

# The Value of Parks and Greenspaces

## Quality Up

Liverpool now has 17 Green Flags making it one of the best performing local authorities in the country. Green Flags are a measure of the quality and management of parks. A new Flag was awarded in 2010 to Stanley Park. (*Green Flag Awards*)



## Visits Up

Visits have risen to over 28 million per year, an increase of 437,000 in one year. Parks are Liverpool's most used leisure and cultural resource, used by 90% of the population every year. 67% use Parks and Greenspaces once a month or more. (*Place Survey 2009*)



## Satisfaction Up

Liverpool residents have given the 'thumbs up' to Parks, with satisfaction levels rising to 71.2% (well above the Core City average of 68%). (*Place Survey 2009*)

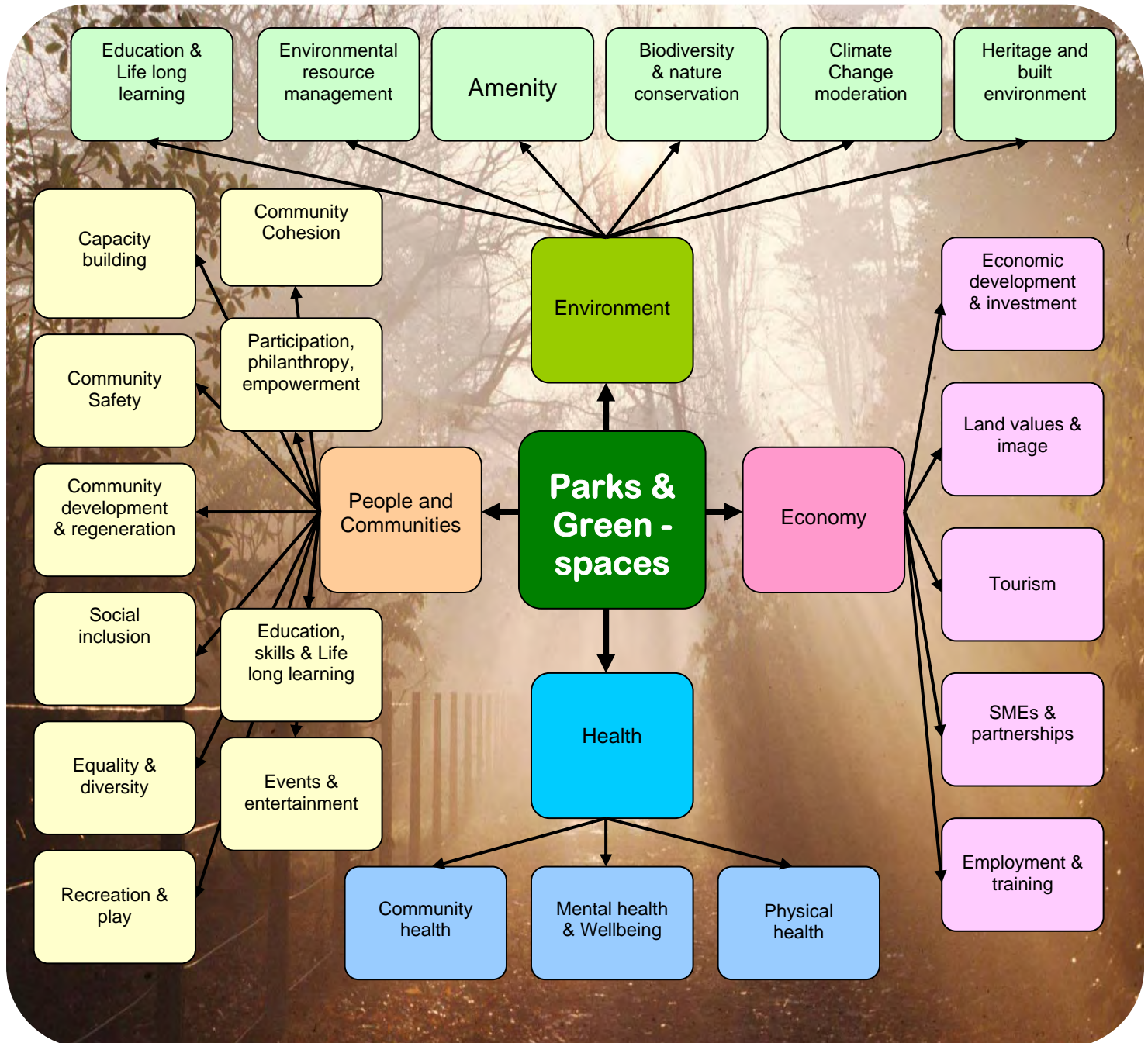
Children's satisfaction levels with Parks and Playgrounds rose 3.7% to 57% in 2009, 5.1% above the NW average. (*Tellus4 Survey 2009*)



