



# Community Environment Fund

## Impact Report

April 2025



West Midlands  
Combined Authority



Greener  
Together

Commonwealth Games  
Legacy Enhancement Fund






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# Executive summary



# Executive Summary

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) received over £1.2 million through the UK Government's Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Fund (CWGLEF) to deliver the Community Environment Fund (CEF). Of this, £916,145 was awarded as grants to community groups. The programme was launched on 27th October 2023 and completed on 31st March 2025.

This impact report considers the benefits and outcomes achieved through the programme. It aims to:

- Assess the reach and impact of the programme, highlighting the change that has happened for people and in the environment.
- Measure the outcomes achieved, including a Social Return on Investment (SRoI) assessment.
- Identify successes and challenges, and recommendations for future programmes.

The report includes a review of programme documents, engagement with grant holders through a survey and workshops, consultations with the Grant Assessment Panel (GAP) and WMCA's programme team, and analysis of primary and secondary data.

## Programme overview

CEF funded 27 community groups across the West Midlands to deliver community-led environmental initiatives under five 'themes' (see Section 2).

## Reach and impact

The programme met CWGLEF's 'wellbeing and sustainability' theme by successfully delivering £1.2 million grant funding to community projects in the West Midlands. Grant holders provided good geographical coverage across the combined authority's seven core local authorities.

CEF directly reached over 28,000 people through project activities and improved access to green spaces for over 162,000 local residents (people within 15 minutes' walk – see Appendix 2). A range of groups across the West Midlands benefitted from the programme through positive outcomes and impact across three categories: social and community, economic, and environmental (aligned against CEF's Theory of Change).

Social and community benefits include: improved access to green spaces, improved physical and mental health of beneficiaries, and increased environmental awareness of residents.



Economic benefits include: jobs created and supported, people learning skills and gaining qualifications.

Environmental benefits include: natural habitats being managed or improved, trees and shrubs planted, 'waste materials' being upcycled or reused, and green and blue spaces better able to store carbon, manage water, provide shading and support nature's recovery.

Other wider benefits achieved include: volunteering opportunities created, projects generating revenue on-site and making financial gains by diverting waste from landfill.

Overall, the SRoI assessment shows the programme generated exceptional value for money. For every £1 spent, there was a return of £4.14.

The programme largely achieved its four intended impacts, namely:

- Better experience and quality of life for residents.
- Benefits to the resilience of people and places.
- Improved environment for nature to thrive.
- CEF sustains itself beyond the CWGLEF funding - funded organisations continue to benefit from improved capabilities and skills, and with improved networks, even though new funding has not been identified (see Section 3).

## Conclusions

### Strengths and successes

- Good progress was made against CWGLEF's 'wellbeing and sustainability' priorities.
- A high level of demand for CEF and excellent reach.
- Created long-term outcomes and impacts achieved, alongside other wider benefits.
- Longer-term impacts were achieved, a legacy was created, and the sustainability of many activities was ensured beyond the period of CWGLEF funding.

### Concerns and challenges

- The short timescales and delivery through the winter limited impact.
- Fewer applications were received under certain themes.

### Recommendations

- Promote the wide range of impacts achieved, alongside the strong value for money generated.
- Explore ways to engage communities and organisations around climate adaptation as this was the most under-represented theme.
- Always clarify and simplify the language in guidance documents.

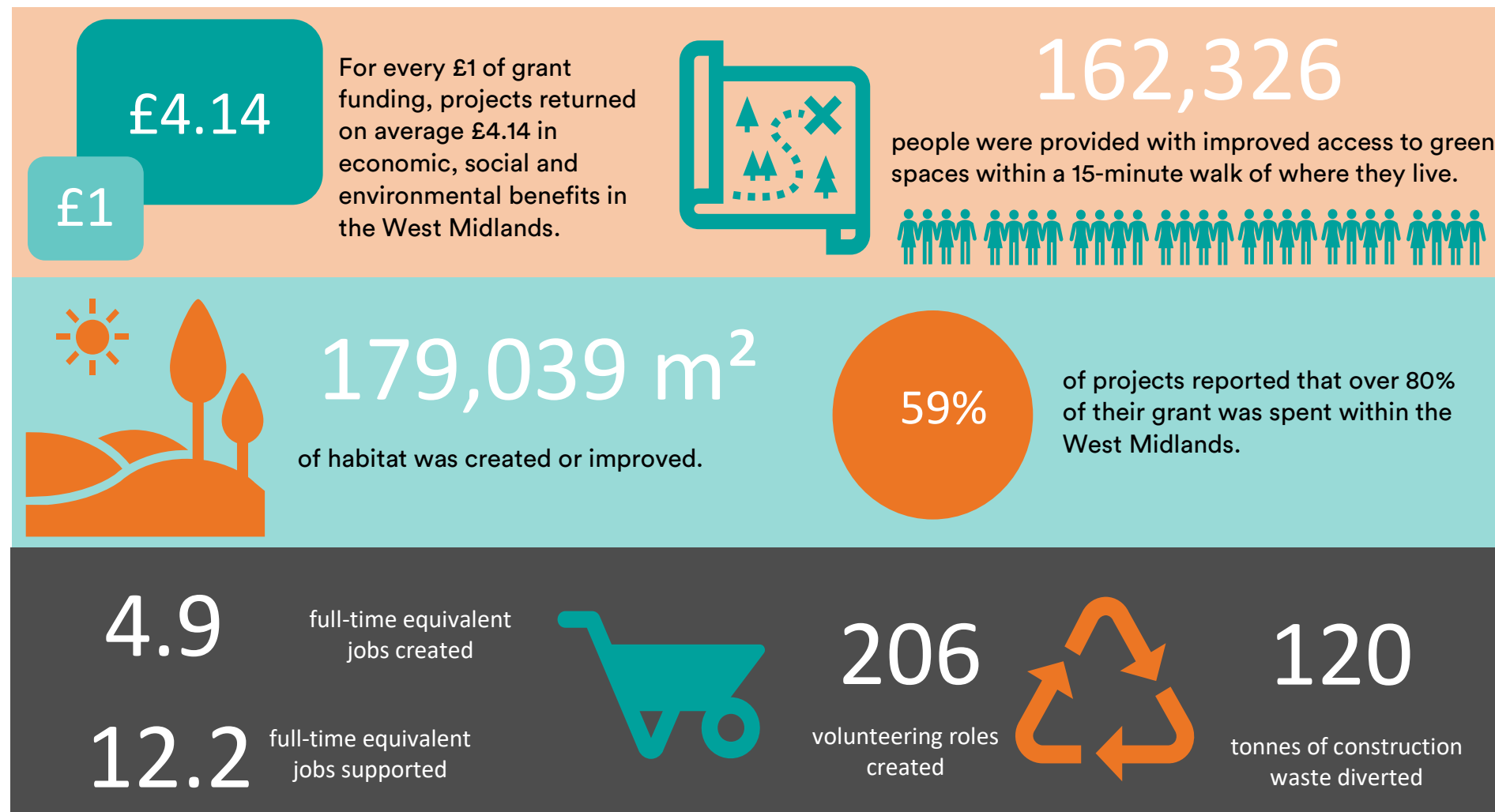


- Ensure future programmes are delivered over a longer period to reduce the challenges caused by weather conditions.
- Continue promoting collaboration among grant holders and other stakeholders.
- Explore increasing involvement of local environmental specialists in programme design and delivery.
- Improve the efficiency of data collection processes including benchmarking before project delivery (**see Section 4**).



## Overall value for money is excellent...

The outcomes create social value of £3.8 million. This represents an exceptional value for money of £4.14 social return for every £1 invested.







LEAF (Linking  
Environment  
and Farming)

# Introduction



# Section 1: Introduction

## Background

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) received £70 million from the UK Government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2023 through the Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Fund (CWGLEF). Of this, £1.2 million was allocated to the Community Environment Fund (CEF) under the 'wellbeing and sustainability' theme. The total amount awarded as grants to community projects under CEF was £916,145.

## About the impact report

WMCA commissioned Forever Consulting in January 2025 to evaluate the impact of the CEF programme [referred to as 'the programme' or 'CEF']. Appendix 1 summarises the approach.

## Research questions

The report aims to answer the following research questions:

- How many people were involved? Did CEF reach a wide range of people? Did it help vulnerable people? How did it support them?
- Were jobs created or supported? Did people learn new skills? Were these formal qualifications or informal skills like teamwork or confidence building?

- Were green and blue spaces created? Can more people access nature? How were these spaces improved? What other benefits were there for communities? Did it improve people's financial situation or health?
- Were natural habitats managed, improved or new ones created? How many trees and hedges were planted? Did any particular species benefit?
- Did CEF increase the awareness and understanding of the environment? Are some communities in the West Midlands more resilient to climate change now? Were communities engaged in the emerging circular economy? What quantity of material did they divert from landfill?
- Did people learn more about environmental issues? What kind of activities were used to teach people? Have people changed their behaviour?
- What roles did community groups and other stakeholders play in delivering the outcomes?
- What challenges were encountered and how were they overcome? What lessons can be learned for future projects?



# About the Community Environment Fund



## Section 2: About the Community Environment Fund

This section provides an overview of the programme. It sets out the programme objectives, funding profile, the themes covered, and the activities delivered.

### Background

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) allocated £70 million to WMCA under the Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Fund (CGLEF). The fund was created to sustain the positive impact of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games across the West Midlands.

The CWGLEF has four pillars of activity (or strands), based on the legacy programmes from the Commonwealth Games. They are:

- Economy, trade and tourism
- Culture and heritage
- Inclusive communities
- Wellbeing and sustainability

Through these strands, the CWGLEF aimed to boost economic growth, enhance cultural activities, promote inclusivity, and support wellbeing and sustainability, creating long-term benefits for communities across the West Midlands.

Building on the activity already undertaken under CWGLEF's 'wellbeing and sustainability' strand, WMCA received £1.2 million from the fund to deliver the Community Environment Fund (CEF). This was aimed at providing grants to communities to deliver environmental projects, and to improve the health and wellbeing of some of the region's most vulnerable communities.

The CEF also builds on the progress made, and activities delivered through WMCA's previous Community Green Grants (CGG) programme. The ambition was to improve environmental outcomes by learning from CGG and incorporating new activities, whilst helping people and communities.

The CEF was launched in October 2023, with projects delivering activities until the end of March 2025.

