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Phase 3: Implementation

Report produced and presented by





Grey2Green

Phase 3 – Implementation Contents

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1. Introduction

This report sets out the third phase of the Grey 2 Green Project, which is referred to as the '**Implementation**' phase. This leads on from the initial report for Phase 1 entitled "**Some Blooming Good Ideas**" and the Phase 2 report "**Community Planning**". This report will look at what has been delivered to date and how this process could be improved, including feedback from residents and professionals involved in the project.

This phase of the project will set out the method and results for each of the three Grey Spaces that were visited independently. These spaces were Fox's Passage, Swirle's Place and Peggotty Road. Conclusions and recommendations will be provided, based on the consensus of views of residents and professionals.

Targets

The Grey 2 Green project's model (see Appendix) suggests that by March 2008, 6 schemes would have been completed, 3 would be near to completion and there would be 6 active community groups involved in the process. The Cleaner and Greener Delivery Plan 2007/08 suggests that the project will be linking and helping towards achieving the following wider Local Area Agreement Targets:

- **3.7 Empower local people to have a greater voice**
- **3.9 To have cleaner, safer, greener public spaces**

2. Methods

A number of face-to-face interviews have been undertaken with residents that live in the immediate areas of the schemes, along with the residents that are seen to be the main contacts of each scheme.

The main professionals that have been involved in the project have also been interviewed, including the Community Development Worker, Grey 2 Green Co-ordinator and the Norfolk County Council Highway Engineer. In addition, other community members who have been integral to the process have been interviewed.

The schemes at Fox's Passage and Swirle's Place were also visited when the contractors were implementing the developments, and where possible contractors have also been asked for their views on the projects development.

3. Results

3.1 Roles and responsibilities within the Implementation Stage.

As part of the interview process, individuals who were professionally involved in the project were asked about their understanding of the aims of the Grey 2 Green scheme. The following responses were given, and seem to show a clear understanding of the aims, and overall ethos of the scheme in terms of community participation.

“Delivering a desired environment to the people who matter on time”

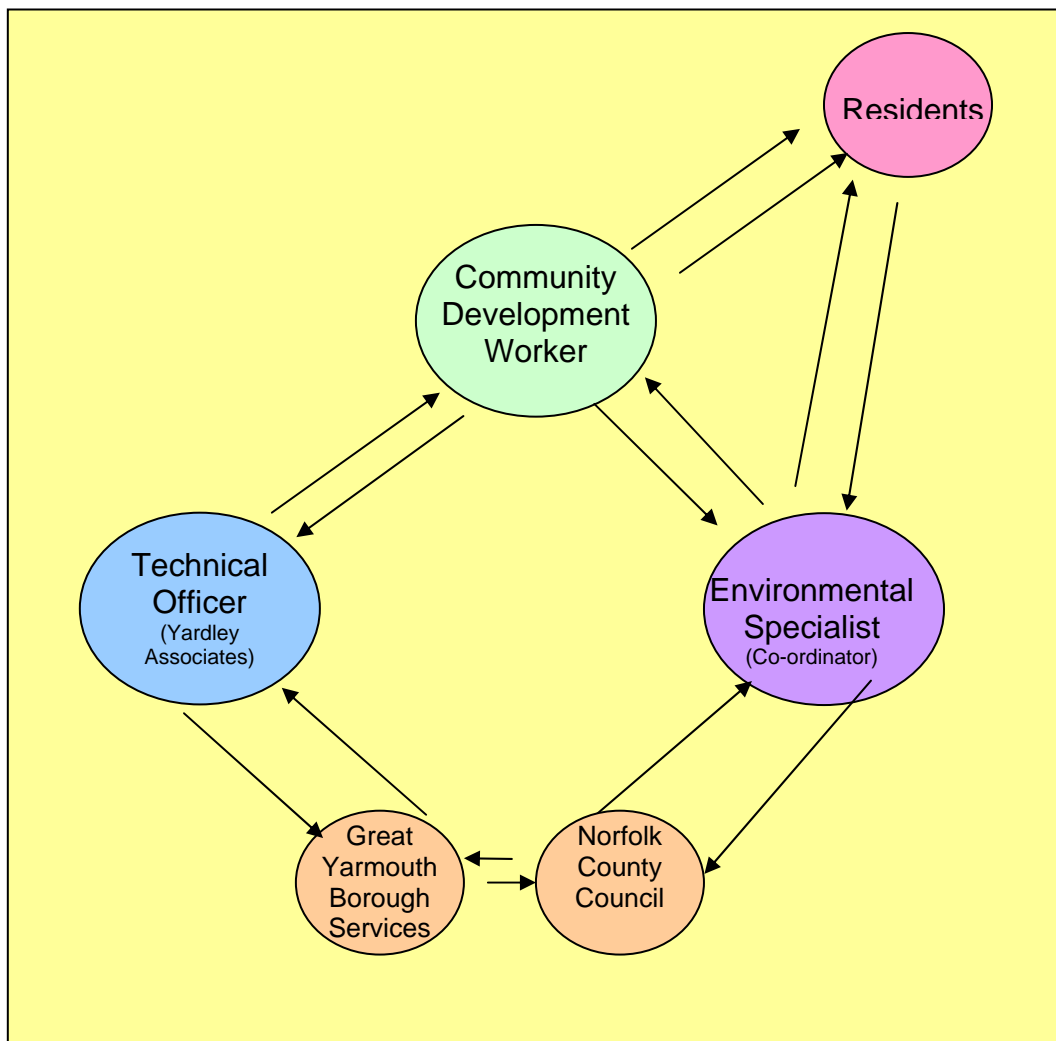
“To ensure that the community are involved in every step for example, the planning and design, alteration and end product and all ideas are led and supported by the community”.