## Valuing our parks

Traditionally, the value of parks, particularly their economic value, has not been estimated and thus the cost of failing to maintain these assets has not been fully considered. All the City's assets – bricks and mortar, intellectual property, institutions, social networks – must be maintained or they will deteriorate. Our parks are no exception. Continued investment brings benefits – with a social, cultural and environmental value as well as economic returns.

## Parks – what they deliver for the City



An illustration of the network of links and benefits that Parks and Greenspaces bring to Liverpool.

## Environment

### Environment

Parks protect and conserve biodiversity. They play a vital role in keeping our air and water clean, counteracting the damaging effects of pollution. Parks offer refuges for threatened species and buffers against the impacts of climate change. Liverpool's green infrastructure has taken on a new, significant role in creating a pleasant environment in the future.

## Economy

### Economy

Neighbourhood, city and regional economies benefit significantly from parks. They stimulate the recreation and tourism industries, and are significant sources of employment for local communities with a range of associated economic benefits.

## Health

### Health

Parks are inspiring and pleasant places to exercise and improve physical and mental wellbeing for today's sedentary society that is more vulnerable to stress, mental health issues and obesity than ever before.

## People and Communities

### People and Communities

Parks are places to meet and celebrate with family and friends. They are inclusive and accessible. They are venues for community festivals, events and sporting activities. Parks are the scene of excitement, refreshment, relaxation and solitude. Parks form a significant part of our cultural heritage, with features marking the history of Liverpool from the first settlements here in late Neolithic times.

## Environment

*Parks are the places people visit to get close to nature. Large healthy parks provide safe havens for species by protecting vital habitat and helping them retain their natural resilience to climatic changes.*

### Biodiversity & Nature Conservation

Many city parks conserve what is left of our dwindling urban biodiversity, with measures in place to conserve valuable areas, increase biodiversity and incorporate viable wildlife habitats into new developments.

### Storing carbon

Parks are significant assets in the fight against climate change. They contain large areas of woodland which remove carbon dioxide (the most abundant greenhouse gas) from the atmosphere and store it for generations.



## Maintaining clean air and water

Vegetation cleans and filters water, traps sediment, recycles nutrients, stabilises slopes and slows runoff to improve the quality of water in our rivers streams and lakes and reduces flooding. Without the large expanses of greenspace to buffer water movement the costs of flood mitigation would skyrocket.



“Air quality, as expected, is higher in wards with more green spaces”  
*GLA 2002*

“The Green Belt’s continued protection may have benefits as a large open area acting as a storage basin, for example Croxteth Park acting as a storage basin for the River Alt and to ensure levels of surface water run-off is not increased.”

*Liverpool City Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2008*

Trees act as the ‘green lungs’ of our cities and towns. Their leaves naturally filter the air by stabilising dust and absorbing pollutants. There is an established link between particulate air pollution and poor health, so Liverpool’s trees can be said to benefit every person in the City, not just those that visit parks.

*Urban woodlands: their role in reducing the effects of particulate pollution*  
*K. P. Beckett, P. H. Freer-Smith and G. Taylor, Environmental Pollution 1998*

## Cooling our cities

The green spaces in urban areas break up reflected heat from hard surfaces to bring a cooling effect. Through the shade they provide, trees can buffer buildings from excessive heat and reduce energy consumption and the costs of air-conditioning. This is an effect that can save lives.



