



connswater community
greenway

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*Living the
Green Way*



Evaluation Report

Final evaluation, reviewing progress
and achievements on project completion, September 2017

Evaluation Report by: Dr SJ Simpson



Belfast
City Council



Northern Ireland
Executive



Our Vision...

...to develop a safe, accessible, sustainable greenway which is an inspirational living landmark that improves the quality of life for the people of east Belfast, now and for future generations.



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Living the Green Way

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Table 7:

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Connswater Community Greenway - Funding

Cost: £40m

Funders:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Big Lottery Funds | |
| Living Landmark Programme | £23.6m |
| Belfast City Council | £4m |
| Department for Communities | £3.7m |
| Department for Infrastructure | £8.7m |

Management & Maintenance:
Belfast City Council

Construction Completed:
April 2017

Connswater Community Greenway Officially Opened:
September 2017



The Greenway Story

1.1 Complete but Beginning

In one respect the Connswater Community Greenway (CCG) is complete. In another, the story is just beginning.

Construction and environmental work on the CCG, which was extended to include the East Belfast Flood Alleviation Scheme (EBFAS) finished in April 2017. What was an underappreciated landscape has been transformed and people in east Belfast and beyond now have the opportunity to use and enjoy a valuable community asset.

The CCG is a 9km linear park through east Belfast. It follows the course of the Connswater, Knock and Loop Rivers, connecting open and green spaces and creating conditions in which a long-neglected and polluted ecosystem can revive and thrive. These pivotal physical and environmental improvements represent two elements of a much more ambitious project.

CCG Phase 1 placed a priority on the areas around Victoria and Orangefield Parks, as these locations were prone to flooding and this complex issue required urgent attention. A 'phased' approach to the Greenway development also meant that sections were opened and made accessible to the community as quickly as possible, so that local people could use the facility and quickly see what the project was aiming to achieve.

This was important as the Greenway is really about people, opportunities, health and quality of life. CCG's most important purpose is to reconnect the communities of east Belfast and bring the area's rivers 'back to life' as focal points and community assets, by creating vibrant, attractive, safe and accessible parkland for leisure, recreation, events and activities.

Connswater Community Greenway - Aims & Approach

- Construction & environmental improvement work
- Flood alleviation
- Creating an amenity and focal point for the community
- Promoting a sense of community
- Engaging communities
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Economic development
- Measuring the impact of CCG on health and lifestyle and use of the area
- Carrying out construction work in a socially and environmentally responsible way.





1.2 A Model

In many respects, CCG / EBFAS is a model and example of best practice for the development and delivery of large-scale, multi-partner, complex projects with multiple objectives. This is reflected in widespread national and international interest and through numerous awards and accolades, including recognition as one of the world's 200 most influential projects by the Institution of Civil Engineers in 2018.

CCG brought partners who work at national, regional, city and community level together. It was conceived by EastSide Partnership, was awarded funding of £23.6 million from the Big Lottery Fund and is managed and delivered in partnership with Belfast City Council. Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Departments for Communities and Infrastructure also provided funding.

The Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure Rivers Agency delivered EBFAS, which is designed to reduce flooding and its impact along the courses of the Connswater, Knock and Loop Rivers.

In short, the Greenway exists to bring about dramatic and positive change to the physical environment and to people's opportunities, health and lifestyles. People and communities which, for generations, have turned away from the dirty and neglected Connswater River system now have the opportunity to return and make the most of what has become a living landmark and a valuable, life-enhancing asset.



Awards Gained by CCG

- **Green Flag Award** status 2018;
- **Urban Villages Community Awards** – Winner Thriving Places 2018 for C.S. Lewis Square and EastSide Visitor Centre;
- **Northern Ireland Electrical Awards 2017** - Lighting Project of the Year;
- **Sustainable Ireland Environmental Waste Management and Energy magazine** – Joint Winner Environmental Initiative of the Year, 2017;
- **Construction Employers Federation Construction Excellence Awards 2017** – Winner Social/Community Construction Award;
- **Construction Employers Federation Construction Excellence Awards 2017** – Winner Transport & Utilities Infrastructure Award.

1.3 Awards and Recognition

The CCG / Flood Alleviation Scheme was constructed in two stages. Phase 1 construction work, which finished in September 2014, prioritised the redevelopment of Orangefield and Victoria Parks as the areas most affected by flood risk, including the 'Moving of the Knock River'. Phase 2 construction, completed in April 2017, focused on 7 areas, including new path creation, play facilities, multi-use games areas, bridges, landscaping and the creation of the C.S. Lewis Square. The CCG was officially opened in September 2017.

CCG has won many awards and gained widespread recognition for construction excellence and environmental impact.

Recognition

- Selected as one of the **200 most influential projects** in the world by the Institution of Civil Engineers in 2018;
- **Finalist 2018 UK National Lottery Awards Good Causes Best Environmental Project**;
- **RICS awards for Community Benefit 2018** – Highly Commended;
- **RTPI Best Place Award** – Finalist 2017;
- **River Restoration Centre** - Urban Rivers category of the UK Rivers Prize, 2017;
- Central Scotland Green Network selected CCG as one of **5 worldwide case studies** for Green Active Travel;
- The Greenway is a case study in the Northern Ireland **GCSE and A-Level** geography curriculum.



1.4 The story goes on ...

The Greenway has created a stage for individual and community activities, events and recreation. The curtain has gone up, but the real value of CCG and its contribution to community life, culture, welfare, health and commerce will emerge over years and generations.

To help secure the legacy and future of CCG and make the case for more greenways and green spaces, EastSide Partnership established the Connswater Community Greenway Trust (CCGT) as a UK charity, to deliver the CCG as an inspirational landmark for all to enjoy.

This is an important step which will sustain the already successful partnership between CCGT and Belfast City Council, provide a vision for the future of CCG, deliver a forty-year management and maintenance programme and ensure that the Greenway continues to act as a catalyst for the ongoing, sustainable regeneration of east Belfast.

More information about the Connswater Community Greenway Trust and its plans for the future is available in Section 9 of this report, 'Living the Green Way'.





Evaluation Purpose and Framework

2.1 Purpose of Evaluation

Evaluation concerns the retrospective assessment of progress against measurable objectives. CCG / EBFAS refers to such objectives as Key Performance Indicators or 'KPIs'.

This end of project evaluation assesses progress against the Project's KPIs in four areas:

- **Environmental** – there are 13 environmental KPIs (10 construction-related / construction dependent; 3 PARC Study* perception measures)
- **Social** – there are 14 social KPIs (9 PARC Study measures; 4 linked to community engagement; 1 construction-related)
- **Economic** – the project has 9 economic KPIs (5 related to investment, employment and tourism; 1 PARC Study measure; 1 construction-related; 1 communication; 1 volunteer involvement)
- **CEEQUAL** – this is linked to 3 environment-related KPIs and concerns progress towards achieving 'excellent' status in the Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment and Awards Scheme, which assess how well project teams have managed environmental and social issues.