“Brighten up and improve communities for the people who live there. The communities tell us what they want”

Each of the individuals interviewed were then asked their opinion of their specific roles and responsibilities in this stage of the project: The responses are listed below:

Grey 2 Green Co-ordinator- The Grey 2 Green Co-ordinator produced a model of the communication lines of the Grey 2 Green Phase 3 process. The model shows that the role of the Co-ordinator is to feedback knowledge and concerns of residents, to the Community Development Worker, GYBS and Norfolk County Council, keeping each stakeholder informed.

Figure 1: Grey 2 Green Phase 3 model



Community Development Worker: The Community Development worker post is employed through Community Connections, but works directly as part of the Neighbourhood Management programme. The Community Development Worker felt that their role within this stage was:

“To maintain communication links to residents and community groups, updating them of technical developments, including delays and changes in plans. To keep two-way communication pathways between residents and organisations/ agencies.”

An example of the importance of a two-way communication pathway was shown when the cobblestones from the pathway were taken up at Fox's Passage and were going to be replaced with tarmac. The residents contacted the Community Development Worker with the request to put the cobbles back, who then relayed this request back to the contractors.

A range of methods have been used, which have helped to keep individuals involved in the scheme informed of developments, and engaged with the overall process. These have included:

- The design and production of newsletters by community groups
- Christmas card updates sent out to residents from the ComeUnity programme
- Telephone calls made to community members and professionals involved that keeps individuals informed
- Information leaflets produced and sent out
- The Community Development worker visited the schemes where residents were consulted on an opportunistic basis

Norfolk County Council Highway Engineer: The role of the local authority within the overall process has been an important one, particularly in terms of the workforce having to work in a more community driven way.

"I am involved in community type issues, giving advice on highway matters. I get invites to projects that go on and advise on highway issues / aspects."

It was felt that there had been successes within this project which may lead to the relevant members of staff

"...going along to stakeholder events of future schemes."

Partnership Working

The Grey 2 Green project relies strongly on successful partnership working in order to achieve its aims. It is recognised that the local community are involved in the decision making process, but without the involvement of Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Services and Norfolk County Council to organise the designated workforce to implement development (e.g. gardening, landscaping and benches), the scheme would not be implemented successfully. However the role of the residents, and local community groups, along with Community Connections who employ key staff, is vital in ensuring local people lead the project. The ComeUnity Neighbourhood Management programme provides the overall management for the project, and a link between the community and the local authority.

It was suggested that partnership working has been successful on the whole, and it was commented that the Grey 2 Green team are a:

“Flexible team who can respond quickly to issues that are apparent.”

Targets

The delivery plan of the ComeUnity Programme includes the overall target of GREY 2 GREEN and several LAA Targets are being worked towards. The overall target of the GREY 2 GREEN project has been to have 9 targeted areas by March 2008 and the LAA targets that are being worked towards relating to this project are:

- 3.7 Empower local people to have a greater voice
- 3.9 To have cleaner, safer, greener public spaces

This report provides the findings from three of these targeted areas, two of which (Swirle’s Place and Fox’s Passage) were completed by March 2008, with the third (Peggotty Road) completed in summer 2008.

3.2 Swirle's Place

Figure 1: Before and after photographs– Swirle's Place



before



after

A door knocking technique was employed in order to consult with residents living within the vicinity of the Swirle's Place scheme. 17 doors were knocked on in Swirle's Place and Swirle's Buildings. Out of all of the doors that were called, at 7 residents answered, all of these were happy to complete the face-to-face interview. The researcher also consulted with one individual that was walking past the scheme at the time of the door knocking exercise, who was also a resident living in the area. Another individual who lives in the area who was one of the main contacts for the project also took part in an interview at a later date.

When asked what residents thought of the project before the work had started the responses were mainly positive. A range of views were recorded including:

"Pleased to hear that the work would be taking place and was eager to see the work take place and finally come to a finish"

"Thought it was all right and a good idea"

"I thought that something needed to be done"

"Good"

The above comments suggested that something needed to be done about the area, but there was no description of what needed to be done or why. Another individuals expanded on this and said they agreed with the project as the:

"... grass and bushes were horrible"

One respondent felt that the project would achieve the outcome of:

"Enhance the community and create a green space that is pleasing to the eye and is accessible to the community."

A more negative comment recorded suggested that the project was:

“A waste of money as it will be abused by people –kids playing there have to play somewhere”

This was echoed by another respondent who felt that the whole community would need to take responsibility for maintaining the green space:

“Empowerment and residents taking responsibility for the area does not happen if kids play football and ruin it”

One resident commented that they were not aware of the work being undertaken in the area:

“Didn’t know what they were doing”

Residents were also asked whether their opinion has changed since the implementation. Some of the residents’ initial opinions prior to the implementation were the same as after. This was shown when asked if their opinion of the project has changed:

“No, certainly not”

“Still good”

“No, the area looks better now”

“It looks better, kids do play football on the green but the fence is good as it stops balls hitting cars”

However, it was suggested that the positive changes might not be sustainable in the long term, because of the perception that the area will not be maintained:

“Looks nice but how long will this last”

The interview process showed that respondents' expectations of the project were on the whole not very high:

“Admittedly, my early expectations for the project were quite low”

“I did wonder whether it would get done”

“I thought that nothing would happen, especially as quick as it did”

“But did not want this to happen as I knew what would go on (kids swinging on gates and playing football”

Only one individual had expectations that focused on specific responses to perceived problems:

“I thought it would stop football and dog mess”

In general, the comments show that the residents' expectations were largely met, and some of those who had low expectations were very satisfied with the outcome:

“They were easily, more than doubled”

“Well impressed, expected tarmac, no individual bricks”

“The area has been enhanced, it is pleasing to the eye and is accessible to the community.”