The exceptional summer heatwave of 2003 contributed to 1,800 heat related deaths in the UK. An extra 10% green infrastructure (particularly from trees) can reduce the urban heat island effect by 3 deg C. (Similarly a loss of 10% would ensure many more heat related deaths in hot summers)

*Urban trees and their role in adapting for climate change. Dr Susannah Gill, The Mersey Forest.*

## Economy

*Parks bring measurable direct and flow-on economic benefits to local, regional and national economies. These economic benefits enable communities to function and prosper, allowing them to build social cohesion, social capital and healthy communities.*

The importance of parks to economic growth and wellbeing cannot be overstated. Parks contribute directly to the local and regional economy through tourism, employment (on and off parks) and expenditure on park management and services. Parks are also an asset that encourage inward investment to the City, raise property values and encourage private and public sector investment in services and facilities.

Their value is difficult to quantify as access to Parks is free to all and much of the financial return they bring is derived indirectly, with financial benefits passed on to local neighbourhoods, increasing the perceived value of the City to potential investors, or expressed as savings that boost local economies and agencies.

The Health is Wealth Commission report (2008), in its chapter 'Beyond the Built Environment: Designing for Health' made recommendations to develop additional sources of public and private investment as well as revenue income from concessions and complementary commercial activity. It used Central Park in New York as good example of integrating business and amenity. Analysis of 'commercial' use of Parks shows that a number of businesses depend on, or are linked with, Parks and Greenspaces, although not at present to the same extent as the Central Park model.

Parks are a not just a hub for communities but for business too. The businesses using Parks enhance the facilities of the Park, providing an extra service, along with employment. These businesses have a vested interest in the quality and condition of the Park and are perceived by the public as an extra amenity alongside those financed by the Council. The lease/rental income they generate helps support the City's coffers, providing a public amenity without being a burden on the council tax payer.

The extra facilities and events provided in Parks bring new visitors from different backgrounds to the Parks and extend their appeal. Some draw in tourists from outside the City, so making a valuable contribution to the local economy well beyond the Park boundary

Parks directly employ staff, provide jobs indirectly through Joint Venture partnerships and generate local and regional economic activity through events, supplies, maintenance, etc. Visitors spend money in Parks on entrance fees, souvenirs, food, refreshments, event tickets and charges for services. A significant income also 'flows on' to organisations and businesses associated with Parks. Some businesses contribute to the Parks and Greenspaces 'bottom line' through leases, ground rental fees and other payments, creating a significant income for Parks and Greenspaces.

"Parks and open spaces contribute substantially to London's marketing image and may have an important role in encouraging inward investment"  
(GLA, 2002).

Other businesses are beneficiaries indirectly, with tourism and leisure being helped by the presence of parks. Pictures of our historic greenspaces feature in virtually every tourism promotion of the City - there is a presentation on Liverpool's Park heritage continually showing at the Shanghai Expo 2010.

Restaurants and shops at the edge of Parks benefit from the footfall but the influence of greenspace goes much wider – for example if it wasn't for the opportunity to fish in park lakes, it is doubtful that as many five angling shops in Liverpool would prosper.

Overall, Parks do cost money to manage but generate a significant economic benefit. More than this, they create real savings.

## Enhancing property values

Urban parks also have clear economic values. Proximity and park views add to the residential value of a home.

Eminent US researcher Dr John Crompton has concluded that neighbouring an urban park can add 20% to house values, creating a genuine financial offset to the cost of not developing park space as residential space.

"A view of a park was shown to raise house prices by 8 per cent, and having a park nearby by 6 per cent."

*The Value of Public Space, CABI Space*

## Areas of Interest to Prospective Purchasers

### High Demand

Local estate agents identify the following locations within Liverpool as areas of high demand, which are considered particularly 'attractive' locations by prospective home-buyers and the rental market.

#### Suburban Core (South Liverpool)

.... suburbs of Allerton, Woolton, Mossley Hill, Gateacre and Childwall. These areas are popular with families who are attracted by the low-density semi-detached and detached properties, the availability of open space, the schools, churches and local amenities, the general environmental quality and affluence of the area, and the low crime rate..... Residential property close to the Calderstones Park area is also very popular.

### Moderate Demand

#### Eastern Fringe

.... West Derby is one of the main locations within the eastern belt, and is moderately popular, ... Local estate agents reported that there is particular demand for residential property in the area around Croxteth Country Park.

*Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment  
Liverpool City Council*

In Liverpool, Broseley Homes (later Persimmon) took the opportunity to benefit from the development's proximity to Croxteth Hall to name their development 'Croxteth Country Park', capitalising on the cachet the name gave. The estate was developed to become the second largest private housing development in Europe, boosting the City's population through 4,000 new homes.

## Caring for our Greenspace

Liverpool's Joint Venture partners look after the greenspace of the City to a high standard (16 Green Flag Awards). Quality of maintenance and diversity of provision are the key factors in attaining high satisfaction levels from the community. High quality greenspace has a much greater leisure, recreational and health value and is much more highly valued by local communities. As a consequence respect for the resource is generated and anti-social behaviour diminishes.

## Investing in our future, times seven

Parks and Greenspaces have successfully attracted external funding for investment in the future of Parks.

Parks recently attracted investment to Liverpool for Stanley Park, Sefton Park, Otterspool Promenade and Playbuilder (playground regeneration) totalling over £24.85M (94 % from external funding). A further 40 parks citywide are benefiting from a £4.75M investment programme.

Each of these has also produced employment and stimulated the economy, with varied industries gaining benefits from the initial consultation stages to design and construction, through to subsequent enhanced use. Shorter term employment during the earlier stages has been succeeded by a legacy of greater use, employment and a regenerative effect for surrounding areas.

This considerable investment can be expected to have long lasting beneficial effects to neighbourhoods and the City as a whole, continuing after the construction work has been completed. The benefits will spread beyond the parks, as recent studies have shown that Social Return on Investment in greenspace (SROI) generates a sevenfold return.

## Businesses generating employment and income

'Flow-on' economic benefits, boosting the local economy indirectly. These are listed below, broadly divided into categories.

### Health is Wealth

Liverpool Bootcamps (Sefton Park) - Keep Fit classes  
British Military Fitness (Calderstones Park, Sefton Park) - Keep Fit classes  
Fitness Junkies (Stanley Park) - Keep Fit classes  
Lee Siemaszko Personal Training (Sefton Park, Calderstones Park, Wavertree Mystery Park, Croxteth Park, Camp Hill and Clarkes Gardens) - Keep Fit classes  
Jungle Parc (Croxteth Hall & Country Park) - Aerial adventure, rope swings – also a tourist attraction  
Croxteth Park Riding Centre (Croxteth Hall & Country Park) - Horse-riding tuition and also Pony Club for children.

### Additional Facilities in Parks

Dog walking businesses – there are approximately seven businesses specifically offering dog walking services in Liverpool Parks.  
Wheelers Horse drawn bus rides and donkey rides – Croxteth Hall and Country Park (seasonal additional attraction)

### Cafes and refreshments

Sefton Park (Café and Boathouse kiosk)  
Sefton Park Palm House – refreshments at events (see also Functions, Weddings, Event venues)  
Croxteth Hall & Country Park – Old Riding School Café  
Calderstones Park - Cafe  
Ice Cream Van Concessions – Otterspool Park, Calderstones Park, Croxteth Hall & Country Park (etc?)  
Isla Gladstone Conservatory - Café/Bistro – Stanley Park (see also Functions, Weddings, Event venues)

### Functions, Weddings, Event venues

Sefton Park Palm House – weddings, functions, events  
Isla Gladstone Conservatory – weddings, functions, events

Each of these run an extensive entertainment and events programme, developing community use alongside more commercial events.

NB Croxteth Hall & Country Park offers a similar service, provided in-house by Parks and Greenspaces.

## Events in Parks – Sport, Arts, Theatre Music, etc

In addition to the buildings above, Parks are extensively used for events by commercial operators. In addition to the performance/event there will be associated employment and income generation for catering concessions, equipment hire, public address, stewarding, etc.

Event bookings (eg Food and Drink Festival, Theatre in the Park, In the Night Garden, Africa Oye, Sporting events, etc)

International Tennis Tournament

Sporting Events – Women’s 10K Road Race, etc

Circuses

Story tellers – Croxteth

Theatre Companies – Murder Mystery Nights, Ghost events – Croxteth

Paranormal investigators - Croxteth

Re-enactors – Croxteth

Market stall holders - Croxteth

Wedding planners, photographers, caterers

Conference organisers, caterers

Artists – Calderstones Gallery

Film production – location venue

Musicians – performers at events (Palm House)

Haunted Liverpool Ghost Walks

## Tourism

Tourism’s contribution to Liverpool economy is over £600M (2008).