### Programme objectives

In their Business Justification Case, WMCA identified key outputs, short-term and long-term outcomes, and impacts through a programme Theory of Change (Figure 2.1). Based on these, the programme set out to deliver activities across five key themes (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.1: Programme Theory of Change (ToC)

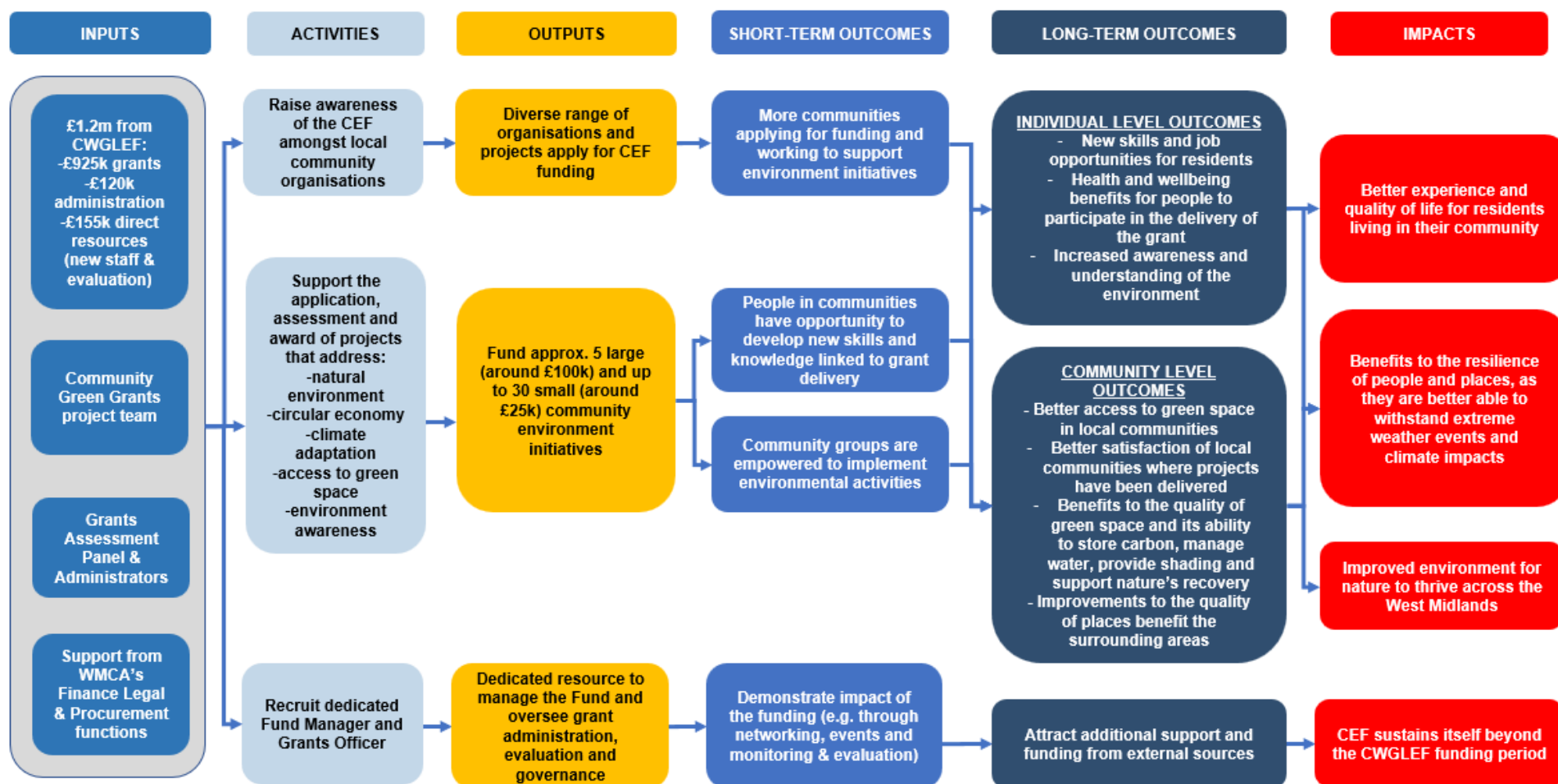




Figure 2.2: Programme themes

## Funded programmes

Over £916,000 of funding was awarded to 27 community groups (referred to as ‘grant holders’ or ‘projects’) under the programme. Projects delivered a range of activities, including



**Access to Green and Blue Space:**  
Improving access to and community use of green and blue spaces for health and wellbeing.



**Climate Adaptation:** Making communities more resilient to climate change.



**Environmental Awareness:**  
Increasing knowledge of environmental issues and fostering behaviour change.



**Natural Environment:** Protecting, restoring, and enhancing nature and wildlife.



**Promoting the Circular Economy:**  
Reducing waste and keeping resources and materials in use for as long as possible.

Table 2.1 summarises the key details of the projects funded through the programme

*Table 2.1 Funded projects*

Organisation	Project	Local authority (LA) location	Project description	Grant amount
All Saints Action Network	All Saints Repair Cafe	Wolverhampton	Set up a repair café in its community hub and wood recycling centre. They promoted furniture and clothing recycling among the community and enabled local residents to access basic tools from a tool library. The project also allowed visitors access to expert knowledge of repair techniques.	£25,000
Aspire4U	Dudley Support Circles	Dudley	Reclaimed an abandoned garden by establishing a gardening group, helping participants develop horticulture skills. The project also helped improve mental health and environmental awareness of volunteers and visitors.	£8,033
Birmingham Botanical Gardens	Trees over Time	Birmingham	Piloted research to address the need to understand the impact of climate change on the tree canopy in Birmingham. The project aimed to help people, the natural environment, and trees in the city to be more resilient and less vulnerable to the impact of heat, drought, and flood events.	£24,990
The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham &	Dudley's Paths to Nature Recovery	Multi-LA	Created new walking routes and managing habitats through the Black Country Geo Park, helping more people connect to nature.	£99,605



Organisation	Project	Local authority (LA) location	Project description	Grant amount
the Black Country				
Birmingham County Football Association	<b>Save Today, Play Tomorrow</b>	Multi-LA	Trained climate champions and put football club volunteers through Carbon Literacy for Grassroots Football training. Also trialled a nature-based solution to reduce flooding of a sports pitch.	<b>£25,000</b>
Birmingham Settlement	<b>Green Minds</b>	Birmingham	Converted a 3-acre site into a natural, safe, and welcoming community green therapeutic space for local residents.	<b>£19,526</b>
Birmingham TreePeople	<b>Street Tree Project</b>	Birmingham	Trained new volunteers to survey young street trees within the city, helping identify trees in poor condition and the cause of this to inform future planting choices.	<b>£12,765</b>
BME United	<b>Together we can make a difference</b>	Wolverhampton	Delivered training to enable members of ethnically diverse communities in Wolverhampton to become more resilient and prepared for the impacts of climate change.	<b>£24,760</b>
Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust	<b>The Midlands Crayfish Partnership</b>	Multi-LA	Mapped existing native and non-native crayfish populations, coordinated conservation efforts, and worked with the Sealife Centre in Birmingham on a breeding programme to boost declining numbers of the White clawed crayfish. They also hosted talks, walks, workshops, and other family activities to raise awareness about the native crayfish, the challenges it faces and freshwater ecosystems.	<b>£59,430</b>

Organisation	Project	Local authority (LA) location	Project description	Grant amount
Caldmore Village Festival Ltd	<b>Caldmore Environmental Education Centre</b>	Walsall	Transformed Caldmore Community Garden into a nature, environment and climate change education centre, hosting gardening, conservation, climate change, and environmental sustainability workshops, events, and other activities to help local people reduce their own waste and carbon emissions.	<b>£24,995</b>
Canal and River Trust	<b>Wild Waterways</b>	Multi-LA	Expanded the Canal and River Trust's 'Wild in Birmingham' project to improve the natural environment with communities around sections of the waterway in Birmingham, Walsall, and Wolverhampton.	<b>£100,000</b>
Carriers of Hope	<b>What Comes Around, Goes Around</b>	Coventry	Helped people experiencing poverty by providing essential items such as baby equipment, furniture, electrical items, bikes and toys, reusing unwanted items that would otherwise go to landfill. They also upcycled surplus fabrics into seasonal decorations whilst upskilling local volunteers.	<b>£25,000</b>
Castle Bromwich Hall and Gardens Trust	<b>From the Ground Up</b>	Solihull	Delivered a range of activities including repair cafés, home food growing drop-in days, and foraging and cooking sessions to encourage behaviour change among visitors from east Birmingham and north Solihull.	<b>£21,292</b>
Ekho Collective CIC	<b>Creating Greener Communities</b>	Dudley	Installed a composting toilet allowing greater accessibility to their activities along with the construction of a cob oven using the clay on site for "plot to plate education sessions". Also offered access to gardening equipment through their tool library, and sustainability resources	<b>£25,000</b>



Organisation	Project	Local authority (LA) location	Project description	Grant amount
			such as literature, pots, and seed swaps to improve health and well-being amongst their participants.	
Growth Path Services (formerly Kingstanding Regeneration Trust)	Biodiverse Brookvale	Birmingham	Increased biodiversity and community use of Brookvale Park, Erdington, through a programme of planting and events while offering training and qualifications to NEET (not in education, employment, or training) young people.	£13,148
Holyhead Road Allotments	Future Proofing Community Food Growing	Coventry	Transformed an area that was water-logged into a wet woodland habitat, using more sustainable practices such as water conservation, and raised beds alongside climate adaptation workshops for allotment holders and local gardeners.	£18,707
LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming)	Creating Conscious Consumers in Wolverhampton, Sandwell, and Birmingham	Multi-LA	Delivered farm visits and workshops for children at inner city schools and youth groups across Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Sandwell to improve their understanding of where food comes from and how it is produced, helping them become conscious consumers in the future.	£25,000
Make Good Arts	Repair and Share Sandwell	Sandwell	Provided sewing machines and other resources in community venues to help local people repair, share, and remake clothing, saving them money and diverting hundreds of items of clothing away from landfill.	£13,320

Organisation	Project	Local authority (LA) location	Project description	Grant amount
Norton Hall Children and Family Centre	Improving the natural environment and access to blue and green space in Ward End Park	Birmingham	Created a second allotment on an unused terrace space to engage with the community, increase food production and consider climate change. They also developed a forest school area for use by schools and community groups.	£24,825
People for People	Smethwick Community Garden	Sandwell	Cleared waste and improved access to three plots within Londonderry allotments in Smethwick. The project also created a nature-focused community garden space to offer regular activities to people from diverse communities in the West Midlands.	£21,878
The Rebuild Site	The Reuse Hub	Wolverhampton	Started the Reuse Hub to support the Circular Economy in the West Midlands. Took surplus materials from construction sites, builders' merchants, wholesalers, and others in the supply chain to sell them on to local small traders, DIYers, gardeners and crafters at a discounted cost; diverting the surplus material away from landfill sites.	£100,000
Ryecroft NRC	The Greenway	Walsall	Delivered a climate festival, training about the climate, and guided walks and cycling along the Greenway route in Walsall.	£8,202



Organisation	Project	Local authority (LA) location	Project description	Grant amount
Saathi House	Aston Environment Awareness	Birmingham	Trained local women as environment champions to promote sustainable living practices, such as waste reduction, efficient cooking, recycling, and energy conservation.	£20,125
Severn Rivers Trust	Coventry Rivers Citizen Science	Coventry	Trained volunteers and engaged people through events under their 'Citizen Science' project focusing on river health along the River Sowe in Coventry.	£36,500
The Active Wellbeing Society	Repair and Skill Share at the Share Shacks	Birmingham	Expanded their Share-Shack project in Birmingham. Conducted repair and skill workshops at their sites, helping local people fix their own broken items such as electrical equipment and clothing, saving them from landfill.	£99,544
Wildside Activity Centre	Natural Learners	Wolverhampton	Delivered hands-on activities in their natural learning environment to teach inner-city children about the natural world, the importance of conservation and environmental issues, and encourage them to become ambassadors for positive environmental change.	£24,400
Woodgate Valley Urban Farm	Community Engagement Space and an Eco-toilet	Birmingham	Provided new facilities and opportunities to young people with disabilities to get involved in practical nature-based activities.	£15,100
Total				£916,145



# Reach and impact



## Section 3: Reach and impact

This section explores the difference the programme has made to individuals, communities, and the environment across the West Midlands, including its legacy and long-term sustainability.