“Has enhanced an area that is accepted by the council to be one of the most concreted areas in Great Yarmouth” (see funding application)

However, there were some individuals whose expectations were not met:

"I like the garden and the trees – problems have not gone away though"

(In terms of football and dogs mess)

One respondent felt that the aims of the scheme were unrealistic in the longer term:

"Perhaps ComeUnity are living in an idealistic world"

Some respondents gave less positive responses, which focused on the amount of money that had been spent on the scheme:

"I felt that from the money saved by reclaiming benches from the park, there was enough money to get a more mature tree"

"Does not seem like £12.5k worth of work"

When asked how the residents were involved in the project, most of the responses suggested that individuals had been given the opportunity to become involved:

"I did go to some meetings"

"I gave my thoughts"

"Gave some ideas, and my kids had their face painted and played with others"

"Used to go to the meetings, and gave some of my ideas for the project"

"I have been to the Market Rows community group and the Neighbourhood Management Board. Also went to marquee meetings and the town hall."

There were also suggestions that some individuals were not involved in any stage of the project, although it should be acknowledged that this is always likely to be the case in projects of this nature:

“I was not involved”

“No – just watched it happen”

Some of the reasons why these individuals were not involved in the project were explained when asked how resident involvement could be improved:

“Was at work when meetings happened”

“There could have been meetings in the evenings”

It was suggested that a certain demographic were not interested in becoming involved in the project:

“People with children don’t seem to be interested in getting play area”

“People were well informed but some are not bothered”

However, other residents believed that the level of community involvement was seen to be high, and it is interesting to note the perception that the project had engaged young people:

“Were a lot of people involved”

“Community spirit was good, and kids were also involved”

It was generally believed that the plan developed by the community was kept to. Comments included

“Yes, I received information through the post and I do believe it was carried out as explained.”

“I did see the plan and it is similar to the original plan”

“Yes no problem there, although it is not quite finished”

Two responses suggested that there were specific aspects that had not been completed from the plan:

“Have left off railings and self-closing gates to stop dogs”

“Set up the same as the plan except for the fence all around”

In terms of potential improvements to the site, residents made a number of suggestions:

“Could put fence all way round to stop dogs crap”

“Looks nice but people play football, need a sign to stop this”

“Did not put no ball games sign back up so football happens, - affects plants and means that the money for this has been wasted”

Comments about professionals involved in the project were recorded. For example, when asked about the Community Development Worker involved in the project, it was reported that:

“Very helpful... told us about what was happening”

“Excellent, does her job”

“She’s lovely”

“Good to all the kids”

“She kept us fully informed and got straight back with any queries and questions”

When asked about the Grey 2 Green Co-ordinator, respondents again gave positive comments about his involvement in the project:

“Excellent”

“Very nice man”

“Listened to my ideas”

“Kept us informed in a more practical manner towards plants and landscape.”

When asked about the Local Authority, it was felt that there was an initial reluctance to be involved in the process:

“Did not want to know originally but Neighbourhood Management board dragged them into it.”

It was also suggested that the Borough Council were not fully aware of the project and its aims:

“It would help if council were more aware of what project was all about”

“At the town hall meetings they were condescending”

When asked about the contractors, respondents felt that they had delivered a good service:

“Answered all questions and did best they could to work around us in a sense”

However, one respondent felt that they did not think the contractors fully understood the Grey 2 Green process:

“Not sure contractors knew the background of the project” (in terms of community involvement)

This lack of knowledge around the background to the schemes amongst contractors was highlighted on the 5th February when the researcher visited Swirle’s Place. The Grey 2 Green Co-ordinator and the Landscape Architecture were also on site. They reported on examples of where workman had thought about adjusting parts of the plans for designs and materials that are cheaper and are seen to be easier to sustain. However, on these occasions there has been an individual who has been involved in the project present and able to encourage the workmen to stick to the plans that had originally been made. It was suggested that different workmen come and go on projects, and this may mean that they are less likely to all be aware of the level of community consultation and involvement.

The original ideas and designs were nearly changed by the workmen to cheaper, easier to implement and maintain (an approach suggested to be the Councils usual practice). For example the patterns of the pathways, were almost changed, and it was also suggested to put plant retardant spray to stop the growth of plants. Residents told the workmen not to and that they should still plant the bulbs as originally planned. It was fortunate that individuals involved in the Grey 2 Green project were in the area at the time and explained about the project. It was reported that the workmen did not realise that it was a community-designed project and this is why they were going to make the changes.

3.3 Fox's Passage

Figure 2: Before and after - St James' Walk and Fox's Passage area



A door knocking technique was again employed, with 11 houses that are in the immediate area of the green in the Fox's' Passage area being called at. Out of all of the doors that were called at 2 residents answered, both of these completed the face-to-face interview. The researcher also arranged an interview with a resident who was one of the main contacts for the project in this area.

