspace-map.aspx>

⁵ <https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/research-evaluation/20-years-heritage>

⁶ For a comprehensive understanding of why parks matter to people and communities we would refer to our 2014 State of UK Public Parks report (<https://www.hlf.org.uk/state-uk-public-parks-2014> and our 2016 State of UK Public Parks report and accompanying research data <https://www.hlf.org.uk/state-uk-public-parks-2016>

⁷ The full case study can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/state-uk-public-parks-2016>

⁸ More information can be found at www.nesta.org.uk/project/rethinking-parks