Achievements against the targets set for these KPIs are outlined on Table 7, page 10.

2.2 Relationship of Key Performance Indicators to CCG / EBFAS Elements

The KPIs and table described above provide an Evaluation Framework for the CCG project and are related to the main elements of CCG and EBFAS for:

- Construction and environmental improvement works
- The PARC Study, which assesses the impact of CCG on the physical activity, health and wellbeing of residents living near to the Greenway
- CEEQUAL
- Community engagement and volunteer involvement
- Creating awareness of the CCG
- Promoting tourism and economic development.

During Phase 1 of the project, additional information about elements of CCG / EBFAS was provided by a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Survey. This exercise provided feedback about the impact of CCG marketing, communications and community engagement activity during Phase 1, which ended in September 2014. This indicated that there were high levels of interim-stage project awareness, support and engagement among residents and stakeholders and indicated that CCG was 'on the right track'.

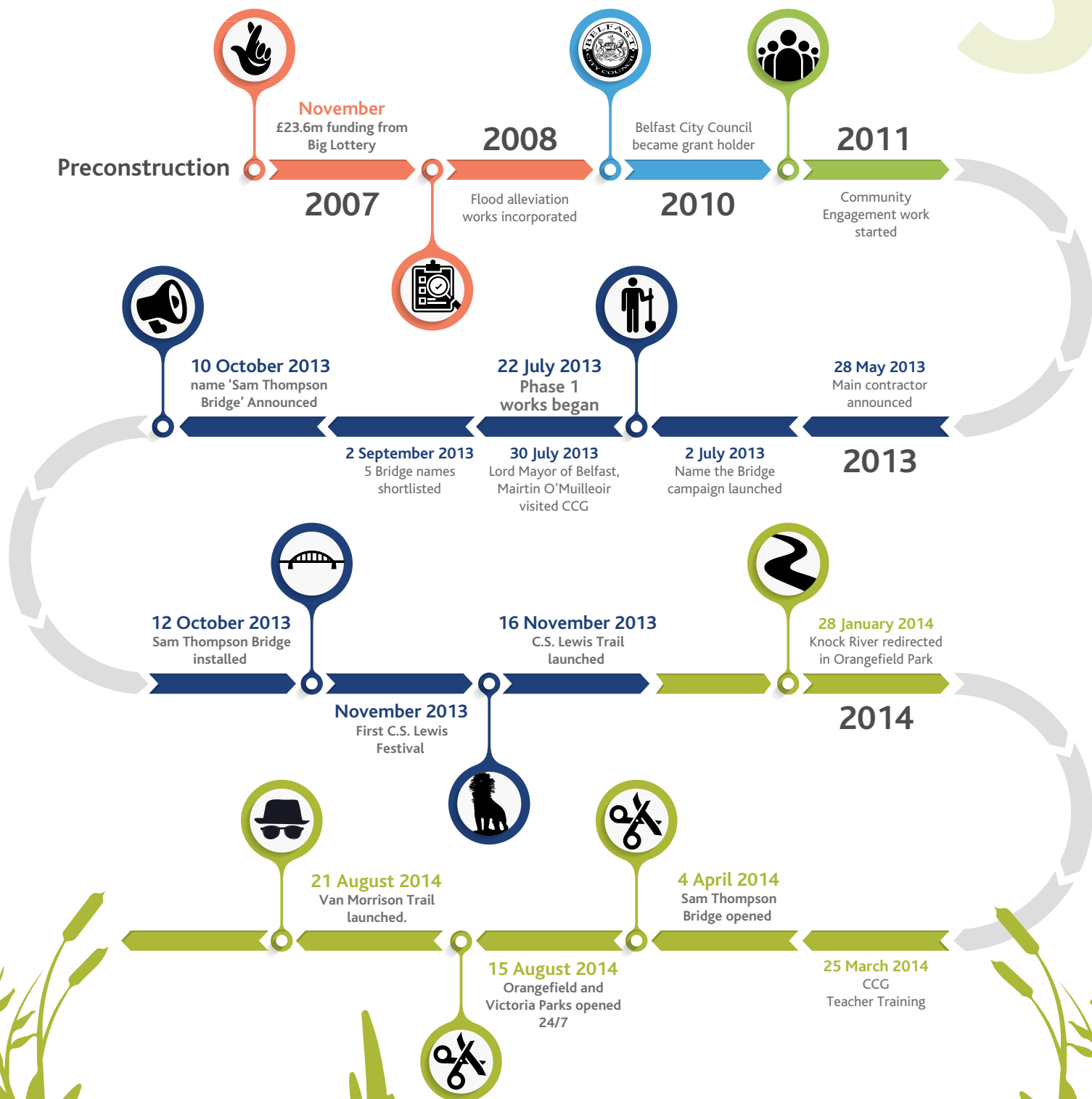
More details about this Survey are available in the Phase 1 Evaluation Report.

*The PARC (Physical Activity and the Regeneration of Connswater) Study was an important element of the Connswater Community Greenway project. It used 'before-and-after' research to assess the impact of CCG on the physical activity, health and wellbeing of residents living near the facility – see Section 8, page 14 for more on the PARC Study.

Summary of Project Achievements

3

3.1 Phase 1 – May 2013 to September 2014



Summary of Project Achievements

3.2 Phase 2 Oct 2014 – Sept 2017

Paths, Events, History, People, Exercise, Play, Activities, Planting, Growing, Bridges, Landscape, Places, Wildlife and more...

Phase 2 of CCG / EBFAS focused on 7 sections and saw the Greenway come alive.

Large Park Events

2015

Orangefield Celebrations

2016

Love Victoria Park



Industrial Past

October 2016

Launch of
Industrial Heritage Trail

In partnership
with the
Very Local History Group



Walk for Health

June 2017

'Green Walking'
Map launched

Supported by
Belfast Health and
Social Care Trust

Completion and Participation May 2016 to April 2017

Seven more sections of CCG open
completing Phase 2



Marsh-wiggle Way (Clarawood to Braniel)

Opens with local schools
Grosvenor Grammar School,
Orangefield PS and Braniel PS
leading the event.

Launch of Dixon and The Hollow

Community event
and duck race.

Cregagh Glen

2 new bridges
and improved entrance.

Flora Street Walkway

Opens with a new play
facility, multi-use games
area and bridge.

C.S. Lewis Square, First Large Event

Installation of 7 sculptures, inspired by C.S. Lewis,
by sculptor Maurice Harron.

Attended by 2,000 including C.S. Lewis' stepson Douglas Gresham,
Northern Ireland First Minister Arlene Foster
& Lord Mayor of Belfast Brian Kingston.