In relation to the original views on the project, the residents involved in the interviews felt that the project would be worthwhile. The following comments were made:

"Alright, about time they did something"

"All for it, anything that would improve the area"

"Project was a good idea, been trying to get drains for years"

Particular expectations were for the following to be achieved:

"Area to be better, bigger drains and improved lights"

"An area that would be nice for everyone to go and sit out in the summer"

"If plants are put in, they may not be kept nice, so the community need to get involved to help get them to look after them"

The residents felt that the project had met expectations, although there were issues that were raised as a result, and others felt the good work might be undone in the future:

"Does look better"

"The area looks better, the drains are bigger and the lights will soon be working"

“Very good project, will be good when it has finished”

“Brought better community togetherness”

“Very pleased with what has been done, although work that has been completed has brought up issues”

“Still all for it, but concerned that minority will ruin it for majority”

“ they have messed up the green with the diggers”

“Were expecting more plants but only got a few”

“Bins do not always get emptied, people have set fire to them since”

“People walk across the green leading to the grass wearing away”

It was suggested that the work had brought up issues such as a drain being too high, and joints of the paving not good as it has been laid at different levels. However it was suggested that:

“It is still 100% better than what it was”

“No, there’s not much green as there have been more bald patches from machinery and diggers”

Residents from Fox’s Passage highlighted ways in which they had been involved in the project:

“Been to a couple of meetings and the marquees”

“Been to marquee events, meetings at neighbourhood centre and at the town hall. Possibly joining the community group.”

One individual has been particularly involved and engaged with the process, and is now becoming a volunteer for the Grey 2 Green team and will be visiting other areas to tell individuals about the project.

“Now on the team as a photographer”

Residents gave the following views on improvements made as a result of the increased community involvement process:

“We were not told about what was going on at some points” (During the auditing process mentioned in the phase 2 report).

“Could have asked us more and we could have helped them to do it”

Residents were asked as to whether the completed work had been what they were expecting from the plans of the original project. One individual thought that it was the same as the original plan.

“No, thought it was going to have swings on”

“Not as many plants as I thought there would be and there was talk about a fence around the green”

As with the Swirle’s Place scheme, residents’ views on the involvement of the Community Development Worker were very positive:

“Ever so helpful”

“Has been a big help with Grey 2 Green and ASB problems. Brilliant at job”

The Co-ordinator was also viewed in a positive manner by the residents, with examples of community participation given:

“Was here the other day to see how things have got on, I like him”

“Has time for you, was prepared to get the rubbish moved”

When residents were asked about their views of the Local Authority, the general consensus was the same as Swirle's Place, although it was felt again that some members could be patronising.

“Should be contacting me as I am the main contact point, I have had to contact them myself”

“They do their best when they get round to it”

“One member talked down to you when at the town hall meeting”

When residents were asked about their views of the contractors:

“Alright, just let them get on with the work”

“They did put ramps out and told us what they were doing and when”

“Very helpful, asked for things and they did it”.

Although it was suggested that the workmen were helpful, however, there was some concern over the level of workmanship, in particular the finishing of the project.

“Helpful but left damage to houses and did not repair it.”

“Bad finishing”

“Finishing is not a very good standard”

It was suggested by the workmen at Fox's Passage that older individuals have been happier about the project than younger people. Some people have said that the project was a waste of money, and one individual who was in the area said they were going to rip out the tree that had been planted.

Overall the workmen felt the level of community interest was not as high as may have been expected.

"Not many people have spoken to me about the work compared to other jobs."

It was reported that one resident approached the workman to talk to them about the work and thought it was a good idea. However, some residents reported that they were happy to leave the workmen to get on with their work, perhaps in the knowledge that they had already been involved during the previous stages, and this may be why workmen perceived levels of interest to be low.

The workmen also expressed their view that because a lot of the residents rented their houses they might not have as much pride in the area compared to if they owned their house. This may be the case, but is not possible to prove within this research.

It was reported by the construction workers that residents were more positive in Swirle's Place. There were more individuals enquiring about what was going on.

There may be an issue relating to the knowledge of the project for the workers themselves, and in terms of the local authority providing this information to the workers. When one of the workmen was asked whether he knew the background of the project, he said that the:

"Council has not told me what the project is about."

3.4 Peggotty Road

Figure 3: Peggotty Road before



Figure 4: Peggotty Road planting day



The plan for the Peggotty Road green space developed from the Community Centre committee, with residents saying that there was not enough green space in the immediate area.

At a Children's Centre event held at the Peggotty Road Community Centre, the Community Development Worker and Grey 2 Green co-ordinator were able to consult with local families, and young people attending the event. The response led to the suggestion for a community garden.

Publicity in the form of flyers, was distributed to addresses in the locality, but this did not meet with a high response rate. More positive responses to the scheme were received by the Community Development Worker visiting the area at the weekend, which led to the suggestions of a number of young people being received. Terry Luxton, who runs the Community Centre committee itself, and various Sure Start / Children's Centre groups were also able to have an input into the overall process.

Chris Yardley, Landscape Architect, then drew up the plans for the space, which was sent out to local residents.

The original plan included a bench; this had met with opposition from a local resident who felt that this would potentially increase anti social behaviour in the area. In the event of this concern, a compromise was reached with the resident, whereby they would monitor the use of a bench, which was designed to be removable as opposed to fixed. This would mean that if the bench did cause additional concerns then it could easily be removed. To date, this arrangement has worked well, and as yet there has been no further instance of anti social behaviour as a result. It would appear that because the local resident had clearly felt they had been involved in the decision making process, that the issue of the bench has been resolved in the most appropriate way.

A large log was donated by Sheringham Park, and was hoisted into place by a crane provided by the Gardline Group. This event in itself was considered to

be a successful community event, as it was obviously interesting for the local community to see what was going on.

