



# The Future Of Urban Green Spaces in NI



Northern Ireland  
**environment  
link**



National  
Trust



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# Agenda

- Welcome & House Keeping
- Paul Mullan - Project Background
- Lizzy Pinkerton - Project introduction
- Eleanor Potter - What is Future Parks Accelerator?
- Julie Proctor - Green Space Scotland's journey to date and lessons learnt
- Victoria Magreehan - Introducing feedback interactive session
- Craig McGuicken - Summing up



Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup>  
Oct 2022

# Dr Paul Mullan.

The National Lottery  
Heritage Fund  
Director for NI



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# Dr Lizzy Pinkerton.

Project Manager overseeing  
Future of Urban Green  
Spaces Project

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**environment  
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# Future of NI Urban Green Space

A collaboration between NI Environment Link and National Trust.

## Aims to explore:



Current collective understanding of urban green space and public benefit in NI



The potential for urban greenspace to play a future key role in addressing the health, climate and nature crises

## And to engage:



Co-create a vision and action plan to 2030 for the future of Northern Ireland's urban green spaces.



St Columb's Park, Derry  
Lizzy Pinkerton

# Programme Overview

This one-year project will act as a catalyst for cross sector collaboration, and will be delivered through the following work packages:

- 1 Data and mapping:** What do we know and what do the maps that tell us?
- 2 Insights and Stakeholder Opinions:** Engaging across public sector, health, business, voluntary & community sector along with public opinion.
- 3 Co-Design & Making it Happen:** Engaging stakeholders, investors & key decision makers in visioning and actions that will deliver further public benefit.



## Stakeholder engagement

Public Sector

Health Sector

VSCE Sector

Business Sector

Public insights

Work packages will be led by an appointed consultancy.

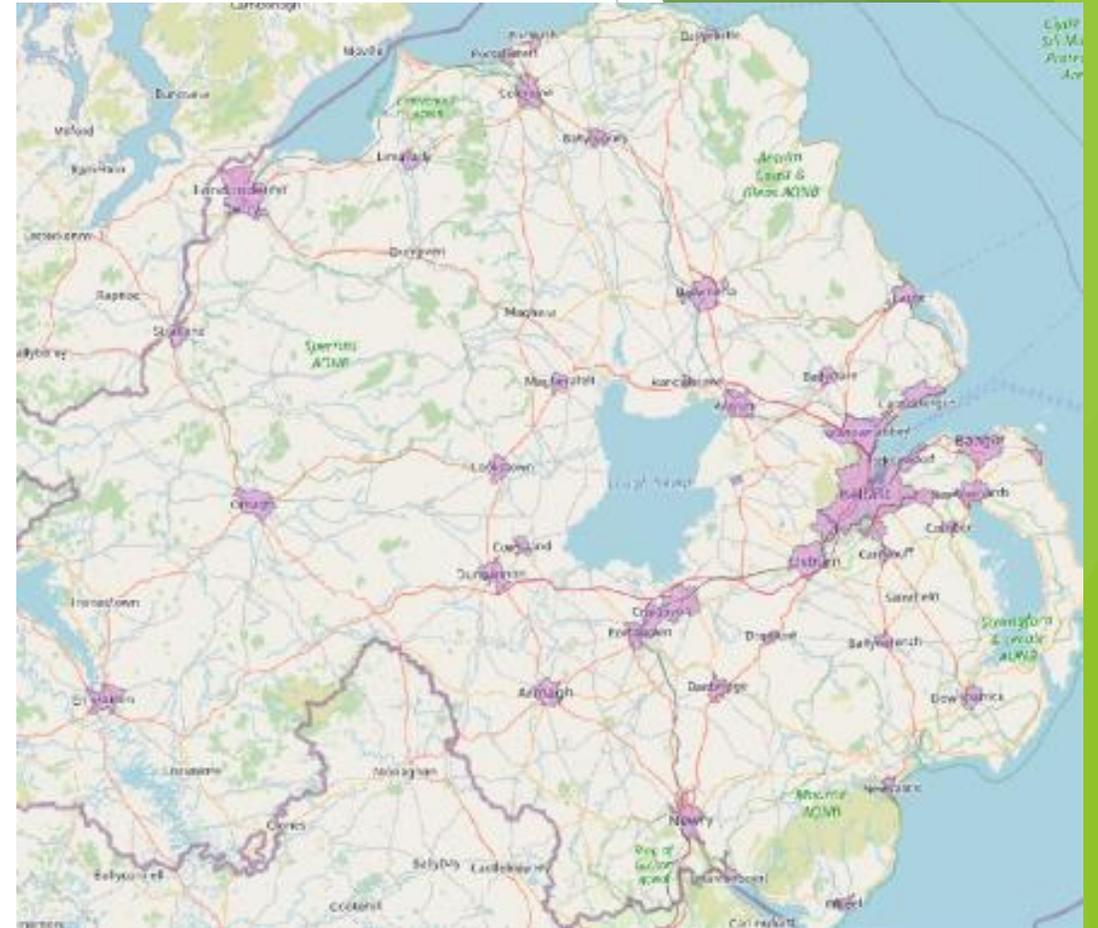
# What we mean by urban green space?

Focus on the public parks and publicly accessible urban green space of Northern Ireland (it's not about creating new parks).