500 people participate in a community engagement
film project to animate the sculptures.

Participants include Grosvenor Grammar School, Orchardville Society,
Bloomfield Community Association, Tamar Court Residents,
Gertrude Star Flute Band, Ashfield Boys High School
and Ajendance Dance Company.

Loop River and Daddy Winker's Play Park

Opens with a new play
facility, multi-use games
area and cantilevered
boardwalk.



Connswater Retail Park

Final section of CCG opens.
Includes improved bridge in
partnership with Connswater
Shopping Centre retailers.

Montgomery Link

Opens with Belfast
Metropolitan College and
British Legion.

'Piece Together'

CCG officially launched on
14th September 2017.

Public Naming

Sam Thompson bridge, James
Ellis bridge, Rope Works bridge,
Hutchinson bridge, Grace
Bannister bridge, Shannon bridge,
Colliers' bridge, Avalon bridge,
Kingfisher bridge, Marsh-wiggle
Way, Dairy Lane, Veterans' bridge,
Daddy Winkers' Lane
and Daddy Winkers'
Friendship Playpark.

Engagement & Animation

Walking groups, physical activity, park events, C.S. Lewis
Square markets, volunteer gardening, stakeholder forums
and campaigns, including 'Love Your Greenway' and 'Living
the Greenway', to encourage community responsibility and
ownership and end dog fouling and littering.

What's Growing on the Greenway?

'What's Growing on the Greenway' blog featuring local
people's photos of the landscape and planting on the CCG.

Community Engagement

4.1 Achievements against Targets

Table 1: KPI 3.1 - No. of community members and community groups engaged in specific CCG activities

| | Project Target | Actual |
|------------------|----------------|--------|
| Number of People | 3,000 | 32,378 |
| Number of Groups | 90 | 294 |

Table 2: KPI 3.2 No. of schools, colleges, students engaged in specific CCG activities

| | Project Target | Actual |
|--------------------|----------------|--------|
| Number of Schools | 30 | 32 |
| Number of Students | 1,500 | 3,049 |

Table 3: KPI 3.3 Engagement with key stakeholder groups (% stakeholder groups informed about CCG)

| | Project Target | Actual |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| % Key Stakeholder Groups Engaged | 95% | 97% |

Table 4: KPI 3.4 Number of CCG events held

| | Project Target | Actual |
|----------------------------|----------------|--------|
| Events and Activities Held | 150 | 452 |

4.2 Comments

As the above indicators confirm, Community Engagement is one of the notable successes of the CCG project. The 5 targets set were exceeded and, in 4 cases, vastly exceeded. This reflects the effective work of staff, the impact of communications activities and, most importantly, the level of genuine interest and ownership of the Greenway project among people and organisations in its hinterland.



Examples of Events & Activities

- Opening of C.S. Lewis Square
- Other Opening Ceremonies, including the public naming of bridges
- Community Clean Ups
- Markets
- Walking Groups
- C.S. Lewis Festivals
- Information Sessions
- Park Events
- 10K Run
- Physical Activity
- Stakeholder Forums
- Volunteer Gardening
- C.S. Lewis Square Community Engagement Film

Communications & Volunteer Involvement

The offline (i.e. newspapers, TV, radio, magazines) communications element of the CCG project exceeded the target level of 5.6 million people, which was an excellent achievement.



5.1 Communications

Table 5: KPI 4.6 No. People CCG Offline Media Coverage & PR Activities Reached

| | Project Target | Actual |
|------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Number of People | 5.6 million | 7.2 million |

The reach achieved by media coverage is based on the estimated exposure of readers, viewers and listeners to stories that media outlets carried about the Greenway. This does not mean that 6.2 million different people saw information generated by CCG, as many people have viewed a number of pieces of publicity.

Digital Communication

During the CCG / EBFAS construction period, there was enormous growth in the use of digital and social media platforms and channels. CCG staff recognised the importance of these communication methods at an early stage and used them as effective and increasingly important ways of communicating and engaging with a wide range of stakeholders.

Monitoring activity on digital platforms confirmed that the CCG website, Facebook, Twitter and email were the most useful tools. The website was used to issue information, provide access to design drawings and as a gateway to events, while Facebook and Twitter were used to distribute information quickly and encourage two way conversation. The CCG e-mailing list grew as the project progressed, indicating growing awareness of and interest in the project CCG and illustrating the need for regular project updates.

Areas of significant activity on social media included the construction process, sharing CCG images and CCG events and the available evidence suggests that social media did introduce the CCG to new audiences and increase the reach of project messages, as the following project-end statistics indicate:



Facebook followers: 6640



Instagram followers: 1096



Twitter followers: 4584

5.2 Volunteer Commitment

Volunteer commitment levels, as assessed by the number and value of volunteer hours committed to CCG during the pre-construction and construction phases of the project, greatly exceeded target levels. As the measures of progress indicate, the degree of volunteer commitment to CCG was significant, impressive and a tribute to the many members of the community who gave time to the early stages of the project.

Although it was not measured (and is very difficult to quantify) the value of the 'social capital' generated by bringing people together, building personal and social networks and promoting a sense of community to create a sense of ownership of the Greenway is clearly considerable and is a very important aspect of the project.

Table 6: KPI 4.7 - Volunteer hours / value

| | Project Target | Actual |
|-----------------|----------------|---------|
| Volunteer Hours | 4,000 | 6,780 |
| Volunteer Value | £24,000 | £46,516 |