As a result of the green space being developed, there was the need to maintain access at all time, and this was achieved by opening a gate that had previously been locked at certain times of day, leaving this gate always open for people to enter that section.

There are also plans for a mural to be designed and painted on the garden wall.

A successful planting day was held, which was publicised well through radio and local press. A particularly positive feature of this in terms of impact was the number of young people who got involved in the process. The planting day event coincided with a BBC event, 'Breathing Places' which further added to the day.

There was no opportunity for researchers to talk to contractors within the Peggotty Road scheme.

3.5 Strengths of the approach

Local Authorities have a whole range of expertise to help implement practical developments at schemes with financial control and management systems to complete tasks effectively. However, the constitution of the Local Authority is seen to be inappropriate to effectively engage and communicate to the community to enable the community to develop its own environment.

It has therefore been important for the Grey 2 Green Project Co-ordinator, Community Development Worker and the Technical Officer to have maintained engagement and communication systems with residents throughout the project. This has especially been important during the time

when there was no visible work being completed. This communication has been validated by the residents when interviewed by the researcher. For example, residents received documentation to confirm work and timescales, and publicity statements were provided with contact details if any issues arrived.

3.6 Challenges

One of the key challenges of the scheme has been in getting service providers to understand the value of community led approach, and getting them to adopt the approach. It was perceived that rather than doing what they see as best, the council needed to ensure that they meet the needs of the community. In this instance a good example, has been in terms of workmen amending their own plan to fit with the resident's ideas. As discussed earlier, it was believed by some that the contractors were not aware of the level of community involvement in this project.

There is a recognised need to increase the levels of communication between the Local Authority and residents. This becomes more of a challenge when to the expectations of the residents are not being met, if residents believe that nothing is happening, it is felt that the Local Authority are less communicative. However, it is also true to say that when community members observe activity on the site there is a realisation that developments are happening and the processes that are needed which may delay the project (e.g. measuring up).

The co-ordination of this project is vital as there are a lot of different organisations involved and all have different deadlines. These deadlines sometimes have disparity with each other and the expectations of the ComeUnity programme. This can lead to difficulties when trying to keep the community engaged. It was recognised that timescales were short within these initial schemes, it is hoped that future schemes will be different. There were also some physical challenges; for example it was difficult for the necessary machinery to get down passageways (Fox's passage).

4. Value for money

The Neighbourhood Manager provided the following documentation as regards the Grey 2 Green project, and its value for money. The information relates specifically to the Swirle's Place element of the Programme:

Scope of Review	
To assess the VFM status of the Grey 2 Green project (specifically the completed Swirle's Place project), taking into account a) financial and staffing resources, b) outputs achieved, c) desired outcomes achieved.	
Review period	The delivery period was January 2007 – March 2008. This represents the project from the initial community consultations to completion of the scheme.
Cost Data	
<p>The total cost of this project was £18583-32, comprising of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital costs of £12,370 • Revenue costs of £6,213-32, consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resources £16-66 ○ Fees / licenses £50 ○ Professional support £1,750 ○ Expenses £180 ○ Volunteers expenses £20 ○ Communications £50 ○ Contingency £66-66 ○ Community Development Worker (CDW) £2880 ○ CLIP Worker £1200 	
Performance Data	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The project was aimed at improving the quality of a sterile and neglected pocket of green space in Central Yarmouth (the only one in LLSOA 005C). This responded directly to concerns expressed through the Residents Perceptions Study conducted by the Neighbourhood Management Programme in November 2006. 2) January – March 07: Community Consultations (“Bloomin’ Good Ideas”) - initial community engagement sessions to develop basic ideas to shape the future development of the project. 3) April – June 07: Community Planning events (“Picture This”) - next round of community meetings to refine plans for area 4) July – September 07: Funding secured, tendering process for contractors started and contractor appointed 5) October – December 07: Scheme implemented, launched, and Community Planting event took place 6) January – March 08: Further Community Planting events, along with evaluation and review of project 7) March 08 onwards: aftercare and support for community to maintain and manage space 8) Apart from improving the physical environment, the project also provided the 	

CDW and CLIP worker with the opportunity to engage with and support the local community in terms of information about training opportunities, promotion of community meetings, newsletters, information about services such as the CAB, and also community group support

- 9) Through this engagement, the Grey 2 Green team were able to identify other issues related to the local community, including social, crime, environmental and issues related to young people, along with developing support measures to assist local residents with these (link to Market Roads Community Group – see 7.4.3)
- 10) Actions included immediate response to environmental issues such as flytipping, removal of rubbish from gardens, clearing drains, and cleaning of alleys and pavements. Furthermore, residents were supported to become involved with the local SNT's meetings to address crime related issues.

11) Grey 2 Green overall summary

Outcomes	Outputs
Increased resident involvement in the neighbourhood, including involvement of young people	Issues dealt with and environments enhanced
Residents signposted and accessing Community Partnership	Policing priorities decided for the neighbourhoods
Residents expectations raised	Bids accepted for implementing community led environmental enhancements
Increased knowledge and understanding of similarities and differences in local communities	Young people actual involvement in enhancing environments, including planting flowers and hanging pot plants
Contacts made and increased knowledge of service providers that will increase cost effectiveness of the project (e.g. the unpaid work team)	New methods of consultation developed and used
Learning how to communicate to the Council when the community are presenting bids	
Learnt new, less time consuming processes to go through e.g. the time consuming Revenue Implementation Evaluation	
Hazel Blears names Great Yarmouth Borough Council as an Empowerment Champion with the GREY 2 GREEN project as a case study	

Customer Satisfaction Data

An external evaluation of each phase of the project, including residents' feedback, is done on an ongoing basis by the Priory Research Team. The general consensus from the communities involved with the Grey 2 Green schemes is that the project is held in a very high regard, as it is a community led regeneration initiative, which delivers visual improvements to residents' immediate surroundings, along with addressing wider social issues and linking local people into services and support measures that are available.