Parks play a significant part through their heritage interest, as an Events venue and as part of the ‘Natural Economy’ – a tourism driver for the NWDA.

Visions of developing Liverpool as a major tourist city like Barcelona could draw comparisons with the marketing and popularity of Park Guell, which attracts several hundred thousand visits every year (and was designed as an ‘English style park’). Several Liverpool Parks have potential to be marketed in similar fashion.



Park Guell

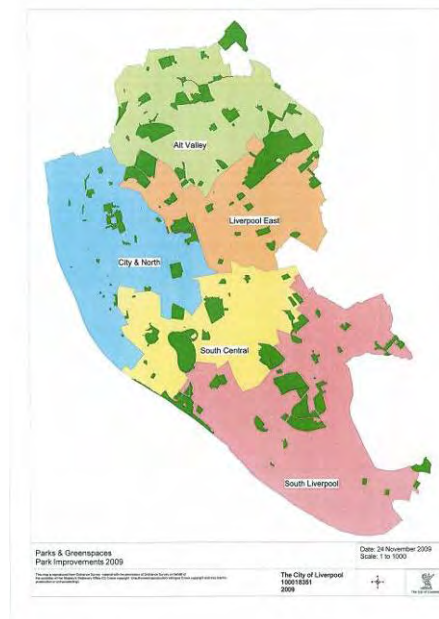


Croxteth Country Park, Stanley Park, Sefton Park and St John’s Gardens

## Businesses doing business with Parks

Many companies across Liverpool do business with Parks and Greenspaces, as suppliers, consultants, maintenance operatives, agencies, etc.

Waste management Companies  
Oil suppliers  
Trainers for staff training  
Machinery maintenance & supply  
Vehicle fleet maintenance  
Boiler maintenance  
Repairs, joiners, etc  
Photocopiers  
Environment Agency  
DEFRA  
Vets  
Farriers  
Agric contractors  
Feed suppliers  
Consultants  
Undertakers  
Other LCC depts – finance, licensing, ICT,  
Tourism depts, TIC's  
... and many other suppliers



## Health

*Contact with nature enriches our psychological, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Parks are places of adventure and challenge, exercise, peace and quiet, recreation, gathering and relaxation. In them, we find a sense of enjoyment, strong community spirit and wonder in nature. Parks offer a range of recreation activities to bring families and friends together in appealing places.*

### Healthy Parks, Healthy People

“The quality of public spaces and in particular access to appropriate, high quality green space is crucially important for health and wellbeing”.  
“The annual cost of ill-health to the City-region’s economy is approximately £2 billion”.

*Health is Wealth 2008*



In 2010, Parks and Greenspaces were adopted as a workstream for Liverpool’s Year of Health and Wellbeing, recognition of the part they continue to play in improving community health. The value of Parks in ‘preventive medicine’ is difficult to calculate as their benefit

comes from indirect savings, rather than as expenditure by the NHS. However research back in 2004 has shown for Liverpool that provision of Parks and Greenspaces makes potential annual cost savings of:

### **£3,092,000 contribution to the local economy, including £641,000 to the NHS**

*Dr William Bird (Natural Fit report, 2004)*

The health benefits of parks and greenspaces are now widely recognised – perhaps no more so than in the commitment to re-build Alder Hey Hospital as Alder Hey Children's Health Park, a £288M investment.

"Hospitals are not just buildings; they are places to foster healing and wellbeing. The natural environment is not merely the setting for our new hospital: it is part of its essential character and function."

"The Park is not just a green backdrop for a new hospital; it will be a vibrant living place and an essential component in the integrated vision for the Alder Hey Children's Health Park".

*Alder Hey*

## **Improving physical health**

The huge variety of spaces in parks, with traffic free paths, mown grassland, 'wild areas' and formal gardens encourage all forms of exercise. Parks are places for organised and casual sport and exercise, from football to Tai Chi. Their play spaces and outdoor activity areas build up children's and young people's wellbeing but also provide opportunities for all ages to take exercise, from a gentle stroll to a strenuous workout.