### Programme reach

#### Applications received from a range of organisations...

A key planned output was to receive applications from a wide range of organisations. CEF received 125 expressions of interest, followed by 54 applications, from which 27 community groups / charities were funded. On average, project delivery ran for nearly nine months.

#### Allocation targets for the programme achieved...

Another programme output was to fund around 5 large and up to 30 small community environment initiatives. This was largely achieved with large grants (up to £100,000) allocated to six organisations and small grants (up to £25,000) awarded to 21 organisations. The programme ensured a good geographic spread across the West Midlands (Figure 3.1).

#### The programme reached a large number of people...

CEF projects directly supported 28,821 people across the West Midlands through their activities, including a wide range of population groups. Further, 162,326 people were provided with improved access to green spaces locally (people living within 15 minutes' walk of improved green/blue spaces).

Many of the residents directly supported through project activities were from deprived areas and disadvantaged / underrepresented communities including (but not limited to):

- Ethnically diverse communities, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Individuals and families, including children and young people.
- People with disabilities, including long-term physical and mental health conditions and illnesses.

Figure 3.2 highlights the reach of the programme across different demographic groups where this data was collected by projects.

Figure 3.1: Projects by local authority area

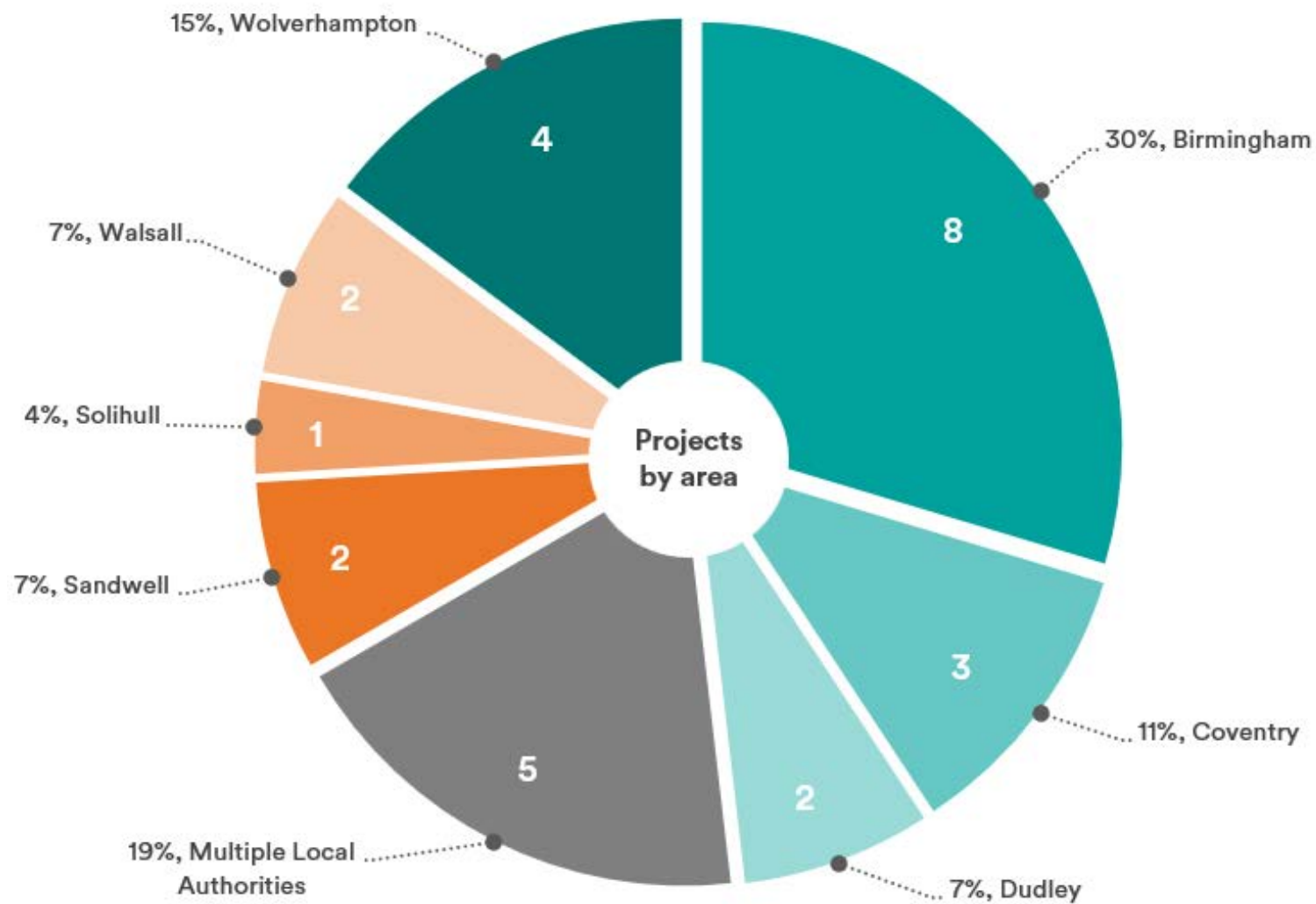
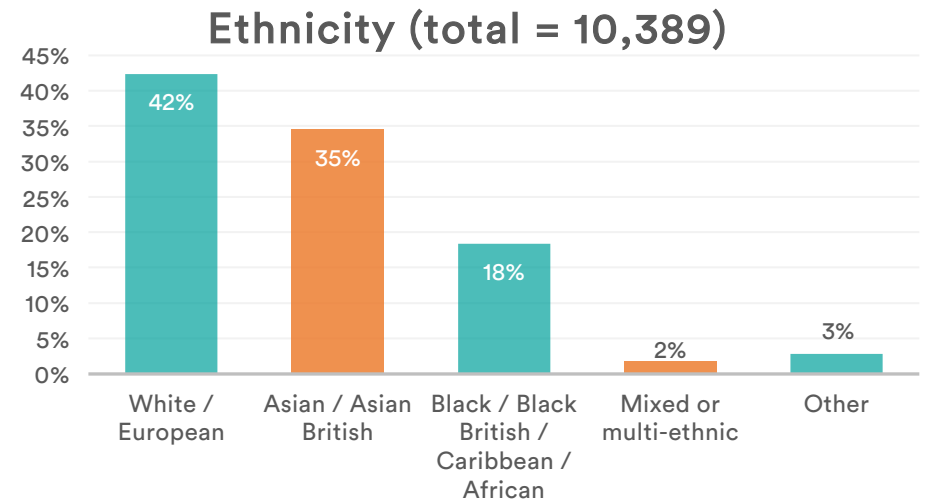
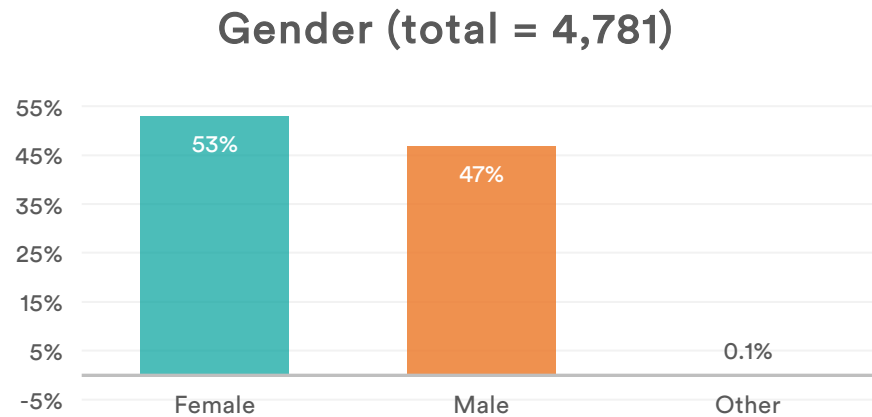
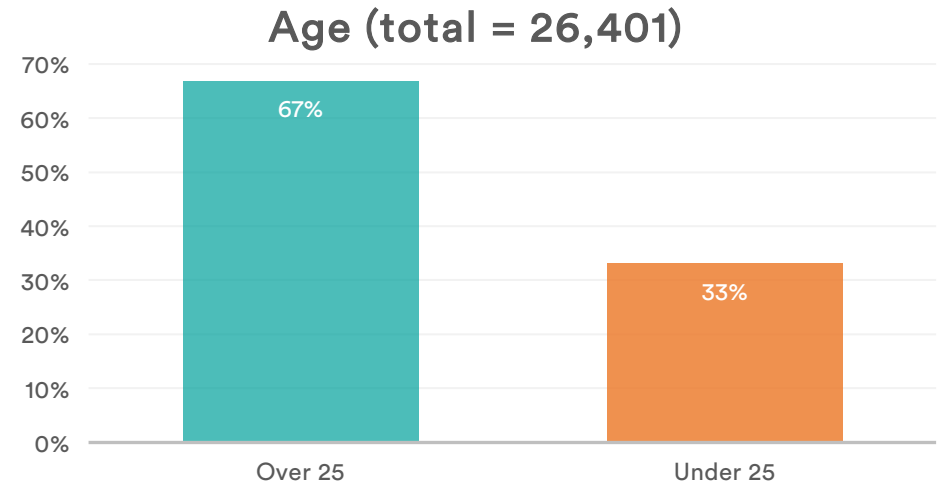
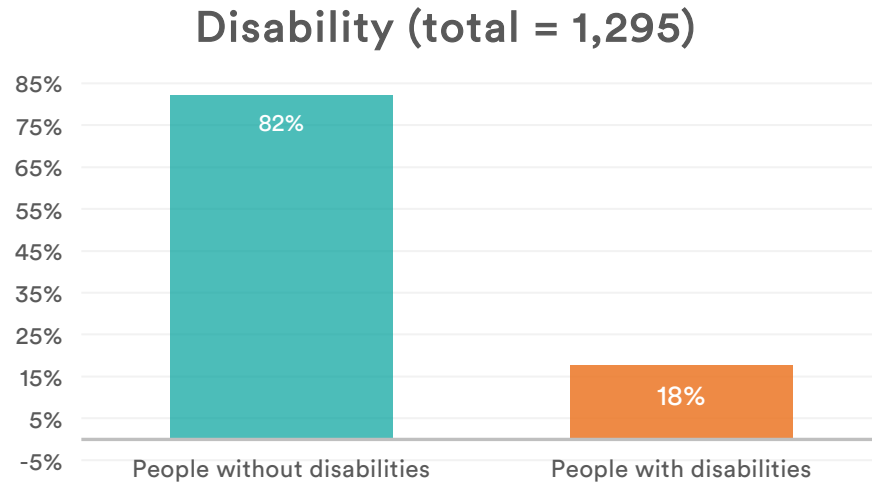