External Factors

- 1) Grey 2 Green as a whole is targeted at South and Central Yarmouth, which comprises of six of the most deprived Lower Super Output Areas in Great

- Yarmouth, as recognised in the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- 2) Swirle's Place is situated within LLSOA 005C
 - 3) The review concentrates on the period of delivery for Swirle's Place, which includes factors that are typical of a standard project cycle, but also takes into consideration the unique needs and challenges of local residents

Does the service support corporate priorities?

- 1) **Customers:** The need for Grey 2 Green was identified in the 2006 Resident Perception Survey for South and Central Yarmouth. The Swirle's Place project was shaped by local residents and other key stakeholders through the Neighbourhood Management Action Plan Process. Ongoing monitoring is provided by the Grey 2 Green team, supported by the Neighbourhood Officer.
- 2) **Economic:** Swirle's Place has been a flagship project and a great example of effective community led regeneration in the Borough
- 3) **Environmental:** The project has been highly successful in terms of providing the local community with an environmental improvement, which was both community led and also exemplary of multi-agency partnership working
- 4) **Social:** By addressing local environmental issues through the engagement techniques employed by Neighbourhood Management's Grey 2 Green team, the project was able to identify and address wider social issues in the Swirle's Place area, thus supporting the Market Roads Community Group's aims and objectives
- 5) **Resources:** The total cost of the Swirle's Place project was £18583-32, which included a series of environmental improvements, along with staff time and the resources needed for the community engagement work to ensure the project is community led in all its phases. This cost also included community development support for wider social issues identified by residents.
- 6) **Performance:** The project is monitored and managed on an ongoing basis through a detailed project plan with clear timeframes for delivery, which defines actions to be taken by specific members of the team, dates for completion and whether funding is required and/or has been secured for each task. As evidence of the project's impact, Neighbourhood Management contracts the Priory Research Services to conduct ongoing assessment and analysis of the various Grey 2 Green projects and their various phases.

Does the service support the objectives as per SCS?

- 1) **Building Safe, Strong and Cohesive communities where diversity is valued:** Grey 2 Green promotes active neighbourhood / community participation through supporting local people to identify local environmental issues, develop and take part in the work undertaken, and to develop ownership and a sense of pride in their area. It also enables community members to work alongside each other to address common local issues, thus building a stronger sense of community.
- 2) **Promoting health and wellbeing and tackling inequalities:** As a Neighbourhood Management initiative, Grey 2 Green is aimed in the six most deprived Lower Super Output Areas as recognised by the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Through supporting local people to take an active part in their community the project contributes towards the general wellbeing of the community and supports members from diverse backgrounds to work together to achieve a mutual goal.
- 4) **Protecting and enhancing the local environment and tackling climate change:** As the project is aimed at local, small-scale, environmental improvements, it directly addresses this objective
- 5) **Promoting a flourishing economy and enterprise and prosperity for all:** Grey 2 Green promotes community led regeneration in the Borough, along with effective partnership working between service providers and agencies

6) **Encouraging learning and personal development:** The project encourages local people to become involved in environmental regeneration, which involves the acquisition of skills, along with an insight into the mechanisms involved in delivering environmental projects achieved through inter-agency partnership working

VFM Judgement

The Swirle's Place project described in this analysis was delivered over a period of 15 months, at a total cost of £18583-32. When assessing the achievements of the project, which includes environmental improvements, enhanced community empowerment and cohesion, community development and supporting local people to become more involved in local decision making, in relation to the costs involved, it can be said that the project has provided a good level of efficiency and effectiveness. The project directly supports the 6 corporate priorities of the Council and the 5 objectives of the SCS. The VFM judgement is enhanced when considered alongside the multiple deprivation challenges that are presented by the target geographic area.

Does this project provide an example of Participatory Budgeting?

The project is 100% community led, which includes local residents working with a highly skilled and community-minded Landscape Architect and Environmental Specialist to develop plans and related costings, which guides the overall project delivery and the work done by the various agencies involved with the project. Financial projections and performance are monitored by the Neighbourhood Management Board, which comprises of more than 50% local residents, and includes two elected members.

VFM: Next Steps

The project needs to be compared against a comparable service, such as those provided regionally (and applied locally) by the DWP.

Resource Implications

As Swirle's Place is a completed Grey 2 Green scheme, the resource implications for this project is very low, mainly involving staff time related to supporting local residents with the ongoing maintenance of the site. Future Grey 2 Green projects are reliant on a resource breakdown similar to that provided in this analysis, with a variation in terms of capital costs, which is dependant on the unique nature of each scheme.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the findings show that the schemes have in general met with support from local residents. As with projects of this nature, it is difficult to ensure that all community members are able to participate, as some may choose not to be involved. Additionally, there will always be those who are sceptical about the aims of the project, and display a level of cynicism about what is being achieved. However, there is evidence, from the consultations carried out with local residents, that the schemes have achieved many of their aims, particularly in terms of community involvement. As the quote from a local resident highlights:

*“Yes it is (a good idea), as it benefits the residents, as it is what they want.
What they are trying to achieve is a good thing”*

It is also heartening to note that some resident’s perceptions about potential negative aspects of the scheme (i.e. vandalism / anti social behaviour) had not materialised at the time of writing. This was a major concern for some residents, and further evidences the positive impact of the schemes.