Recent research has found that natural environments offer low-cost preventative and remedial opportunities for public health. Good health initiatives are now understood to be crucial in controlling healthcare costs and Liverpool is investing in programmes to promote healthier lifestyles. Parks are pleasant and accessible settings for combating the effects of our increasingly sedentary lifestyles, such as obesity, high blood pressure and depression. Our parks are alive every day with people jogging, walking, cycling and even working with personal trainers.

A major part of the push to improve community health in Liverpool involves attempting people to adopt healthier lifestyles – this form of 'preventive medicine' is cost effective compared to drug or other therapies. Parks are seen to be key locations for improving physical and mental wellbeing.

Increased use of open space for physical activity - 74% of physical activity project beneficiaries self report that they now make more use of the outdoors whilst doing physical activity.

*Target: Wellbeing report, North West Public Health Observatory (NWPHO) and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan).*

In 2010 there are scheduled to be over 950 Walking for Health and Cycle for Health events in Liverpool Parks, encouraging thousands of people to adopt more active lifestyles in a pleasant environment.



## Enhancing mental health and wellbeing

Recent studies on nature-based or 'ecotherapy' interventions in mainstream medical treatment have shown that they help speed recovery, reduce prescription drug dependency and lower nursing support. Ecotherapy is emerging in the western world as a clinically valued treatment option. In Liverpool, Parks and Greenspaces are working closely with the Primary Care Trust to develop a social prescribing system for improved health, drawing together 'non-medical' agencies to improve community health.

Explore the opportunities through a multi-agency group to identify the impact of the development of a social prescribing model at a neighbourhood level to promote mental wellbeing and ameliorate exclusion and mental illness.

Factors that have the greatest effect on people's health often lie outside and beyond the control of the health sector.

All programmes are supported by wide partnerships and are nationally and in some cases internationally recognised for the excellent work being undertaken.

*Understanding Liverpool better - The Joint Director of Public Health Annual Report 2008-2009*

## People and Communities

*In parks, families and friends can come together to have fun, celebrate important occasions or just relax and take time out. This immense social value is part of the 'glue' of a healthy society.*

### Bringing people together

In Liverpool thousands of people are brought together in parks every year.

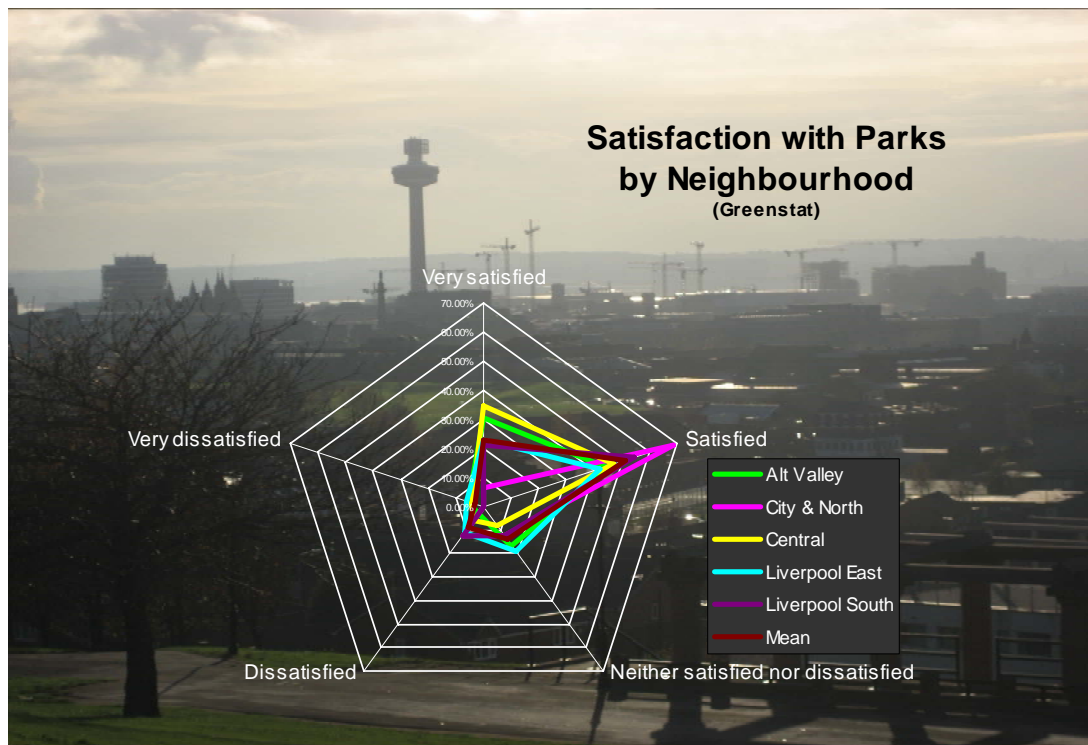
More than 30 Parks have direct links to community and Friends groups. Their voluntary involvement in decision-making directly improves community empowerment and wellbeing.