Table 7:
Connswater Community Greenway Key Performance Indicators

| | | Objectives | Baseline | Project End Target | Outcome Total |
|---|------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| E N V I R O N M E N T A L | 1.1 | Area of additional and improved accessible green and open space provided. | 0 | 7.1 Hectares | 15.7 Hectares |
| | 1.2 | Kilometres of improved cycle and walking paths. | 0 | 16 Kms | 16.5 Kms |
| | 1.3 | Number of new or improved bridges & crossings. | 0 | 26 | 27 |
| | 1.4 | Weight of rubbish removed from rivers. | 0 | 10 Tonnes | 50 Tonnes |
| | 1.5 | Perceptions of Rubbish / Litter lying around (PARC). (Before and after survey measured on 5 point scale with 1 as very big problem and 5 not a problem) | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| | 1.6 | Perception of Vandalism/ Graffiti/Damage to Vehicles or Property (PARC). (Before and after survey measured on 5 point scale with 1 as very big problem and 5 not a problem) | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| | 1.7 | Area of semi-natural habitat created. | 0 | 2.24 Hectares | 3.0 Hectares |
| | 1.8 | Management and control of invasive species. | Treatment Undertaken 2009 & 2010 | Control procedures ongoing | Control procedures ongoing |
| | 1.9 | Water Environment – Ecological Status. | Poor | Moderate | Moderate |
| | 1.10 | Improvement to River Corridor. | None | Moderate | Moderate |
| | 1.11 | Number of Gateway Markers/ Pieces of Public Art pieces. | 0 | | 9 Gateway Markers; 0 Gateway Artworks, 7 Public Art Piece |
| S O C I A L | 1.12 | Satisfaction of Local Area (PARC). Before and after household survey (measured on 5 point scale with 1 as very satisfied and 5 very dissatisfied). PARC reported that this question was removed from the 2017 survey due to space restrictions. | 2 | 1 | Not recorded |
| | 1.13 | Number of Native Trees planted. | 0 | 1385 | 1444 |
| | 2.1 | Total number of pedestrians, cycle users and anglers (INTERCEPT SURVEY). (Before and after intercept survey measured by survey of no. of walkers and use of cycle counters) | 1,425,400 per year | 1,781,750 per year | 1,434,906 per year |
| | 2.2 | Kilometres of improved cycle and walking paths (as per 1.2). | 0 | 16.0 Kms | 16.0 Kms |
| | 2.3 | Walkability Index (PARC). (Before and after study assessed by Wards with a Low –Med- High Walkability Index or WI). Outcome unavailable as PARC reported that it was discovered that the original variable did not make sense. | WI 2.41 | Target not available | WI 2.45 |
| | 2.4 | Play and recreation in CCG Area (SOPARC). Before and after study (measured by survey of average no. people using defined play and recreation areas per hour) | 285 people per hour | 314 people per hour | 556 people per hour |
| | 2.5 | Self-reported general health (PARC) Before & after study (measured by % of population reporting good general health) | 72.6% | 82.5% (UK average) | 62.1% |
| | 2.6 | Proportion of population meeting physical activity weekly target (PARC) (Before and after study measured by % of population meeting recognised weekly 150 minutes activity) | 60% | 65% | 56.8% |
| | 2.7 | Mobility – level of use of 'active' transport (PARC) Before and after study (measured by survey of time spent walking and on bicycle) | 29.9mns | 33mns (10% increase) | 24.5mns |

| | | Objectives | Baseline | Project End Target | Outcome Total |
|--------------------------------------|-----|---|------------------------|---|--|
| S O C I A L | 3.1 | Number of community members and community groups engaged in specific CCG activities. | 7 groups 100 people | 90 groups 3000 people | 294 groups 32,378 people |
| | 3.2 | Number of schools, colleges and students engaged in specific CCG activities. | 0 | 30 schools 1500 students | 32 schools 3,049 students |
| | 3.3 | Engagement with key stakeholder groups (% stakeholder groups informed about CCG). | 95% | 95% | 97% |
| | 3.4 | Number of CCG activities / events held. | 3 | 150 | 452 |
| | 3.5 | Strength of social networks (PARC). (Before and after stakeholder network survey measured by % of stakeholders engaged with CCG). PARC reported that 8% of stakeholders responded to survey which was insufficient to provide data. | 81% | 95% | Data unavailable |
| | 3.6 | Safety of the area from crime (PARC). (Before and after household survey measured on a 3 point scale with 1 as poor and 3 as good) | 2 | 2.5 | 3 |
| E C O N O M I C | 3.7 | Measure of trust in neighbours (PARC). (Before and after household survey measured on 3 point scale, with 1 as poor and 3 as good). | 2 | 2.5 | 2 |
| | 4.1 | Total capital expenditure attributable to CCG. (The available budget of £40 million was used, with £33 million used for capital expenditure.) | 0 | £40.0 million | £33.0 million |
| | 4.2 | Management & Maintenance expenditure on CCG. | 0 | Reach agreement with Belfast City Council | Belfast City Council to manage & maintain CCG for 40 years |
| | 4.3 | Direct employment and training arising from CCG. (Measured by no. of people trained and employed; contractor to provide evidence of progress) | 3 (CCG staff) | 314 | 325 |
| | 4.4 | Number of Visitors to CCG (PARC). (Before and after study measured by % of people from outside the local area using CCG) | 6% | | 13.4% |
| | 4.5 | Number of CCG Tourism and Heritage Trails. | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| | 4.6 | No. people CCG offline media coverage and PR activities reaches. | 1.0 million people | 5.6 million people | 7.2 million people |
| | 4.7 | Volunteers hours / value. | 250 hours £1.5k | 4,000 hours £24,000 | 6,780 hrs £46,516 |
| | 4.8 | Number of properties protected from flooding. | 0 | 1,700 | 1,700 |
| | 4.9 | No. of interpretative and directional signs installed. | 0 | No target set | 39 signs in total |

Please refer to page 17 for a commentary on the KPIs

- target greatly exceeded
- target achieved
- target not achieved
- end of project data unavailable
- no target set



Flood Alleviation, Environmental Improvement & Responsible Construction

6.1 Flood Prevention

The East Belfast Flood Alleviation Scheme (EBFAS) was an important, but distinctive, part of the overall Greenway project (see Section 1). Flooding has long been a problem in some parts of east Belfast and the EBFAS involved works to protect 1,700 properties from flooding. This was the only target related to flood prevention and it was achieved.

| | Project Target | Actual |
|---|----------------|--------|
| KPI 4.8 - No. of Properties Protected from Flooding | 1,700 | 1,700 |

6.2 Ecological Improvement

Two CCG KPIs relate to ecological improvement:

| | Pre-Construction Baseline | Project Target | Actual |
|---|---------------------------|----------------|----------|
| KPI 1.9 - Water Environment – Ecological Status | Poor | Moderate | Moderate |
| KPI 1.10 - Improvement to River Corridor | None | Moderate | Moderate |

The construction phase of CCG lasted a little over 4 years, ending in April 2017.

Even though the Connswater river system has had relatively little time to respond to the environmental improvement work that has taken place, measures taken by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency indicate that ecological improvement has occurred and that the project has achieved its targets in these areas.

This is a very positive and encouraging outcome and it is anticipated that this marks the start of a sustained period of improvement to the CCG river system.

6.3 CEEQUAL

CEEQUAL (Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment and Awards Scheme) encourages project promoters to exceed minimum requirements and demonstrate the commitment of the civil engineering industry to environmental quality and social performance. CCG was committed to gaining a CEEQUAL Award, linked to three KPIs (see table below). When this report was printed, the CEEQUAL assessment was with the verifier, but the Phase 2 project managers are confident that the CCG project will achieve a minimum rating of 'very good'.

| | Project Target | Actual |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1.7 Area of semi-natural habitat | 2.24 Hectares | 3.0 |
| 1.8 Control of invasive species | Control Procedures Ongoing | Control Procedures Ongoing |
| 1.13 No. of native trees planted | 1,385 | 1,444 |



Project Development & Management

Taking the Connswater Community Greenway and East Belfast Flood Alleviation Scheme from concept to reality depended upon a broad and effective partnership between funders and the public, community and private sectors.