For example, during the planning stage and implementation stage, residents had suggested that plants would be destroyed within a week. However, this has not been the case.

At the start of the project, one resident had a backyard full of rubbish. There was a ‘clear-up day’ where residents were able get their rubbish taken away. Since then, a resident has contacted a member of the Grey 2 Green team to find out if the team could arrange another clear-up day. This shows that residents are more aware of services that are available to them and that they are taking responsibility to try to keep the area tidy.

A key feature of the schemes is that they have enabled areas to be prioritised that would not normally be given Council priorities. The Council’s spending on areas is often based on safety issues. It is of note that these schemes have

been completed and have enhanced the areas that probably would not have been achieved, as the areas were not classed as unsafe. For example, Fox's Passage has enabled improved aesthetics that would not usually be prioritised. This work would not have been completed until a couple of years ahead. However, regular inspections of pathways are carried out to see whether they need to be maintained on safety grounds.

Future developments

The final phase of the Grey 2 Green project is 'sustainability' for which a separate report will be produced. It would be wrong to think of the implementation of the schemes as the final phase. This could have longer-term implications when looking at the sustainability of the project in terms of the maintenance of the schemes. This phase has been suggested to be very important by the Grey 2 Green Co-ordinator, and this has been validated by a comment (taken from the Phase 2 report) by the GYBC Environmental Service Manager when talking about the future involvement of GYBC in projects like Grey 2 Green in terms of community involvement.

It was suggested that GYBC would be interested in being involved in these sorts of projects in the future.

"Very keen to work with communities. My line manager is involved with going to meetings. I think that this is the way that things are going. Spending money where people want it. Presently, developments are made when there is a need to improve safety, so there will be a limit to what we can 'chip into this'."

However, it was also suggested that this would be dependant on practicalities such as sustainability and maintenance of the projects and it was suggested that:

“Community groups would have to show sustainability after the implementation stages.”¹

It is true to say that some residents are more engaged than others. The majority of residents in the areas know of the level of resident involvement in the area. A level of responsibility and ownership is already being taken. For example, individuals have been actively trying to maintain the areas, flower beds have been hoed etc. A resident has bought a litter picker and used to clean up. There is also scope for asset management training for residents.

Community champions have helped towards sustainability and levels of engagement, as they have helped by providing regular updates at community partnership meetings.

A group of young people (Sunshine Crew) have been involved with the organisation, advertisement and activities of a planting day to help improve the physical environment. This was co-ordinated with GYBS and assisted with planting.

It is seen that the community energies generated by the physical transformation of local environments could be engaged to help sustain the developments. The Grey 2 Green Co-ordinator suggested that to do this it that community events would be organised around the annual cycle of plants. For example, pruning and celebrations when the flowers bloom. It has been predicted that the residents involved in the local schemes will need to be supported for the first year, to raise community awareness and levels of education, helping to sustain the physical transformation.

For this year, it is suggested that the 3 individuals who will be needed in this sustainability phase are: Technical Officer, Environmental Specialised and the Community Development Worker (CDW). The CDW will be responsible for supporting residents to set up events and to access the resources available to

¹ Grey to Green: Phase 2, Community Planning. Priory Research Services, 2008.

purchase items such as equipment and refreshments to help to maintain each scheme. The role of the Environmental Specialist is to promote the relevant expertise to the residents when maintaining the schemes, for example letting the community know who they need to contact when the grass needs cutting. It is the role of the Technical Officer to work with the community to build a maintenance schedule based on the annual cycle of plants in the area.

It has been suggested to be important for residents to take ownership of the project at this point, if not, residents' enthusiasm may disappear and end up the same as other projects. If residents reach the level of ownership and responsibility for the project aimed, this would ultimately lead to the Grey 2 Green team being made redundant within each scheme in the sustainability phase.

It was originally envisaged that the project would have 6 completed schemes and 3 nearly completed schemes by March 2008. The Cleaner and Greener Working Group had to amend this during the programme due to expected funding not being fully available:

“Adapting targets to realistic expectations around CSG funds not being readily available in SSCF designated areas” (Neighbourhood Manager)

It was perceived that some funding for the Cleaner and Greener programme had been spent in areas that were not designated SSCF areas, and this had led to a lack of funds to enable the proposed number of completed schemes.

Outcomes

As well as the creation of three green spaces, there were a number of key outcomes, which add value to the levels of community participation in the Grey 2 Green scheme:

- Community Planting day

- Community volunteer (photographer) helping with the engagement process in future schemes
- Residents have become more involved in working groups of the ComeUnity programme. Helping to shape the delivery of Crime and Safety, Cleaner and greener provision.
- Residents have accessed more services to address more issues such as drug and alcohol problems.
- Making connections with local community organisations and officers in the GYBC, leading to improved communication.

One resident has volunteered as a photographer for other schemes. It is suggested that residents that have been involved in schemes will be able to become involved with new schemes, as a way to inform residents at the new schemes.

The Grey 2 Green Co-ordinator has suggested that his idealistic vision for the schemes is that as knowledge grows a 'critical mass' of individuals will be reached and everyone will be aware of it. This will enable the schemes to be truly representative of the community in which they are developed.