### Five More Years

3418 hours were contributed by volunteers in 2009 through Heritage Guiding and Education and 4231 hours worth of volunteer activity in the Local Nature Reserves. That's 7649 hours, equivalent to a FTE contribution of nearly 5 years work (4.97 years, based on 220 days worked p.a., 7hour days).



## Developing Communities



The Discover Parks events programme brought 35,512 people together in 2009/10, for 641 events.

People can learn from formal interpretation event programmes run in parks and incidentally through brochures, signage or casual observation. School groups use parks for a broad range of environmental education activities.

Educational visits to Parks increased to 35,970 in 2009/10, up 34% in two years.

21 Apprentices are employed working in Parks & Greenspaces, the highest in the sector for any Core City.



Wards with a large amount of green space have better educational performance. The spatial patterns shown by educational performance and green spaces suggest that a high percentage of students aged 10 who score less than level 4 are in wards with lower percentages of green space.

(GLA, 2002).

## Participation

Many community groups, clubs and organisations use parks on a regular basis, using green space as a facility to develop their interests. These stakeholder groups from the community benefit from the availability of local greenspace.

Friends Groups, over 30 around the City  
Bowling Clubs: Sefton Park Bowling Club, Harthill Mens Bowling Club, Harthill Ladies Bowling Club, Garston Ladies Bowling Club, Belvidere Bowling Club, Calderstones Bowling Club and Calderstones Ladies Bowling Club  
Croxteth Hall Garden Society  
MET  
Merseyside Outdoor Activity Centre  
Woolton Village Residents Association  
Palm House Trust  
ABCC  
Stanley, Sefton, Newsham Stakeholders Groups  
Kite Flyers  
Get Hooked on Fishing  
Woodturners  
Beekeepers  
Art Groups  
Churches (eg, Our Lady of St Nicholas)  
Sports events participants (eg Womens 10K run – 3,000 participants in 2010)  
Healthy Walks, Cycling  
Friends forum meetings – strengthening communities  
Extended groups  
NHS – Active Parks programmes  
Arts – bluecoat, biennial, theatre in Parks  
Liverpool Museum  
Merseyside Archaeology Society  
Sefton Park Cricket Club  
Running clubs  
Rare Breeds Survival Trust  
Croxteth Heritage Volunteers  
Walton Model Boat Club  
Merseyside Live Steam and Model Engineering Society  
Liverpool Nature Conservation volunteers  
Merseyside Orienteering Club

## Place Survey Calculations

The Place Survey asked a representative cross section of residents' questions about their use of facilities and satisfaction with local authority services.

Park use figures were calculated on the basis of the responses, related to the percentage of the population they represented. So, if 24% of the population used the Park 'about once a month', this is equivalent to 107,040 people (from a population of 446,000) visiting 12 times a year, or 12,84,480 visits.

### 2008 figures (Place Survey)

	Use	Almost every day	At least once a week	About once a month	Within the last six months	Within the last year	Longer	Never used	
Population of City	%	12	31	24	18	6	5	5	
446000	Equivalent	53520	138260	107040	80280	26760	22300	22300	
	Factor	365	52	12	2	1			Total attendance
	Annually	19534800	71895200	1284480	160560	26760			28196120
									(number of visits made to Parks in 1 year)
									Change 437080

## Tourism – additional information

There is evidence of considerable Park use from non residents. The Discover Parks booklet (listing events in Parks) is mailed out on request to over 2,000 addresses. Analysis of postcodes shows that roughly half of these are mailed outside Liverpool.