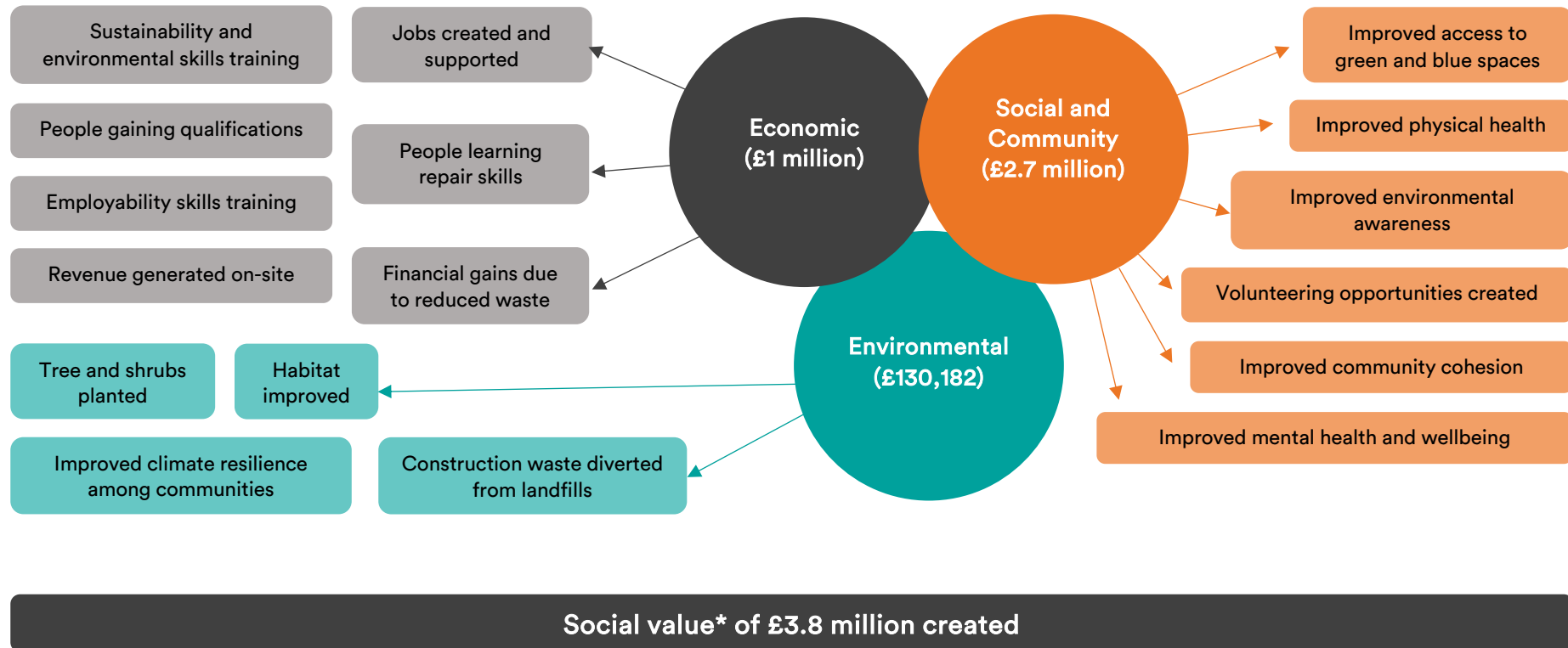
Figure 3.2: Beneficiary demographics



## Programme impact

Aligned with the programme Theory of Change, this section assesses the outcomes and impacts of CEF across three categories - economic, social and community, and environmental – while also highlighting wider benefits. By monetising outcomes and impacts reported by projects, this section also assesses the value for money of the programme (methodology in Appendix 1).

Figure 3.3: Summary of programme benefits



\*Present Value



## • Social and community outcomes

This sub-section highlights the social and community benefits of the programme including:

- Improved access to green spaces in local communities.
- Health and wellbeing benefits of residents.
- Increased awareness and understanding of the environment.

Additionally, wider social and community benefits were achieved through projects by creating volunteering opportunities.

### Improved access to green and blue spaces...

A key aim of CEF was to improve access to green or blue spaces across the West Midlands. A total of 13 projects created new green and blue spaces and / or improved existing spaces, providing an opportunity to improve the overall health of their beneficiaries. This contributes to the planned impact of a better quality of life for residents (Table 3.1 and Appendix 2).

162,326 people live within a 15-minute walk of projects that have improved access to green space.

Over 5 years, this improved access to green spaces could generate a recreational value of over £773,000 by providing residents with day-to-day benefits such as access to walking routes and play spaces (see Table 3.1).

**Aspire4U** transformed an underutilised garden space into a vibrant, accessible, and welcoming environment for their service users. They cleared overgrown weeds, levelled the ground, and enhanced security and access, ensuring that the space was safe and inviting for all.

This revitalised garden now serves as a peaceful retreat where individuals can participate in mental well-being groups, experience the calming effects of a sensory garden, and engage in hands-on gardening activities. By incorporating bug hotels and bird feeders, they have also encouraged more wildlife to flourish in the space - an especially meaningful change given their location near an industrial estate and a busy road in central Dudley.

Other examples of this include:

- **People for People** cleared a community garden in a poor state, with overgrown brambles, making the site accessible, increasing volunteering, and enabling people to share and use the space in a safe way.
- **Canal and River Trust** improved access to seven linear miles of canal and river by planting trees, seeds, coir rolls (placed inside the canal to encourage marginal plants), shrubs, succulents, and bee and bird habitats. They also engaged new and existing volunteers to do litter and vegetation clearance, collecting 15kg of rubbish.

*Table 3.1: Recreation value of the improved spaces to local residents over 5 years*

Organisation name	Residents within 15-min walking distance	Access type*	Created or improved access	Recreation value
Aspire4U	3,710	Restricted	Created	£6,311
The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country	10,857	Open	Improved	£50,173
Birmingham County Football Association	912	Restricted	Improved	£55,220
Birmingham Settlement	3,092	Open	Improved	£14,289
Caldmore Village Festival Ltd	5,388	Open	Improved	£24,899
Canal and River Trust	87,955	Open	Improved	£338,721
Ekho Collective CIC	2,669	Restricted	Improved	£47,332
Growth Path Services (formerly Kingstanding Regeneration Trust)	2,515	Open	Improved	£11,623
Holyhead Road Allotments	6,236	Restricted	Improved	£11,044
Norton Hall Children and Family Centre	6,666	Restricted	Both	£68,915
People For People	3,109	Restricted	Both	£6,358
Severn Rivers Trust	26,137	Open	Improved	£100,656
Woodgate Valley Urban Farm	3,080	Restricted	Improved	£37,865
Total	162,326			£773,407
Average	12,487			£59,493



\*Access was categorised as 'open' for projects offering free access to residents (e.g. public parks and community gardens) or 'restricted' for projects with limited or closed access to the public (e.g. allotments, private parks, a football pitch area).

### Improved physical and mental health and wellbeing...

Other programme activities such as organising walking tours have likely improved the physical health of many local residents, creating health cost savings of over £263,000.

Further, projects have delivered a wide range of therapeutic activities helping people connect with nature, feel part of the community, and reduce their stress and anxiety. While it is difficult to monetise all mental health benefits, qualitative feedback from projects illustrates the extent of impact created here. By bringing people together for regular group sessions and activities, the programme has created a wellbeing value of over £551,000.

Table 3.2 summarises the social value created through improved physical and mental health and wellbeing.



**£263,641**

Health cost savings due to improved physical health



**£551,513**

Value of improved mental health by being part of a social group

*"We haven't measured mental health in any scientific way but pretty much all the volunteers seemed to have gained new friendships and be more connected with each other. Lots of laughter and fun combined with physical exercise!" – Canal and River Trust*

*"For participants, the gardening group has become a vital tool for managing mental ill-health, providing a supportive space to connect with others, learn new skills, and build confidence. We have observed a significant improvement in their self-assurance, willingness to step outside their comfort zones, and overall mindset." - Aspire4U*

Some project examples of activities helping participants improve physical and mental health include:

- **The Active Wellbeing Society** have seen 46% of their beneficiaries engaging with their 'share shacks' move from being inactive to physically active. They also reported that nearly 70% of their respondents have experienced improved mental health since taking part in their repair sessions.
- **Birmingham Settlement** used horticultural activities to help reduce waiting lists for statutory mental health services by providing access to multipurpose green spaces to individuals experiencing anxiety and poor mental health. They provided varied and engaging therapeutic activities both in and incorporating nature including gardening, crafting, and spending time in nature through relaxation, exercise and mindfulness activities such as tai chi and yoga.
- **Severn Rivers Trust** reduced social isolation by 'buddying up' volunteers on river restoration projects to ensure no one felt alone. This has brought people together and made them feel more connected to their local community.
- A men's mental health, depression and anxiety group has increased their involvement at **Ryecroft**, from initially taking part in nature walks, to now using an allotment space and learning cooking skills.
- 70% of **Aspire4U's** users were unemployed, and many of them were also socially excluded. The project provided them with access to a new green space that resulted in an improvement in their mental wellbeing, with participants feeling valued and heard and gaining a sense of togetherness.

Table 3.2: Present value of improved physical and mental health over 3 years

Organisation name	Health cost savings	Wellbeing value of being part of a social group			
All Saints Action Network	£5,377	NA	Castle Bromwich Hall and Gardens Trust	£4,915	NA
Aspire4U	£890	£17,367	Ekho Collective CIC	£7,479	£197,982
The Wildlife Trust Birmingham and the Black Country	£16,026	NA	Growth Path Services	£708	£8,336
Birmingham Settlement	£712	£37,790	Holyhead Road Allotments	£2,493	£48,627
Birmingham Tree People	£1,428	NA	Linking Environment and Farming	£78,061	NA
BME United	£969	NA	Make Good Arts	£2,181	£34,039
Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust	£1,138	NA	Ryecroft NRC	£7,118	£62,521
Caldmore Village Festival Ltd	£14,625	NA	Saathi House	£2,938	NA
Canal and River Trust	£55,072	NA	Severn Rivers Trust	£29,448	NA
Carriers of Hope	NA	£20,840	The Active Wellbeing Society	£9,324	£124,011
			Wildside Activity Centre	£13,124	NA
			Woodgate Valley Urban Farm	£9,616	NA
			Total	£263,641	£551,513
			Average	£12,554	£61,279



### Increased awareness and understanding of the environment...

Most projects (20) conducted various engagement activities such as workshops, walking tours, talks, nature visits and community events to raise awareness around environmental change and sustainability. These activities engaged the following numbers of people:



**Workshops:**  
3,396 people



**Walking tours:**  
616 people



**Awareness sessions:**  
375 people



**Other events:**  
6,130 people

People participating in these activities have a better understanding of the environment and share their knowledge with others in the community. Residents have improved their awareness in numerous ways, including:

- Becoming more aware of sustainable practices such as composting and resource conservation.
- Improving their recycling and consumption habits to reduce waste.
- Learning water conservation through rainwater harvesting strategies.
- Understanding the effects of seasonality on food growing and learning sustainable food growing habits.
- Learning about freshwater invertebrates and habitats and how to conserve them.
- Understanding how pollution from plastics, chemicals, agriculture and sewage affects river health.
- Gaining practical knowledge on climate adaptation, flood prevention and heat resilience measures.