It was conceived by the EastSide Partnership and the complex process of project development and management depended in particular upon input and delivery from Belfast City Council, EastSide Partnership, the Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure Rivers Agency, the Northern Ireland Department for Communities and a number of key private sector partners:

Construction Phase 1

BSG Civil Engineering – Construction

Based in Maghera, Co. Derry, Northern Ireland, BSG Civil Engineering Ltd is a major civil engineering and construction company.

McAdam Design – Project Design

Established in 1963 and with offices in Belfast and London, McAdam Design is one of the largest independent consultancy practices in Northern Ireland.

AECOM

AECOM is an American multinational engineering firm that provides design, consulting, construction, and management services to a wide range of clients.

Jacobs - Flood Alleviation Work

Founded in 1947 and with its head office in Dallas, Texas, Jacobs is one of the world's largest and most diverse providers of professional and construction services.



Construction Phase 2

ARUP - responsible for overall project management

ARUP is a multinational professional services company with its headquarters in London and regional offices in a number of cities, including Belfast. It provides engineering, design, planning, project management and consulting services for the built environment.

Farrans - main contractor

Farrans, founded in Dunmurry, Northern Ireland in 1941 is a major building and civil engineering contractor. The company is a division of Northstone (NI) Ltd and is part of the global construction materials group CRH plc.

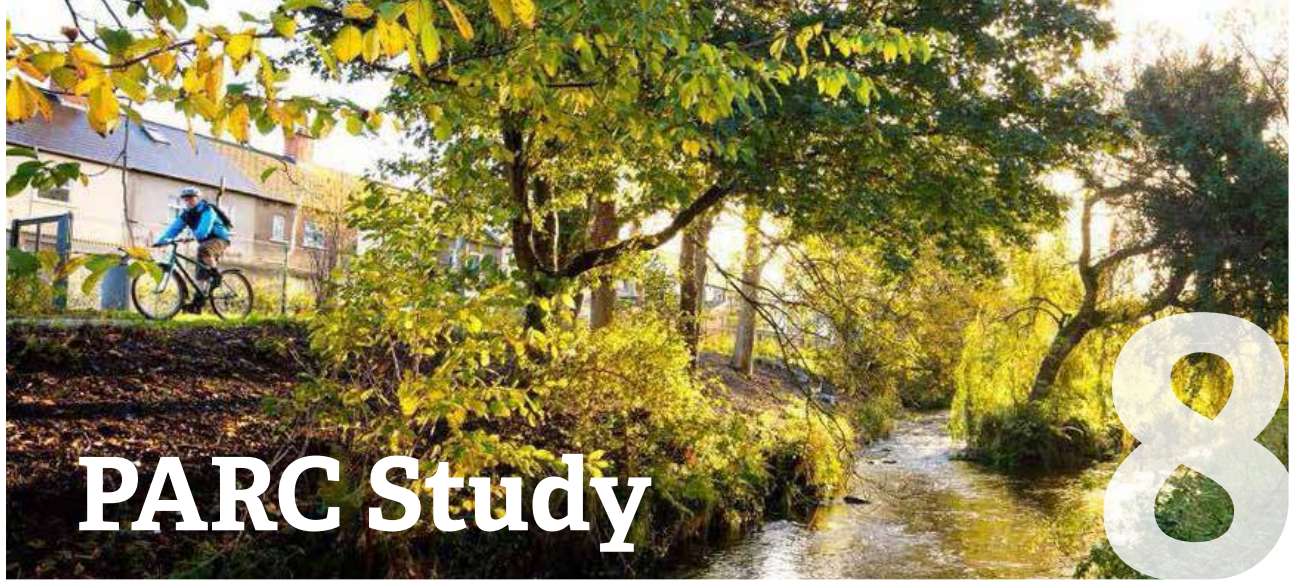
The Paul Hogarth Company - landscape design

The Paul Hogarth Company is a team of landscape architects, urban designers and planners based in Belfast. The company aims to create sustainable environments for people to enjoy and value as places to live, visit and work in.

Pre-Construction

The contract to deliver the CCG and EBFAS was awarded to Connswater Joint Venture (CJV), SIAC NI Ltd and Galliford Try in November 2010. After a year-long dispute this contract was terminated in May 2012, following an attempted conciliation process involving Belfast City Council and the Contractor.

CCG / EBFAS wishes to acknowledge the work of these businesses and the many agencies and subcontractors that contributed to the successful delivery of the project.



8.1 What was the PARC Study?

The PARC (Physical Activity and the Regeneration of Connswater) Study was an important element of the Connswater Community Greenway project. It used 'before-and-after' research to assess the impact of the CCG on the physical activity, health and wellbeing of residents living near the facility.

PARC Study Elements:

A 'before-and-after' household survey on health and wellbeing.
Assessment of change in the local built environment and 'walkability'.
Interviews with residents and stakeholders.
A cost-effectiveness and social return on investment evaluation.

PARC Study Objectives Include Evaluating:

The impact of the CCG in promoting physical activity.
The role of the built environment and stakeholder networks in sustaining change.
The cost-effectiveness of the CCG.

The Study was led by an interdisciplinary team of researchers from Queen's University Belfast with support and input from CCG staff. Data from the PARC Study was collected before and after the CCG was constructed, using a range of methodologies and core elements included:

- Representative surveys of households in the CCG area
- Intercept Surveys provided data on who uses the Greenway and why; estimate of the number of pedestrians, anglers and cycle users was collected.
- Walkability Index – digital mapping was used to assess the impact of the CCG on the 'walkability' of the Greenway area, as a result of changes to the built environment; in essence this is a measure of the extent to which people living around the Greenway have an improved opportunity to walk.



- Users of the CCG – using observational methods, data was collected regarding the number of people using the CCG before and after it was constructed.

13 of 36 CCG Key Performance Indicators were related to the PARC Study:

- Environmental – 3 PARC Study KPI measures
- Social – 9 PARC Study KPI measures
- Economic – 1 PARC Study KPI measure.

The first stage of the Study, completed before the CCG was constructed, established baseline measures for each PARC KPI and assisted with the development of end-of-project targets. The second stage of the Study, carried out 6 months after the CCG was opened to the public, provided measures which could be compared to baseline measures and end-of project targets for each KPI.





8.2 Targets and Outcomes

Environmental Improvement

| Key Performance Indicators | Baseline Measure | Project-end Measure | Project-end Target |
|---|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1.5 Perceptions of Rubbish / Litter lying around.* | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| 1.6 Perception of Vandalism / Graffiti / Damage to Vehicles or Property.* | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| 1.12 Satisfaction of Local Area (PARC).** | 2 | Not Recorded | 1 |

* Before and after household survey measured on 5 point scale with 1 as very big problem and 5 not a problem.

