

Appendix I: Potential Funding Sources

Funding source	Description	What the funding could be used for
National Lottery Heritage Fund/ National Lottery Community Fund	<p>The National Lottery is the largest community funder in the UK, supporting thousands of projects each year across their Heritage Fund and Community Fund.</p> <p>The Heritage Fund's key themes for future funding relate to protecting heritage; responding to the climate and nature crises; improving inclusion, diversity and accessibility; and the importance of financial resilience. The Community Fund look to fund projects that bring people together and build strong relationships across communities; improve the places and spaces that matter to communities; and help more people to reach their potential.</p> <p>The significance of green spaces in relation to the heritage of communities, among their other benefits, means projects concerned with their improvement speak to the objectives of both funds.</p>	Physical projects Funding the NI UGS programme
Future Parks Accelerator	Created by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, in collaboration with the National Trust and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Future Parks Accelerator aims to secure the long-term future of the UK's parks. Working with local authorities and their partners, their programme is designed to protect and develop natural resources in urban areas, and make sure quality green space is accessible for everyone, now and into the future.	Physical projects
Levelling Up Fund	<p>The Levelling Up Fund is an example of direct funding from central government. The UK government has so far allocated around £121 million of funding through the Levelling Up Fund and UK Community Ownership Fund to Northern Ireland. This investment is aimed at helping communities save local community assets; regenerate town centres and high streets; invest in cultural and heritage assets; as well as upgrading local transport.</p> <p>In February 2023 it was announced that £1.3 million in levelling up funding would be allocated to councils in Northern Ireland to enhance green spaces in their communities.</p>	Physical projects
The Community Ownership Fund	<p>The £150 million (£4.3 million for NI) Community Ownership Fund is for communities across the United Kingdom. It has been set up to help communities take ownership of assets at risk of closure. It will run for 4 years until 2024/25.</p> <p>The Community Ownership Fund is open to applications from communities to buy or take over local community assets and amenities at risk of being lost and run them as community-owned businesses.</p>	Physical projects

Funding source	Description	What the funding could be used for
Idverde Community Investment Fund	<p>The idverde Community Investment Fund aims to empower local communities to deliver projects that improve their local green space or the public realm, enhance the local environment, and boost the wellbeing of local people.</p> <p>The improvement could be better facilities (a new swing), or making it look more attractive (new plants and shrubs) or making it easier for everyone to enjoy (wheelchair access) or making it more of a home for wildlife (bug hotels).</p>	Physical projects
NI Executive	<p>The Department for Communities (DfC) is responsible for urban regeneration, and as such will play a key role in the delivery of high quality urban green space and accessibility improvements through its regeneration investment programmes.</p> <p>The Urban Villages Initiative was a headline action within the NI Executive's Together: Building a United Community (TBUC) Strategy and is overseen by the Executive Office. It is designed to improve good relations outcomes and develop thriving places where there has been a history of deprivation and community tension, and there are several examples of investment in improved urban green spaces through this initiative.¹ A continuation of the Urban Villages Initiative (or similar) is another source of potential investment.</p>	Physical projects
Local authorities	<p>Local Authority funding is limited, but it can help deliver high quality urban green spaces and improved accessibility through its everyday functions, as well as through its direct investment in capital projects.</p> <p>Local authorities could also seek to find creative ways of channelling funding from other relevant government departments (e.g. public health, police, education budgets).</p>	Physical projects
Developer contributions	<p>Along with on-site outcomes such as improvement of the public realm or the provision of open space and/or landscaping, developers should also reasonably be expected to pay for, or contribute to, the mitigation of impact and the cost of infrastructure necessitated by their development.</p> <p>Belfast City Council's Developer Contributions Framework stipulates that developments over a certain size must deliver open spaces either through provision of on-site open space, or by funding the creation of new, or improvement of existing, open spaces in the development's locality.</p>	Physical projects

¹ NI Executive Office

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Private sector	<p>Partnerships with local businesses and organisations can help to fund the establishment of new urban green spaces (especially on private land) and support maintenance.</p> <p>Companies with a presence in the region may have Corporate Social Responsibility objectives and programmes for environmental projects and initiatives, that could be directed to urban green space projects.</p> <p>As ESG becomes a priority for investors and businesses, the amount of funding for projects that deliver environmental and social benefits will likely increase.</p>	<p>Physical projects</p> <p>Research</p>
Institutions	Industry institutions such as the Landscape Institute, Urban Land Institute, Institute of Civil Engineers are potential sources of funding for research projects.	Research
Sport Northern Ireland	<p>Sport Northern Ireland is dedicated to developing people in sport, especially young people, and providing facilities for people of every age group and ability to be able to participate, enjoy and perform sport and physical activity.</p> <p>To sustain and increase participation, and improve performances in sport, Sport Northern Ireland invests in a range of projects throughout Northern Ireland.</p>	Physical projects
Community Ownership Fund	The Community Ownership Fund is a £150 million fund over 4 years to support community groups across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to take ownership of assets which are at risk of being lost to the community. It forms part of a substantial package of UK wide levelling-up interventions, helping to support recovery, build opportunity and empower communities to improve their local places.	Physical projects
Northern Ireland's Comic Relief Local Communities Programme	Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 are available for projects which will empower local people, enabling them to create lasting change in their communities.	<p>Physical projects</p> <p>Capacity building</p>
The Community Foundation Northern Ireland	The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland is a local, independent charitable foundation. They help communities in need, drive social change and change lives through impactful grant making and delivering innovative programmes. One of the big issues and themes they are currently focussed on is building sustainable communities.	<p>Physical projects</p> <p>Capacity building</p>

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Voluntary and community sector involvement	Not-for-profit organisations and voluntary and community groups can contribute time and labour, raise funds and encourage community development and local ownership of urban green space.	Physical projects
Income-generating opportunities	Potential income-generating opportunities within parks/urban green spaces include shop units, café franchises, hire of pavilions for weddings, events, paid amenities (e.g. activities for children).	Physical projects
Endowments	Endowments provide long-term funding for urban green spaces from the interest gained on investments in assets such as property or the stock market. For example, the City of London Corporation manages around 4,000 hectares of green space in and around London using funding that comes primarily from historical property investments.	Physical projects
EU funding	The Peace Plus Programme provides EU funding for urban green spaces in Northern Ireland. This programme is a successor to the PEACE IV Programme, and it aims to promote peace and reconciliation, as well as economic and social stability in the region. The funding is available to a range of projects, including those focused on improving urban green spaces. To access this funding, interested parties can apply through the SEUPB website.	Physical projects
Philanthropic contributions	There are examples of urban green space projects receiving charitable contributions from foundations, citizens, private sector donors, etc. However, this is an unpredictable funding source in the long term	<p>Physical projects</p> <p>Research</p>
Crowdfunding	Through crowdfunding, projects can raise funds through the donation of small amounts from a large number of individuals. For example, MyParkScotland (https://www.mypark.scot/), is a charity raising funds for Scotland's public parks that has a crowdfunding platform where donors can support various park projects.	Physical projects
Carbon offsets or biodiversity offsets	<p>Carbon offset projects generate funds that can be used to support the creation and maintenance of urban green spaces. These funds can be used to plant trees and shrubs that will sequester carbon from the atmosphere.</p> <p>A biodiversity offset is a type of environmental offset used to compensate for the loss of biodiversity caused by development activities. When development activities such as construction or land clearing result in the destruction of habitats or ecosystems, biodiversity offsets are used to compensate for this loss by creating or restoring similar habitats or ecosystems elsewhere. This could be directed to urban green spaces.</p>	Physical projects