Improved environmental awareness has created a social value of £158,364.

*“People can feel impotent around the climate crisis, but we’re able to provide tools and skills that allow people to engage with crucial work.” - Birmingham Botanical Gardens*

*“People would say ‘oh I didn’t know the space was here’, they would usually drive out to the Shropshire hills to go for walks, they’ve instead discovered what’s on their doorstep.”  
- Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust*

*“Our project encouraged lasting behaviour change by equipping participants with practical knowledge and a deeper understanding of sustainable gardening and resource conservation...(it) inspired a shift towards more conscious, sustainable gardening while also fostering positive behavioural changes that extend into daily life.” – Aspire4U*



*“Participants gained practical knowledge on climate adaptation, adopting water conservation, flood prevention, and heat resilience measures. They took steps like rainwater harvesting ...(and) many also shared their learning within their communities, increasing awareness and resilience to climate change.” – BME United*

### Wider social and community benefit created through new volunteering opportunities...

CEF supported 531 volunteering opportunities. Of these, 206 roles were new and enabled individuals to volunteer regularly.

Volunteering activity included surveying trees, running repair sessions and cafes, facilitating sewing groups, maintaining

community gardens and project sites, and delivering gardening sessions and nature awareness activities.

Feedback from projects highlights that regular volunteering has had several benefits including making local residents more accountable towards environmental action, improving confidence, reducing isolation and increased skills such as gardening, recycling, sewing, and horticulture.

*"Our 'Forest School Garden' and allotment project engaged local people, including adults with additional needs, to volunteer on site. These people have developed a wide range of skills including horticultural, bushcraft and creative forest school activities. There has been a real impact on their own learning, increased confidence and much improved social skills."* – Norton Hall Children and Family Centre

*"By utilising volunteers, we have increased the capacity of people to be involved in nature within our urban areas...our volunteers are the main legacy of the project."* – Canal and River Trust



Over two years, the new volunteering roles will generate a wellbeing value of over £910,000 (see Table 3.3).



*Table 3.3: Present social value of new volunteering roles over two years*

Organisation name	New volunteering roles created	Wellbeing value of regular volunteering
All Saints Action Network	6	£26,528
Aspire4U	10	£44,214
Birmingham County Football Association	3	£13,264
Birmingham Settlement	26	£114,956
Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust	9	£39,792
Canal and River Trust	80	£353,709
Carriers of Hope	5	£22,107
Make Good Arts	6	£26,528
Norton Hall Children and Family Centre	48	£212,226
People For People	5	£22,107
Ryecroft NRC	4	£17,685
The Active Wellbeing Society	4	£17,685
Total	206	£910,802
Average	17	£75,900

- **Economic outcomes**

This sub-section highlights the economic benefits of the programme. The programme achieved the following short-term and long-term economic outcomes:

- Increased job opportunities for local residents.
- New skills among individuals.

Further, the programme delivered wider economic benefits by:

- Boosting spending in the local economy.
- Increased revenue for projects.
- Saving money for residents and projects through reduced waste / increased recycling.

### **Jobs created and supported...**

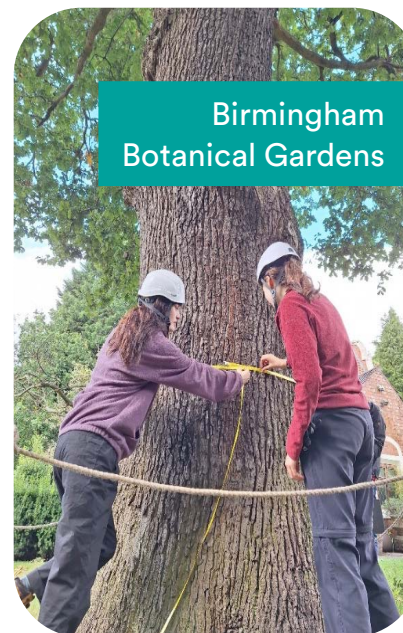
CEF created nearly 5 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs, generating £265,443 in the local economy through Gross Value Added (GVA).

Some projects also used the funding to support existing jobs (over 12 FTE), creating additional GVA of £349,646.

In total jobs created and supported have added £615,090 to the local economy (see Table 3.4).

The funding was crucial in supporting small grassroots organisations to cover staff costs and maintain consistent delivery.

In addition to jobs, some projects also offered young people work placements, helping build their confidence, skills and work-readiness. For example, **Birmingham Botanical Gardens** collaborated with Heart of Birmingham Vocational College to offer work placements to autistic students who undertook horticultural activities, learning tree surveying skills and developing their confidence.



*Table 3.4: Number of jobs created and supported and the GVA created locally*

Organisation	New jobs created (FTE)	GVA from new jobs (over 2 years)	Existing jobs supported (FTE)	GVA from existing jobs (over 1 year)
All Saints Action Network	-	-	0.5	£14,342
Aspire4U	0.5	£26,812	-	-
The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country	-	-	1	£28,683
Birmingham Botanical Gardens	0.8	£42,900	-	-
Birmingham Settlement	-	-	0.4	£11,473
BME United	-	-	1	£28,683
Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust	0.8	£42,900	0.2	£5,737
Caldmore Village Festival Ltd	-	-	0.8	£22,946
Canal and River Trust	-	-	1	£28,683
Carriers of Hope	-	-	1	£28,683
Castle Bromwich Hall and Gardens Trust	-	-	1.34	£38,435
Ekho Collective CIC	-	-	0.2	£5,737
Make Good Arts	-	-	0.25	£7,171
Norton Hall Children and Family Centre	0.6	£32,175	0.5	£14,342
People For People	0.65	£34,856	-	-
The Rebuild Site	0.5	£26,812	0.7	£20,078



Saathi House	0.1	£5,362	-	-
Severn Rivers Trust	-	-	1.3	£37,288
The Active Wellbeing Society	1	£53,625	-	-
Wildside Activity Centre	-	-	0.4	£11,473
Total	4.95	£265,443	12.19	£349,646
Average	0.62	£33,180	0.76	£21,853

### People trained on a wide range of skills...

In addition to the work placements offered, projects provided other valuable training. Volunteers and participants learned many new skills. Collectively, these created an economic benefit of £210,848.



**1,886 people**

trained in environmental and sustainability skills such as gardening, sewing, composting, landscaping, habitat management, and horticulture.

**Social value\* of £108,087**



**210 people**

supported to gain accreditations and certifications in carbon literacy, climate advocacy, and first aid.

**Social value\* of £83,803**



**590 people**

trained in employability skills such as health and safety assessments, safeguarding, time management, team working, and communication skills

**Social value\* of £18,959**

\*Present value

Residents also attended 'Circular Economy' projects where they learnt skills such as bicycle repairs, home DIY (do-it-yourself) skills, including using power tools, creating further social value of £10,722.

Feedback from projects suggests many residents are now applying their newly learned skills to:

- Help with onsite project activities.
- Implement sustainable practices in their homes, including reusing and recycling materials.
- Explore new work opportunities, including ecological and nature-based roles.

Examples of training delivered through projects includes:

- **The Active Wellbeing Society's** bike repair group taught participants to perform their own 'M' Checks (simple checks and maintenance to ensure safe riding).
- **Norton Hall Children and Family Centre** delivered a Level 1 Tool Use Award course to eight volunteers and beneficiaries.
- **Wildside Activity Centre** trained children on junk modelling, sewing skills, making cuddly toys from old jumpers, and rag-rug making, allowing them to learn about nature and how to live more sustainably.
- **BME United** trained five peer mentors as Climate Change Champions, who are now actively driving change within the community. They are sharing

knowledge and engaging with wider audiences, including through community WhatsApp groups, local community radio and other networks.

*"Our sessions included science sessions on renewable energy, soil science, erosion, climate emergency, nature crafts, forest school sessions, gardening sessions, use of gardening tools, recycling and upcycling." – Caldmore Village Festival*

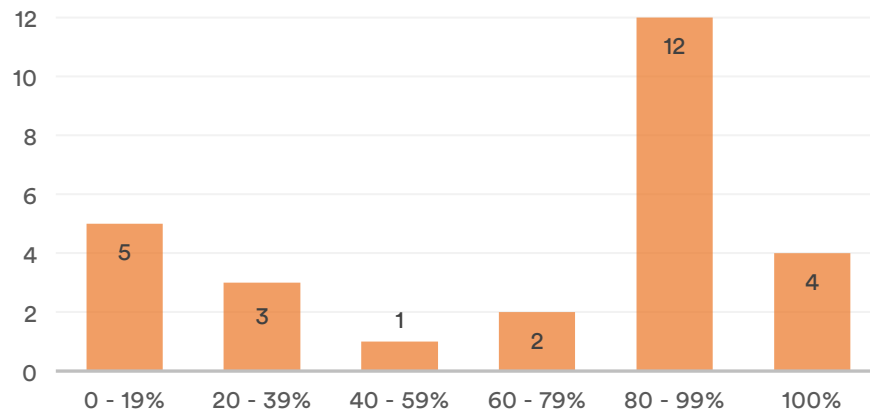
*"(Our participants didn't gain) formal qualifications, but we've had a lead gardener deliver a lot of skills to service users (many of whom have physical disabilities) such as manual handling so they avoid injury. Other skills like planting seeds, growing vegetables – they can take back to their communities and homes." - Aspire4U*

### Most projects spent the majority of their grant locally, creating wider economic benefits...

Funding has further boosted the area's economy through increased local spending.

Most projects (16) used over 80% of their grant to buy services, materials, products and labour from organisations within the West Midlands.

*Figure 3.4: Projects and the proportion of their grant budget spent locally*



### Further economic benefits achieved...

The programme has generated an additional economic benefit of £164,667 through:

- Four projects collectively generated £18,683 on their site through selling plants, charging a small fee for activity sessions, and selling recyclable / reusable items.
- Three projects generated financial gains worth £117,468 due to reduced waste.
- Four projects helped residents save the equivalent of £28,516 from recycling and reusing activities in repair hubs.

The increased revenue and financial gains are likely to help projects (especially smaller organisations) expand their service offer, hire additional staff, and ultimately increase their reach and impact.

*"Our business model is to divert materials from skips (waste containers) and sell them at a low cost to local communities. As we grow this should cover our rent, salaries, bills and other costs with hopefully additional surplus to put back into the organisation to support workshops and upskilling activities." - Rebuild Site*



- **Environmental outcomes**

This sub-section illustrates the long-term environmental outcomes of the programme, including the following as highlighted in the ToC:

- Improved quality of green spaces through natural habitats created / restored and trees and shrubs planted, and their ability to store carbon, manage water, provide shading and support nature's recovery.

The programme has also achieved wider environmental benefits through improved recycling and avoiding materials from becoming waste.

#### **Habitats created and restored...**

As well as improving people's access to green and blue spaces, 8 projects further improved the West Midlands' ecosystem by creating or improving 179,039 square metres of natural habitat (Table 3.6). Further ecosystem benefits are highlighted in Appendix 3.