** Before and after household survey measured on 5 point scale with 1 as very satisfied and 5 very dissatisfied.

Physical Activity, Health and Wellbeing

| Key Performance Indicators | Baseline Measure | Project-end Measure | Project-end Target |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 2.1 Total number of pedestrian, cycle users and anglers. (Before & after intercept survey measured by survey of no. of walkers and use of cycle counters) | 1,425,400 per year | 1,434,906 per year | 1,781,750 per year |
| 2.3 Walkability (Before & after study assessed by number of Wards with Low –Med-High Walkability Index). Outcome unavailable as PARC reported that it was discovered that the original variable did not make sense. | 2.41 | 2.45 | Target not available |
| 2.4 Play and recreation in CCG Area (SOPARC) (Before & after study measured by survey of average no. people using defined play and recreation areas) | 285 people / hour | 556 people / hour | 314 people / hour |
| 2.5 Self-reported general health. (Before & after study measured by % of population reporting good general health) | 72.6% | 62.1% | 82.5% (UK average) |
| 2.6 Proportion of population meeting physical activity weekly target. (Before & after study measured by % of population meeting recognised weekly 150 minutes activity) | 60% | 56.8% | 65% |
| 2.7 Mobility – level of use of 'active' transport. (Before & after study measured by survey of time spent walking and on a bicycle per day) | 29.9 mns | 24.5 mns | 33 mns (10% increase) |

Social Networks, Safety and Trust

| Key Performance Indicators | Baseline Measure | Project-end Measure | Project-end Target |
|--|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 3.5 Strength of social networks. Measured by % of stakeholders engaged with CCG. (Before & after stakeholder network survey measured by % of stakeholders engaged with CCG). PARC reported that 8% of stakeholders responded to survey which was insufficient to provide data. | 81% | Data unavailable | 95% |
| 3.6 Safety of the area from crime.* | 2 | 3 | 2.5 |
| 3.7 Measure of trust in neighbours.* | 2 | 2 | 2.5 |

* Before and after household survey measured on a 3 point scale with 1 as poor and 3 as good.

Economic Regeneration

| Key Performance Indicators | Baseline Measure | Project-end Measure | Project-end Target |
|---|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 4.4 Number of Visitors to CCG. (Before & after study measured by % of people from outside the local area using CCG) | 6% | 13.4% | 12% |



8.3 Comments

6 from 13 PARC Study target measures were achieved, 5 were not achieved and outcome data was not available for 2 measures. PARC Study outcomes by category of KPI are presented below.

PARC Study Outcomes by Category of KPI

| KPI Category | No. KPIs | Target Not Achieved | Data Unavailable | Target Achieved |
|---|-----------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Environmental Improvement | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Physical Activity, Health and Wellbeing | 6 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| Social Networks, Safety and Trust | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Economic Regeneration | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 13 | 5 | 2 | 6 (46%) |

Results from the Study indicate that the CCG's environmental and community engagement work has been noticed, as perceptions of levels of littering and vandalism improved over the study period. It is unfortunate that an end of study measure of satisfaction with the local area was not available, as this would have provided an overall indication of the perceived impact of environmental improvements.

With reference to Social Networks, Safety and Trust, perceptions of the level of crime improved and the degree of trust in neighbours was unchanged compared to baseline measures.

A very encouraging result from the PARC Study, from the perspectives of economic development and the wider impact of CCG, is a recorded increase in the proportion of CCG visitors from outside the local area. At 13.4% this exceeded the anticipated outcome of 12% from a base of 6%.

A key CCG aim is to provide a facility which will improve health and well-being. Initial results from the Physical Activity, Health and Wellbeing component of the PARC Study fell below expectation over what was a relatively short time frame and a small period in the life of the CCG. Monitoring over a longer time will be needed to further investigate the impact of the CCG on the health and well-being of local residents.

The number of pedestrians, cycle users and anglers increased

by 0.7% compared to the baseline figure, but fell short of the target level. One health-related measure exceeded target, data was unavailable for one measure and the 4 other health-related indicators did not reach target, recording project-end measures which were lower than baseline / starting figures.

The PARC Study was carried out in a professional way and it is likely that measures generated by it are reliable indicators. Based on the available data, it can only be concluded that - to date - the CCG has not had the anticipated, positive impact upon the health and well-being of people who live in its vicinity.

However it is important to provide context. Firstly, it should be recognised that influencing human attitudes and behaviour is difficult and can take a long time and that the PARC Study was completed at an early stage in the life of the CCG. The PARC Study team also pointed out that the research was completed in the context of worsening inequality indicators for east Belfast and austerity measures that may have influenced, detrimentally, the health and well-being of the local population over a number of years.

It seems fair to conclude that more time and more work, by CCGT and other bodies, will be required to encourage use of the CCG and help local people and visitors to gain the health, and well-being benefits and improvements that the CCG can promote.



Conclusions

The project had 36 objectives / KPIs and 26 (72%) were achieved. Looking at progress by category:

- **Environmental** – 11 of 13 environmental KPIs were achieved (85%)
- **Social** – the project achieved 8 of 14 social KPIs (57%)
- **Economic** – 7 of 9 economic KPIs were achieved (78%)

The EBFAS scheme achieved its key objective, by protecting 1,700 properties from flooding risk.

Monitoring by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency has indicated that ecological and environmental improvement, relating to water quality and improvements to the river corridor, has occurred in the Connswater river system.

It can be concluded that the CCG project has achieved its objectives in these areas in the time period covered by the evaluation and that it seems likely that further improvement will occur over time.

Three KPIs, all achieved, were linked to the Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment and Awards Scheme. At the time of writing CEEQUAL assessment was with the verifier, but project managers are confident that the CCG project will achieve a minimum rating of 'very good'.

The employment and social impact element of the CCG, as estimated by the provision of employment, was successful. This included the provision of opportunities for unemployed and disadvantaged people, student placements, work placements and apprenticeships.

Community Engagement was a highly successful element of the CCG project. Four KPIs, two with dual objectives (i.e. 6 targets in total) were related to these activities. All targets were achieved and, in the case of 3 KPIs, greatly exceeded.

CCG Communications activities, which included coverage by 'traditional' media like TV, newspapers and radio and the use of online and digital platforms, was successful and the target for the number of people exposed to publicity about CCG was comfortably exceeded.