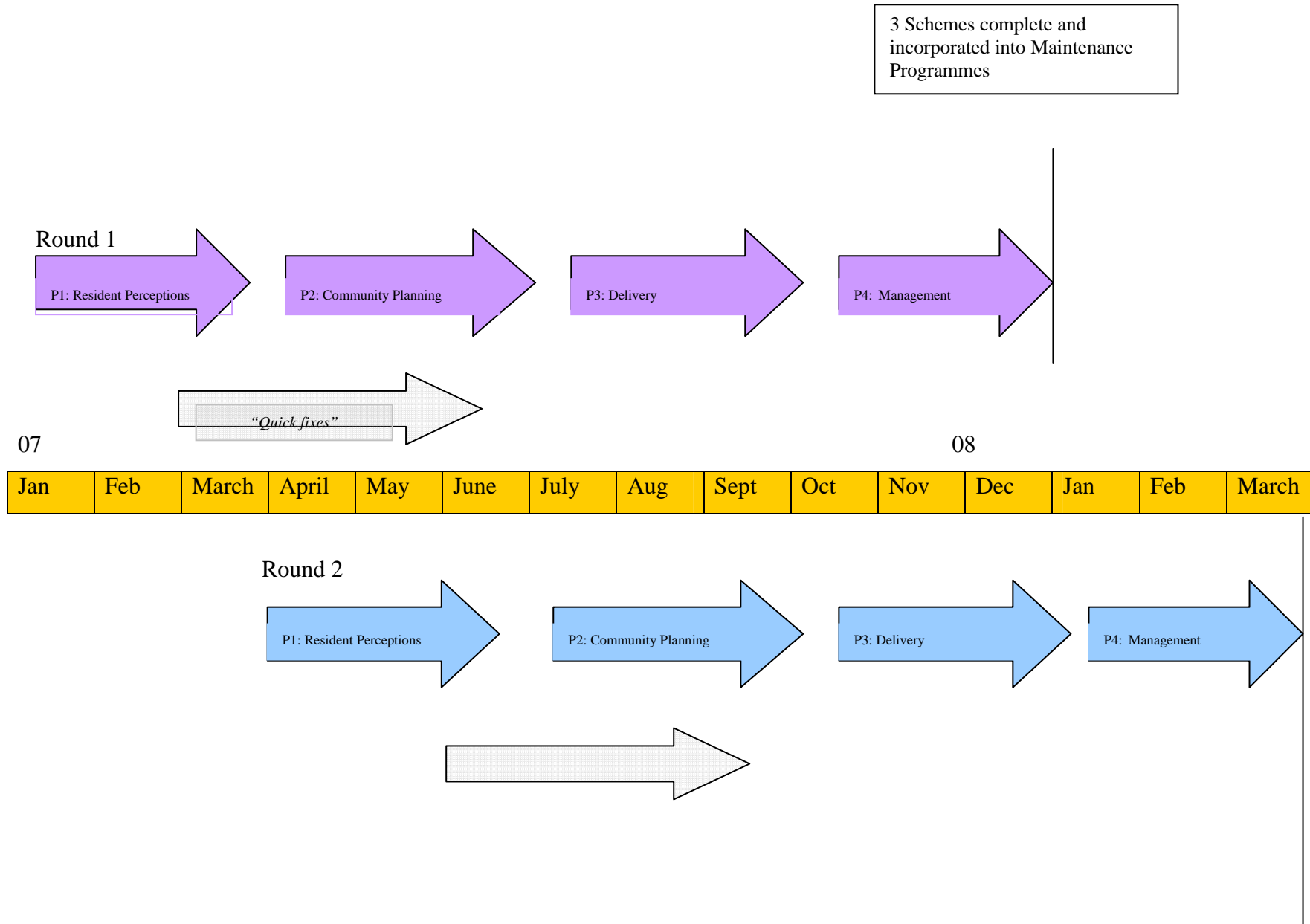
6. Recommendations

The following information should not necessarily be considered as a list of recommendations, as each project was very individual. However, there were a number of aspects which residents felt could have been done differently. Some of these may be applicable to future projects.

- Co-ordination of different aspects of the physical delivery. E.g. resurface Lancaster square where 2 bollards. Could have been re-ordered in order to ensure a high quality finish.
- Getting providers to understand the aims of the project (to make areas greener), vehicles were parked and driven over grassy areas leaving in uneven and churned up without grass.
- It was suggested that a Grey 2 Green notice board could be put in the areas where a scheme is to start. The board could display the aims, contact numbers with photographs of the team and updates of the project. It was also suggested that ID badges for the Grey 2 Green team would be used.
- There has been a suggested need for accounting for time to be made tighter and to formalise the communication process. The methodology of the project has evolved through need as the project progresses. A review meeting has occurred and a matrix has been drawn up to formalise each stage of the project.
- It was suggested that sub-contractors who implement the developments in the area should be briefed around the background of the project in terms of the level of involvement of the community. This was seen to be particularly important as on occasions such as mentioned in the report (workmen attempting to change plan to make cheaper, and easier to maintain).

- Ordering of tasks – e.g. lamp posts and re-surfacing the pavements
- Lead in time to be increased. It could help to have a forward plan / programme of schemes that will be worked on, maybe enable issues and budgets to be looked at in prior to project.
- One lead person / contact whose role it is to tie everything together. If there was one person that controls the scheme (a main contact) to be able to contact about the 'nitty gritty'.

Appendix 1 - Timescale



Milestones

March 07: EV23 Complete, with first three schemes ready to start the Community Planning phase.

April 07: Any “quick fixes” delivered for round 1. Round 2 begins.

March 08: 6 schemes delivered, 3 more nearing completion. 6 active community groups involved in process.