Over time, these improvements will enhance biodiversity, improve ecosystem services, aid climate change mitigation, and increase the resilience of surrounding areas to extreme weather events, while also supporting the health and well-being of nearby communities.

**Birmingham Settlement** developed a wildflower meadow to increase biodiversity and sustain pollinators, planted over 300 Hornbeam bushes to create a hedge maze, planted bulbs and lavender in their amphitheatre, created hedgehog hibernaculum, and contributed to the maintenance and development of the Nature and Wellbeing Centre, benefitting nearby residents as well as wildlife.

**People for People** created a wildlife patch on a plot overgrown with brambles. The brambles were removed and forest made of plum, hazel and sycamore trees preserved with additional hazel, silver birch, downy birch, wild cherry, crab apple and goat willow planted.

#### **Trees and shrubs planted...**

Nine projects planted nearly 2,300 trees (equating to approximately 1.43 hectare of new tree cover) and over 1,400 shrubs.

Planting trees offers significant environmental benefits in terms of absorbing carbon dioxide from the air over time (Table 3.5).

*Table 3.5: Estimated carbon sequestered (absorbed) through new tree cover over 50 years*

Organisation	Carbon saved / year	Carbon savings over 50 years
The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country	£1,707.2	£85,362
Birmingham County Football Association	£8.5	£427
BME United	£2.6	£128
Canal and River Trust	£87.9	£4,396
Growth Path Services	£10.2	£512
Holyhead Road Allotments	£55.5	£2,774
Linking Environment and Farming	£66.6	£3,329
People for People	£17.1	£854
Total	£1,956	£97,782

Additional project activities are further improving the health and diversity of trees across the West Midlands.

Examples include:

- **Birmingham Botanical Gardens'** tree auditing activities identified over 500 trees, including veteran trees, to protect and treat to create long-term environmental impacts of carbon storage. As part of the auditing, they delivered training to local residents, including school children and made 'tree champions' to teach people how to plant new trees and preserve existing ones.
- **Ryecroft** volunteers planted indigenous fruit trees, which has not only increased biodiversity in the area but has also allowed volunteers to take their tree-planting skills to their own gardens and allotments.

Table 3.6: Habitat created by projects

Organisation	Habitat area (m²)	Habitat type	Area (m²)	Trees planted	Shrubs planted
The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country	161,200	Woodland	143,500	2,000	NA
		Pond	400		
		Grass / meadow	14,700		
		Heathland	1,000		
		Geological site	1,600		
Birmingham County Football Assoc.	3,000	Wetland	3,000	10	150
Birmingham Settlement	3,500	Grass / meadow	3,500	NA	300
BME United	NA	NA	NA	3	NA
Canal and River Trust	10,000	Canal towpath verge	10,000	103	868
Growth Path Services (formerly Kingstanding Regeneration Trust)	1,005	Pond	5	12	6
		Grass / meadow	1,000		
Holyhead Road Allotments	200	Wetland meadow	200	65	8
Linking Environment and Farming	78	Woodland	78	78	NA
People For People	56	Woodland	18	20	100
		Pond	8		
		Scrub	30		
Total	179,039			2,291	1,432



### Improved climate resilience among participants...

Another environmental impact of the programme is the increased climate and flood resilience of local communities and natural sites.

While hard to measure and monetise, projects anticipate their activities have contributed towards reduced heat stress on sites, improved community awareness of extreme weather, and reduced drought risk. For example, **Birmingham Tree People** reported increasing the area of tree canopy which will likely reduce the 'urban heat island effect' (when cities are warmer than the surrounding rural areas) and lower the impact of torrential rainfall in the future.

Limited project data restricts the analysis of the benefits achieved but projects highlighted:

- **Holyhead Road Allotments** reported 50 people have increased knowledge about how to adapt their growing practices to build climate resilience.
- **BME United** reported that 311 of their participants have increased climate resilience and 92 households have pledged for water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting.



### Growing the circular economy created wider economic benefits...

**Rebuild Site** diverted 120 tonnes of construction materials such as bricks, blocks, tiles, plasterboard, drainpipes, and paint from going to landfill through the Reuse Hub in Wolverhampton. This has likely created a social value of over £20,800 through avoided landfill tax and cost savings from the carbon reduced. They then sold surplus materials from construction works to local communities at a lower cost, avoiding further waste. They also partnered with **Aspire4U** to transform discarded construction materials into resources for their community garden (see below).

Additionally, by helping materials to be kept in use for longer and promoting reuse and repair of old materials, circular economy projects reduced waste significantly and ensured products were kept in use for long as possible. Examples include:

- **People for People** recycled old decking, pallets and materials from an old shed to build new plant beds and structures.
- **Aspire4U** created a wall from reclaimed pallets, built birdhouses from recycled wood, used worn tyres as plant pots, and repurposed plastic flower bouquet pots as planters, turning waste into functional garden features.

*"This project not only diverted materials from landfill but also fostered a culture of reuse and regeneration within the group. By creatively repurposing materials, we reduced waste and demonstrated the power of circular economy principles in action."*  
– **Aspire4U**

- **All Saints Action Network, Carriers of Hope, Make Good Arts, and The Active Wellbeing Society** recycled and reused a wide range of materials including electronics, household goods, clothing, and textiles. Examples include speakers, drills, lawn mowers, small appliances, hedge trimmers, slow cookers, vacuum cleaners, bedding, crockery, pots and pans, pillows, furniture, and bicycles.



**80,907 kilograms**  
of materials avoided  
from becoming waste



**120 tonnes**  
of construction waste  
diverted from landfills

## Longer-term impacts and CEF's legacy

The outcomes achieved and highlighted should deliver the planned long-term impacts of:

- A better experience and quality of life for residents living in their community.
- Benefits to the resilience of people and places, as they are better able to withstand extreme weather events and climate impacts.
- Improved environment for nature to thrive across the West Midlands.

The final impact of 'CEF sustaining itself beyond the CWGLEF funding period' is evidenced below:

- Most projects (24) intend to continue either all, or key elements, of their projects once the CEF funding has finished.
- Due to increased capacity and experience from delivering CEF, eight projects have already secured additional funding from other sources allowing them to continue or expand their project, ensuring long-term sustainability. However, some are struggling to gain further funding, and in retrospect say they should have started trying to secure this earlier.
- Examples of funding secured includes grants from the National Lottery Heritage and Community funds,

Wolverhampton Council, Warwick University, and other charitable trusts.

- A key success of CEF has been recruiting volunteers. Eight projects now have volunteers or community champions that are committed to running the project themselves beyond the funding. For example, **Saathi House** has created a group 'Friends of Aston Park', in partnership with other local groups, to continue developing and enhancing green spaces.
- Whilst WMCA has not yet secured further funding to support community organisations directly, it is developing a new **Community Environment Network**, to enable ongoing peer-to-peer collaboration to support community organisations across the region in their environmental activities.

*"By creating a sense of ownership and community involvement, this group can create a lasting legacy, promoting ongoing environmental stewardship and creating a supportive network for future projects." – Saathi House*

*"Basically, this award has been transformative for us...The investment has enabled something we couldn't have hoped to do without it and has put [us] in a really positive position to move forward with this work." – Holyhead Road Allotments*



**Linked to this, building partnerships with external stakeholders will help contribute to the long-term success of projects...**

A total of 11 projects have formed partnerships with stakeholders outside of CEF, allowing them to continue delivery beyond the funding, including with schools, large charities, universities, local authorities and other community groups.

Projects that worked with schools are positive about the lasting impact this would have, including behaviour change among children and their families due to increased awareness of environmental issues and climate change.

The links made to local academic institutes were described as crucial for projects wanting to achieve long-term impact and create wider awareness. For example, **Birmingham Botanical Gardens** were invited to speak at the Birmingham Institute of Forest Research conference to talk about their project and the impact they've had.

Projects with a focus on data collection, such as the **Severn Rivers Trust**, have made their data open source so it can be

shared with other organisations to contribute to large-scale environmental research projects.

Projects, such as **Ekho Collective**, with a focus on sustainable food growing practices are building relationships with local food banks to provide regular donations, further contributing to the local economy.

**Another legacy is behaviour change across the West Midlands...**

Projects that have engaged local communities are confident in long-term behaviour change, such as an increased collective responsibility for local green spaces, more sustainable consumption practices, and increased recycling and reusing. For example, **All Saints Action Network** is supporting long-term sustainability through a permanent local tool library that will reduce barriers to taking part in maintaining green spaces.



# Conclusions



## Section 4: Conclusions

This section presents the conclusions in terms of strengths and successes, as well as concerns and challenges. Some of these are based on the qualitative feedback from projects and other stakeholders. These inform the recommendations.

### Strengths and successes

#### Good progress was made against CWGLEF's priorities...

- CWGLEF's aims for the 'wellbeing and sustainability' were achieved through successful delivery of £1.2 million grant funding (with £916,145 awarded to community groups), improving the environment and people's lives.
- Intended programme outputs were reached by allocating funding to 27 community groups, consisting of six large grants (of up to £100,000) and 21 small grants (of up to £25,000).
- Projects successfully delivered a wide range of activities under five programme themes – access to green and blue spaces, climate adaptation, environmental awareness, natural environment, and promoting the circular economy.

#### All long-term outcomes set out in the ToC were achieved...

- Multiple social and community benefits delivered, including:
  - Better access to green spaces among residents.
  - Improved physical health and mental health and wellbeing among people.
  - Better awareness / understanding of the environment.
- Economic benefits for local residents and organisations were created, including jobs created and supported, and people gaining new skills and qualifications.
- Long-term environmental benefits were created, including:
  - Improved quality of natural habitat.
  - Trees and shrubs planted.
  - Improved ability to store carbon, manage water, provide shading and support nature's recovery.
- Exceptional value for money was created, with a return of £4.14 for every £1 spent.



### Wider benefits realised...

- Further impacts were created, beyond those originally identified in the programme ToC, including:
  - Volunteering opportunities created and supported.
  - Local economy boosted through the majority of funding spent locally.
  - Revenue generated through on-site project activities.
  - Financial gains made by projects due to reduced waste, and savings to local residents due to increased recycling and reusing.
  - Construction waste diverted from landfill and other materials avoided from becoming waste.

### Longer-term impacts and legacy created...

- A better experience and quality of life for residents living in their community.
- Benefits generated for the resilience of people and places, as they are better able to withstand extreme weather events and climate impacts.
- An improved environment for nature to thrive across the West Midlands.
- Elements of CEF sustaining itself beyond the CWGLEF funding period. Strong partnership working leading to networking and collaboration will also help projects in the future.

The programme has created further legacy impacts through long-lasting behaviour change among residents.

## Concerns and challenges

While exceptional benefits have been achieved through the programme, qualitative feedback from projects and WMCA highlighted some factors which limited outcomes:

### Adverse weather conditions made delivery challenging...

- A total of 12 projects said the weather was a challenge, with most of the delivery taking place during the winter. Projects struggled with outdoor work including digging frozen soil and planting.
- The weather also meant a third of projects (9) struggled to recruit volunteers, engage learners or find appropriate sites to deliver their activities. Projects working with schools, like Severn Rivers Trust, also found winter delivery difficult, as most primary schools don't start delivering lessons on rivers and the environment until spring.