There are other indicators of the success of CCG communication work, engagement with the project and of the wider influence and impact of the scheme and other services as part of a more connected city. These include the

Conclusions and Learning

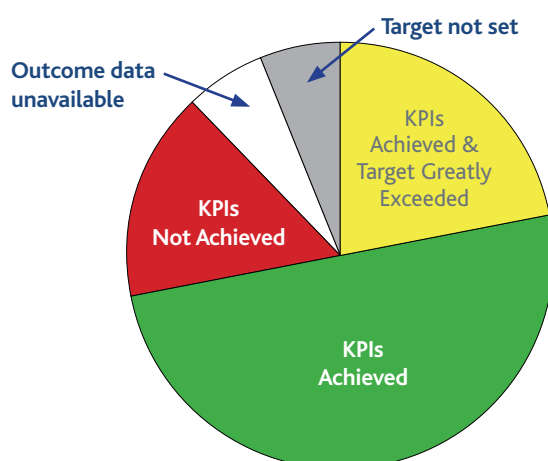
creation of the NI Greenways Strategy, investment in the CCG area through initiatives like the EastSide Visitor Centre (opened in August 2016), the establishment of the Sustrans cycling hub and the Belfast Bikes scheme and by increasing visitor numbers to C.S. Lewis Square (currently 1000 people per day), facilitated in part by a hop on hop off city bus service and the introduction of the new Glider rapid transit system.

Targets for levels of volunteer engagement, assessed by number of volunteer hours devoted to CCG and the estimated value of this time, were greatly exceeded, which is a considerable achievement and a tribute to the many people, including Greenway Leaders, who engaged with CCG in practical ways.

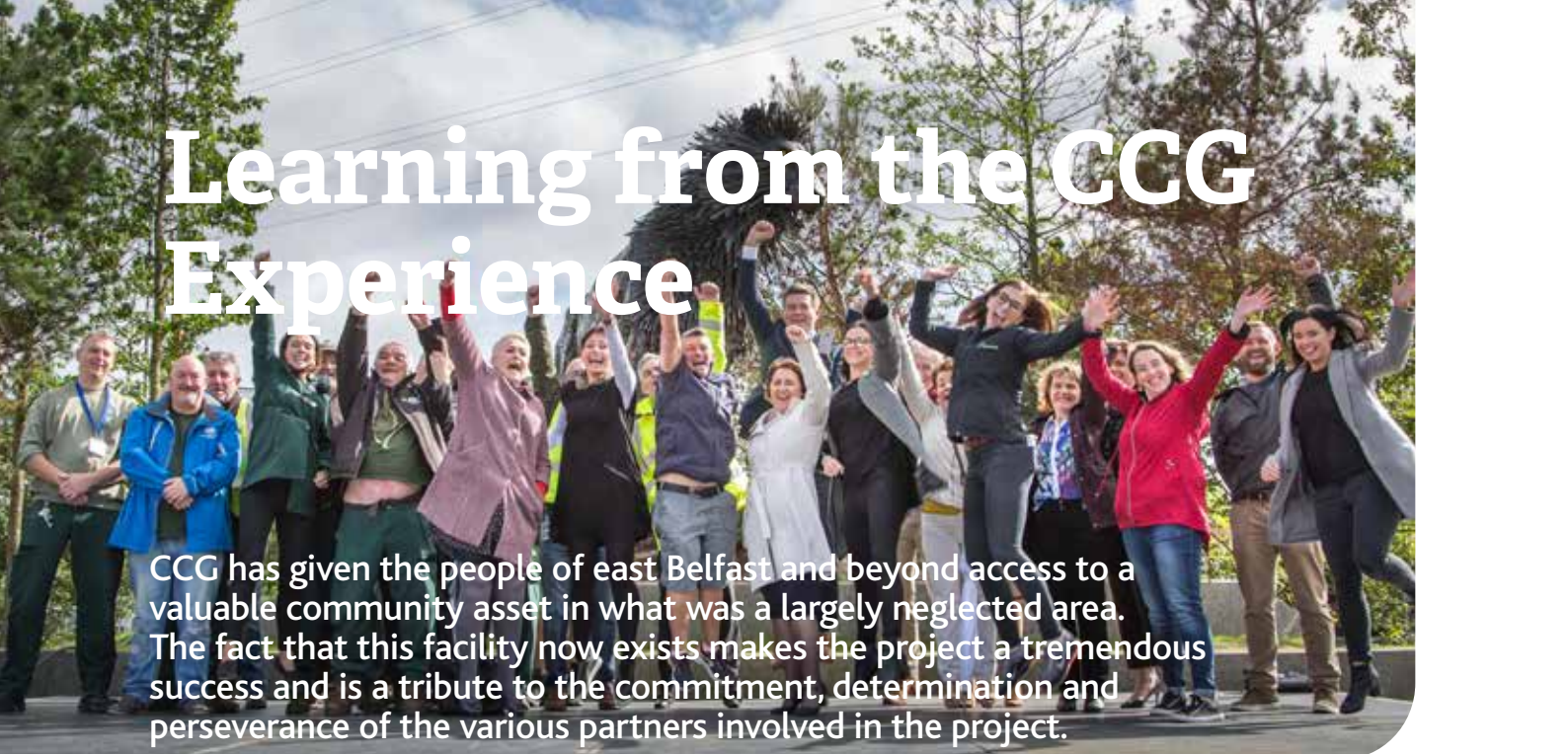
The PARC Study was a very important element of the CCG project. Encouraging results were returned for environmental, social and economic aspects of the Study but, in the key area of Physical Activity, Health and Wellbeing, initial outcomes measures were disappointing. However, health-related indicators should be placed in the context described on Page 16.

Summary CCG Progress and Achievements

| | No. | % |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| KPIs Achieved & Target Greatly Exceeded | 8 | 22 |
| KPIs Achieved | 18 | 50 |
| KPIs Not Achieved | 6 | 16 |
| Outcome data unavailable | 2 | 6 |
| Target not set | 2 | 6 |



Learning from the CCG Experience



CCG has given the people of east Belfast and beyond access to a valuable community asset in what was a largely neglected area. The fact that this facility now exists makes the project a tremendous success and is a tribute to the commitment, determination and perseverance of the various partners involved in the project.

While it is important to learn lessons from the experience of creating the CCG, especially for the planning and delivery of similar schemes, it is important to place these observations in the context of what was, in general, a very successful project. It should also be recognised that evaluation relies on the exact science of hindsight and accepted that it should not be seen as a criticism of those who were involved in the realities and uncertainties of bringing together the multiple strands of a complex endeavour, forecasting outcomes and trying to influence human behaviour and attitudes. In short, the project should not be judged merely by the number of key objectives it achieved, but by everything that was delivered and for its legacy.