### The short delivery period limited outcomes...

- Seven projects noted the short timescale made delivery challenging, with many expressing that spreading it over a full year would have been better as it would have included the growing season.

- Overall, projects raised concerns around the expectations to deliver a lot in a short duration and felt they needed more time to demonstrate their impact due to the nature of the activities delivered.

#### **A limited number of good quality applications received under certain themes...**

- The climate adaptation theme did not receive many applications as local organisations lacked experience in engaging residents here.
- There was a lack of clarity among applicants around understanding the language used for the access to green and blue spaces theme, which led to some confusion and poorer applications. Applicants misunderstood the term 'access' to mean physical obstacles rather than having access to natural greenspace (as per Natural England's Doorstep standards).

## Recommendations

The recommendations below are aimed at improving future funding and delivery of similar programmes. These are informed by the findings of this report and that of WMCA's previous Community Green Grants programme.

- Promote the excellent value for money generated.
- Explore more creative ways to engage with local residents and community groups around climate adaptation.
- Clarify / simplify the language in initial guidance as much as possible.
- Similar programmes need to be longer-term in the future (if possible), so that projects have sufficient time to plan and deliver activities accounting for seasonal challenges and differences.
- Continue supporting organisations in building and maintaining networks and relationships.
- Increase collaboration with local environmental specialists in programme design and ongoing evaluation.
- Standardise data benchmarking through pre- and post- surveys to gather consistent data on green space usage, biodiversity, and community engagement.

- Improve the efficiency of the data collection process by using digital tools (apps, sensors, logs) and standardising monitoring forms to track outcomes.







# Appendices

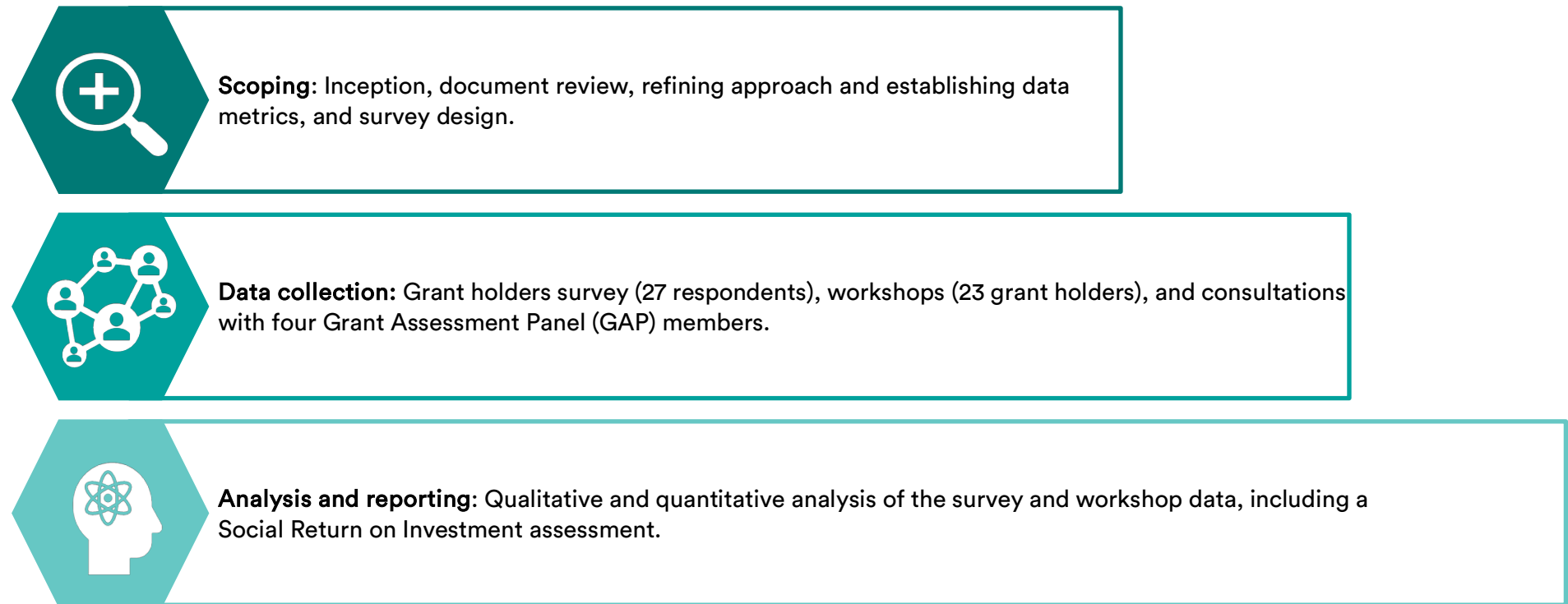


## Appendix 1: Overarching approach and value for money methodology

The impact study is in line with relevant technical guidance, including The Magenta Book (HM Treasury, 2020), The Green Book (HM Treasury, 2022), Social Return on Investment (The SROI Network, 2012), Additionality Guide (Homes and Communities Agency, 2014), and other relevant technical guidance.

Figure A1.1 summaries the research tasks undertaken to inform this report.

*Figure A1.1: Approach*



The programme value for money has been assessed using a Social Return on Investment (SRoI) approach. This involved defining, quantifying, and monetising programme benefits compared against costs to determine the SRoI.

The SRoI captures the outputs and costs of the programme up to March 2025.

## Costs

Costs are based on actual spend of £916,145.

## Benefits

This assessment focused on the benefits listed in Table A1.2. These are based on outputs reported by the grant holders and have not been verified by WMCA. The table also details the approach used for each benefit. While there are other benefits, a monetary value couldn't be calculated for them all and hence some benefits are not included in the SRoI assessment.

## Adjustments

The gross benefits were adjusted to account for 'additionality' and derive net impacts. This means estimating the level of impact that would have occurred without the activities funded by the programme. The following factors were applied:

- **Deadweight:** a measure of the amount of outcome that would have happened even if the activity had not taken place. Using standard guidance, we applied a low deadweight of 25% in most cases, and 50% (medium) or 75% (high) in some.
- **Displacement:** an assessment of how much of the outcome was displaced from elsewhere (ranging from 25% to 75%).
- **Attribution:** an assessment of how much the outcome was caused by the project versus the contribution of other organisations. For majority benefits, we assumed high attribution (90%).
- **Drop off:** the deterioration of an outcome over time.

Valuations were applied to each benefit based on relevant benchmarks taken from several accepted sources.

Other adjustments made in line with HM Treasury include:

- Adjusting all values to reflect 2025 prices.
- Discounting values using a 3.5% discount rate to calculate present value.
- The timescale of impact and duration of the effects.

Finally, we used professional judgement to adjust figures where necessary to avoid double counting benefits and remove duplication.



Table A1.2: Benefits monetised using the SRol approach

Benefit	Measure used to capture benefit	Value (£)	Unit	Source	Benefit duration (in years)	Drop-off
<b>Social and community</b>						
Green spaces improved	Recreational value of green spaces	£53	Per person	Fields-InTrust	5	10%
Volunteering opportunities created	Wellbeing value of regular volunteering	£5,064	Per person	HACT	2	25%
Improved health through physical activity	Health savings from every physically active visit to green space	£4	Per visit	New Economy	3	20%
Improved mental health by being part of a social group	Wellbeing value from being a member of a social group	£1,563	Per person	HACT	3	20%
Workshops, walking tours and awareness sessions delivered	Willingness to Pay (WTP) for environmental awareness workshops / sessions	£70	Per person, per session	iHasco, High Speed Training, Udemy	1	NA

Economic						
Jobs created or supported	GVA per employee	£56,658	Per person	The Office for National Statistics	2 or 1	10% or NA
Skills like gardening, sewing, horticulture learned	WTP of courses around gardening, sewing, horticulture	£64	Per person	University of Birmingham, Udemy, Sandwell Adult and Learning Services, CIEEM	2	20%
Qualifications gained	Value of gaining a qualification (NVQ level 2, City and Guilds level 2)	£1,627	Per person	New Economy	2	10%
Basic employability skills courses delivered	WTP of basic employability skills courses	£48	Per person	Skills Network, NCFE and Udemy	2	15%
Revenue generated on site	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Financial gains made due to reduced waste	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cost savings to local people via repair hubs / workshops	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Repairing skills learned	WTP of repairing courses	£36	Per person	Udemy and One Education	2	15%

Environmental						
Trees planted	Carbon footprint reduced per hectare of new tree cover	£1,366	Per hectare	The Mersey Forest, DESNZ, Woodland Trust	50	NA
Construction waste diverted from landfills	UK Landfill Tax avoided; Cost savings per tonne of carbon saved for every tonne of waste diverted	£126; £38	Per tonne of waste / carbon	HM Revenue and Customs; The Green Book	One-off	NA
Improved climate resilience of residents	WTP of flood / climate resilience courses	£63	Per person	National Flood School, Udemy, CIBSM	1	NA



## Appendix 2: Residents within 15-minute walking distance

Figure A2.1: Projects in Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton.