In this context, important points of learning from the CCG project include:

- The project demonstrated how a scheme involving several funders and many partners can be conceived and delivered – in many respects it is a model example of a complex, multi-partner undertaking and those involved are well-positioned to offer guidance to similar schemes.
 - Contractual issues, ending the original project contract and the need to agree a project schedule with new contractors meant that CCG construction work was delayed. These issues were beyond the control of the CCG Monitoring and Evaluation Team, meant that the timescale linked to some project KPIs were extended and emphasise the importance of extremely careful preparatory and due diligence work in projects of this nature.
 - Setting objectives / KPIs – all targets should ideally be 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited). Most CCG objectives did meet these criteria, but there were some difficulties in setting project-end targets for some KPIs, data was unavailable for some objectives and some KPIs had dual objectives which are best avoided. Almost inevitably, some targets did prove to be beyond reach in the specified time-period. In general, these were linked to challenging objectives, like influencing human behaviour, attitudes and perceptions, which can take a long time to achieve.
- Future projects should, therefore, take great care when setting objectives and timeframes for achieving targets in these areas and give careful consideration to the CCG experience of measurement. For those involved in the CCG and its future, the lesson is that activity to improve, monitor and evaluate particular environmental, ecological and physical activity, health and wellbeing issues should ideally continue for some time, as work and measurement over a longer timescale is needed to provide a fair assessment of CCG's impact upon these areas.
- CCG has shown that tremendous effort was needed to develop awareness and promote engagement with the project. This (and the disappointing outcome of some health-related measures) indicates that 'build it and they will come' is not a philosophy that similar initiatives should adopt and that effective communications, community engagement activities and ongoing work to promote the use of the facility and encourage physical activity are critical to the success of open-space projects, especially if they are to contribute to an improvement in health and well-being.
 - Volunteer engagement was strong and a very important, encouraging and successful aspect of the CCG project and the approach used by CCG can be applied elsewhere.
 - Communication – the use of both 'traditional' media and online channels was important to the success of CCG communications activities and, in many ways, played complimentary roles.
 - A recorded and significant increase in the number of visitors from outside the area visiting the CCG is encouraging, as it provides an indication of the wider attraction of accessible and attractive open spaces and suggests that facilities like CCG can bring economic benefits to their local economies.
 - Ecological and environmental improvements recorded over a relatively short period provide encouraging evidence of the CCG's capacity to improve the environment for people, flora and fauna.



Living the Green Way



'An inspirational landmark that is well used, vibrant, dynamic and sustainable. An attractive destination of outstanding quality for everyone to enjoy.'

Vision of the Connswater Community Greenway Trust

The Greenway was developed by a central, innovative partnership between EastSide Partnership (ESP) and Belfast City Council (BCC). The Connswater Community Greenway Trust (CCGT) was established by EastSide Partnership in 2012 as the vehicle for the delivery of the Connswater Community Greenway.

Greenway Construction was completed in 2017, but this partnership will continue – with CCGT now a registered charity – to make the most of the Greenway's potential. The impact of the partnership and the Greenway will become visible in a number of local and city-wide contexts:

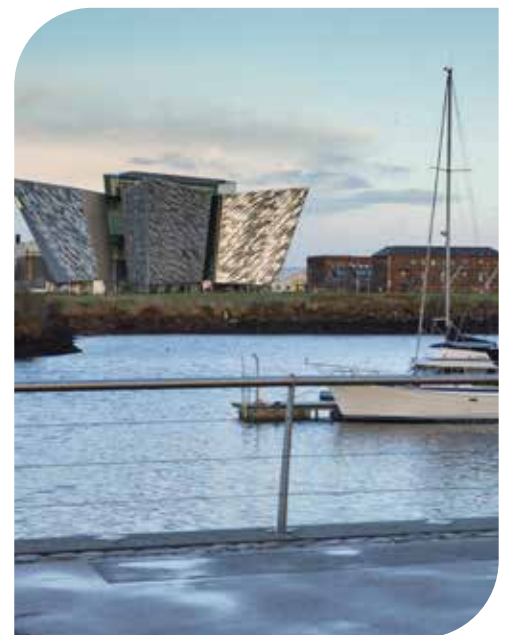


The Wider City



CCGT's vision for the Greenway contributes to Belfast City Council's 'Belfast Agenda', which envisages a beautiful city that is a great place for everyone to live; a city that is well-connected and culturally-vibrant and a city that empowers, energises and drives a successful economy.

It is CCGT's intention to explore the potential for a wider network of greenways across east Belfast, linking to a city-wide and regional system.



Innovation, Sustainability & Community Ownership

CCGT, with BCC, will develop innovative proposals to ensure that the Greenway infrastructure is well-used, managed and maintained, so that CCGT's Vision becomes a reality.

These plans will aim to secure the sustainability of CCG, improve what already exists and promote income generation. They will also support the ambitions of The National Lottery Community Fund (the primary CCG funder) for 'Living Landmark' projects, like the Greenway, by focusing on community engagement, involvement and ownership.



CCGT's Charitable Objective

When it was established as a charity by EastSide Partnership, CCGT recognised the potential to build on the success and lessons learned from the Connswater Community Greenway by defining its Object as:

'To promote the use and sheer enjoyment of green open spaces, parks, gardens, rivers and off-road transport routes in east Belfast and its environs and the sustainable planning, design, management, maintenance and improvement of them for the benefit of the public.'

Achieving this objective means that people in east Belfast will have the opportunity to live healthier lifestyles in an improved physical environment and enjoy the benefits of a safer, greener, cleaner area which is valued by residents and attractive to visitors.

CCGT has a vital role to play as it is in a position to bring together and make best use of available resources, opportunities, expertise and influence. It will, therefore, continue to support the positive use of the CCG as a catalyst for ongoing regeneration to make east Belfast greener, safer and cleaner, while connecting people and places.



Belfast City Council – Management, Maintenance & Sustainability

Belfast City Council, through its Open Spaces Strategy, has agreed to manage and maintain the CCG for a 40 year period. This will ensure that the physical space remains safe, clean and accessible.

BCC's Open Spaces Strategy recognises the need for high quality open space and delivering this is one of the primary functions of its Parks Service. A grounds' maintenance schedule, sets out the standards BCC applies to all open spaces to achieve a high standard of quality.

CCGT will support BCC's management and maintenance programme, by working with local communities to ensure that CCG's physical space is looked after, carrying out environmental improvement activities and delivering campaigns to promote the welfare of the Greenway.

Working together and looking to the future, teams from CCG, Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland regional government, local communities and the private sector have created an influential project with a lasting legacy for the people of Belfast and a source of inspiration for groups working on similar projects.



Delivering the Vision

CCGT's key role in delivering its vision for the Greenway includes:

- Managing and co-ordinating the use of green spaces, assets and their benefits.
- Enhancing and expanding future use.
- Enhancing water quality, providing education and protecting the area.
- Managing, co-ordinating, developing programmes and supporting its use – especially for activities related to health and physical activity, environment, education and tourism.
- Managing and co-ordinating a volunteering programme.
- Monitoring activities to ensure future objectives and appropriate standards are achieved.
- Work with key stakeholders to support the development and use of CCG as a safe and shared space.





Living the Green Way

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