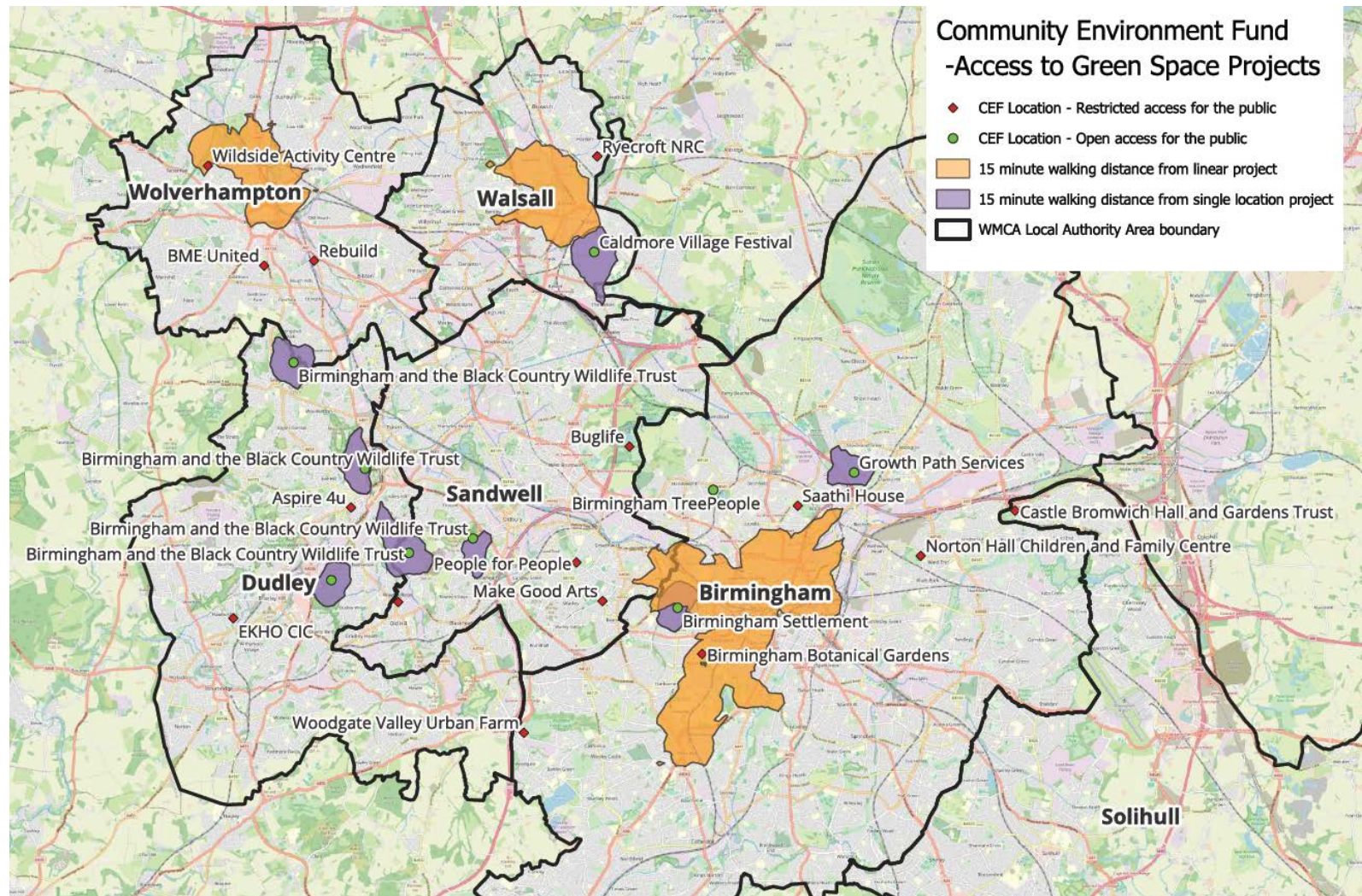
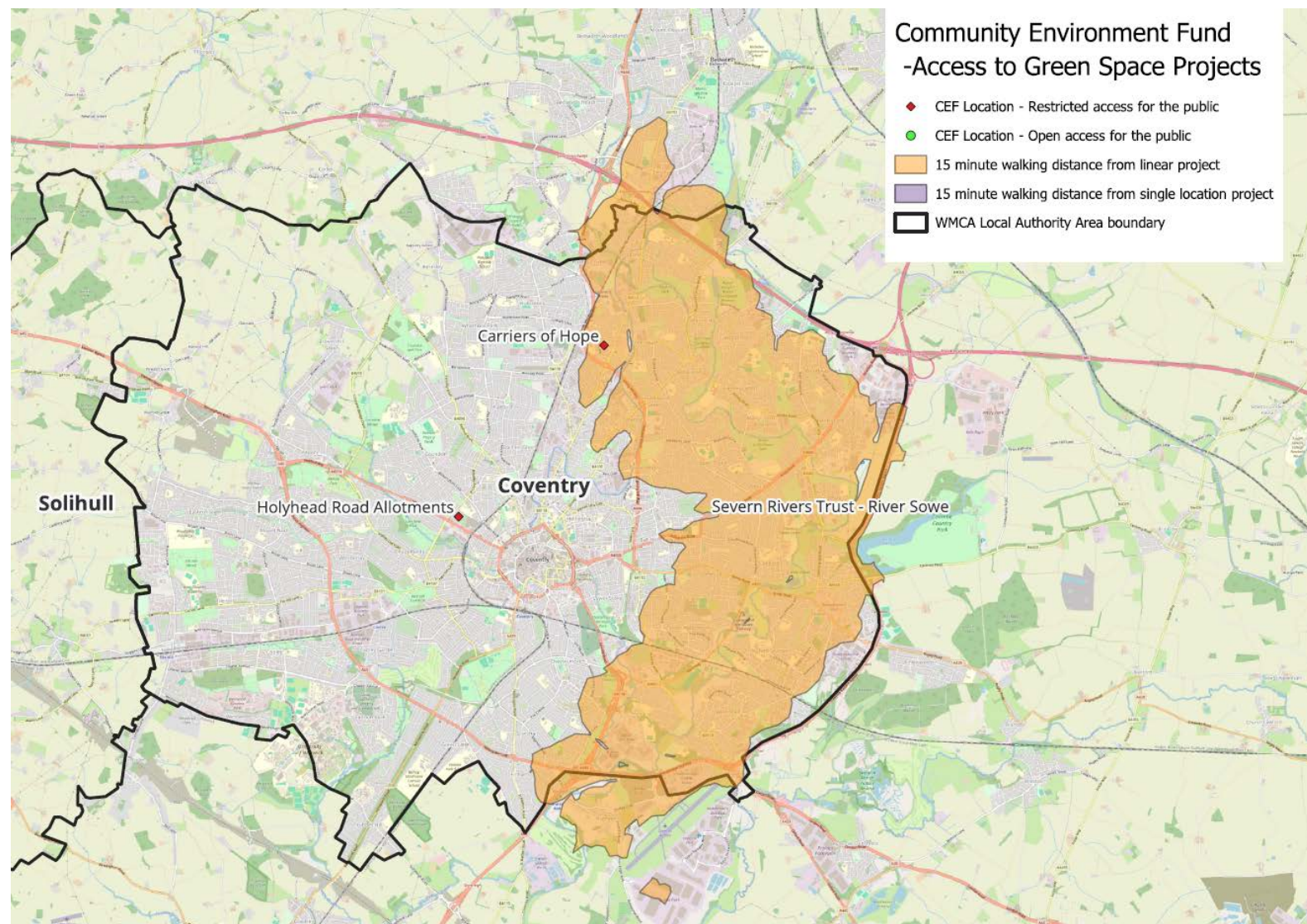




Figure A2.2: Projects in Coventry



## Appendix 3: Ecosystem services

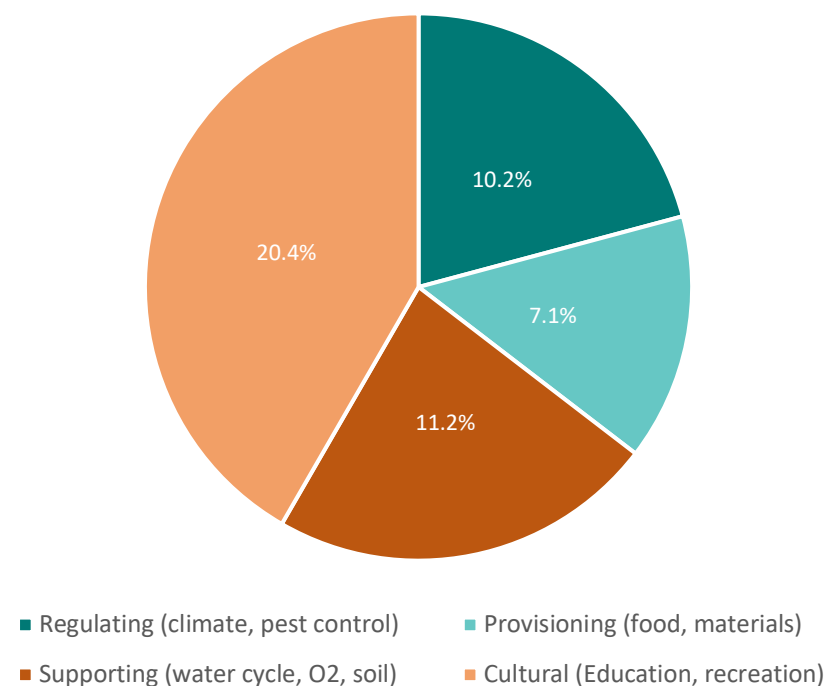
Ecosystem services are defined as services provided by the natural environment that benefit people. By considering the ecosystem services delivered by a project it is possible to get a full picture of the benefits it provides. Consideration is given here to the four classes of ecosystem services (as defined by the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment<sup>1</sup>) and how CEF has delivered outcomes in respect of each of these categories via the funded projects.

Ecosystem services can be grouped into the following:

- Regulating services help with climate resilience, pest control, air and water quality and pollination.
- Provisioning services are the materials an ecosystem can supply, such as water, wood or food.
- Cultural services are those that provide societal value such as recreation and education.
- Supporting services are those on which other aspects may rely, such as generating oxygen or cycling water and nutrients.

Figure A3.1 below shows how the 27 CEF projects deliver on each ecosystem service. As the projects are often diverse, they span across multiple ecosystem services.

*Figure A3.1: Ecosystem service provision by CEF*



<sup>1</sup><https://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/index.html>



## Regulatory services:

Ten projects (out of 27) are deemed to have provided elements of regulatory services, with the conversion of land or additional habitat creation providing increased climate resilience and mitigation, particularly where projects involve the management of derelict areas such as the flood resilience implemented at Holyhead Road Allotments.

## Provisioning services:

Most funded projects don't support provisioning services. Those that do are predominantly allotment projects or similar which include an element of plant growing and education within their project description, although where community engagement and education is involved in other projects this may include identification skills of edible plants which naturally establish.

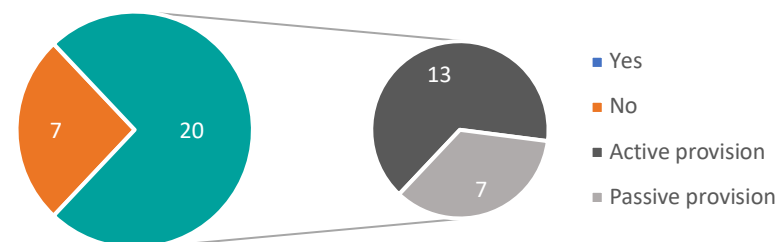
## Cultural services:

- 21 projects provided cultural services, with the majority providing recreational access to green space or encompassing an element of education and learning within their scheme. Projects funded provided education around green skills, climate change, pollution mitigation and encouragement of sustainable lifestyles.
- Of the 20 projects with cultural services, 13 were considered to provide active cultural benefits by indicating they would run guided walks and skills

classes which offer education and learning to local communities (such as teaching visitors and educational groups about growing, natural habitats, and biodiversity)

- Seven projects were considered passive as they provided access to a green space and self-learning opportunities but did not run teaching events (Figure A3.2).

*Figure A4.2: Cultural ecosystem services and their active / passive provision by CEF projects*



## Supporting services:

Supporting services were generated by 11 projects, though this ecosystem service is a less definable aspect such as water, soil and air cycling. The projects considered to provide this service were those which were larger or working with existing natural habitats, rather than those based around the conversion of hard standing. The water quality monitoring carried out by Severn Rivers Trust at the Soar in Coventry is a good example of this.





Saathi House



Make Good Arts



Caldmore Village Festival Ltd



Wildside Activity Centre



Birmingham County Football Association





The Reuse Hub CIC



Buglife - the Invertebrate Conservation



The Active Wellbeing Society





LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming)



ASAN



Birmingham TreePeople







Canal and River Trust



Birmingham Botanical Gardens



Holyhead Road Allotments



Ryecroft NRC





EKHO Collective CIC



Growth Path Services



BME United





Castle Bromwich Hall and Gardens Trust



Severn Rivers Trust | Aspire4U CIC









Carriers of Hope







Birmingham Settlement







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