By parks and urban green spaces we mean, first and foremost, *existing urban green spaces providing free access for recreation and enjoyment.*

*Definition includes, but is not limited to:*

- *Urban parks*
- *Play spaces*
- *Allotments*
- *Town Squares*
- *Cemeteries*
- *Woods*
- *Nature sites*
- *Informal green spaces*



**Urban - NISRA definition**  
Population centres of over 5,000

# Exploring with stakeholders

Our work with stakeholders will evolve as we engage and listen.

Some of the questions we'd be interested to explore include:

- What's the public benefit? In exploring this, we want to understand more about the perceived relevance of the urban green space agenda in relation to other policy frameworks such as: Community Planning; Nature's Recovery; Climate Resilience; Green Growth; Urban Regeneration; Public Health; Levelling Up
- What does Access to nature and urban green spaces mean to people living in NI's urban environments? What do they want to see happen?
- What do local leaders need to deliver a game-changing vision for urban greenspace?
- Who needs to work together and how might that look?
- What policy or investment mechanisms need to be enacted (what are the barriers)?
- Where are the biggest potential areas for investment for multiple long-term benefits? What delivery models could/should we test early in the next phase? What's the current capacity and capability?



View over Belfast City from Divis  
*National Trust Images*

# Programme Outputs

Findings will be brought together into **a vision, route map report and action plan**, co-designed with leaders and stakeholders through online workshopping.

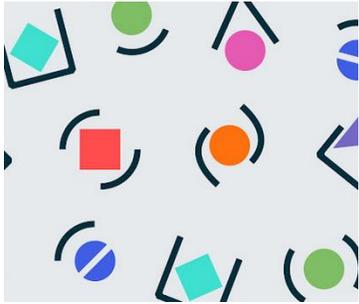
**An emerging Partnership Structure** to drive the delivery of the route map.

An internal report for NLHF, NT and NIEL will set out co-designed principles and **identify areas for an innovation/investment programme** for Northern Ireland.



Castle Park, Bangor  
Victoria Magreehan

# Consultants Team



## Useful Projects

Jo Dobson

Laetitia Pancrazi

Ben Long

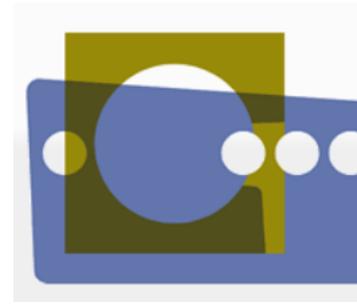


## Periscope

Kirsty Badenoch

Sandy Rompotiyoke

Piotr Kruk



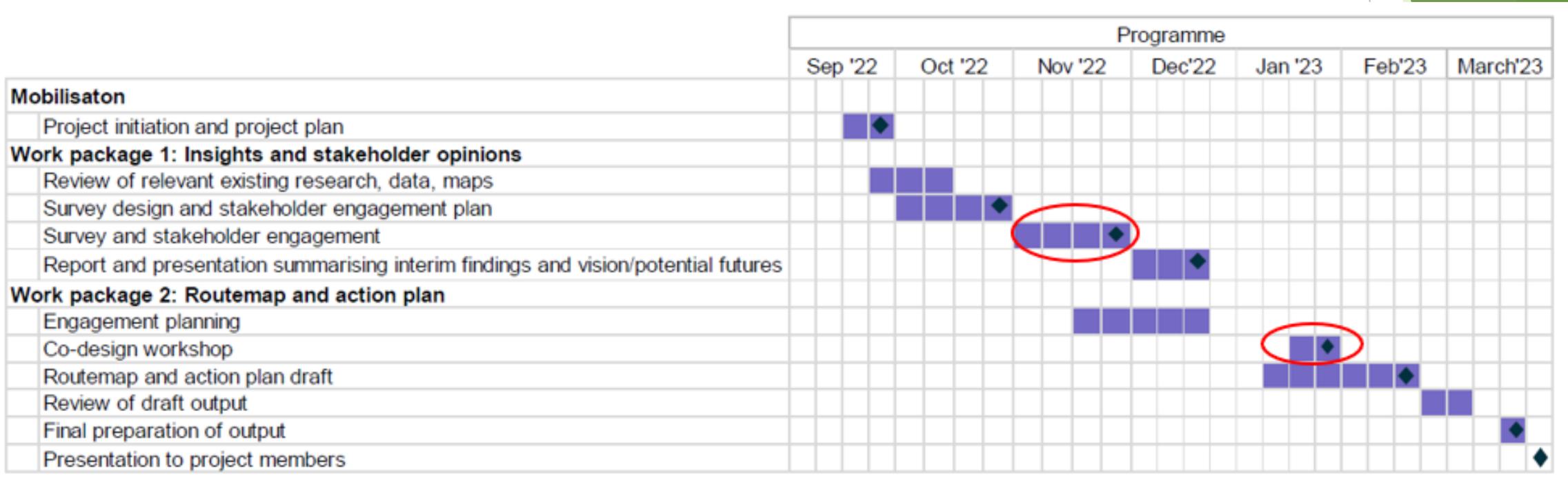
## Community Places

Louise O’Kane

Sinéad McConnell

Claire Rea

# Timeline



Eleanor  
Potter.

Future Parks  
Accelerator



**Future Parks**  
Accelerator

# Introducing Future Parks

## What is the Future Parks Accelerator?

Launched in March 2019, the Future Parks Accelerator is a joint initiative between **National Trust** and **National Lottery Heritage Fund** with support from **DLUHC**. It was a **strategic response** to the **funding crisis** facing public parks in the UK, seeking to safeguard high quality, free urban green space for future generations.



## Making space to lead for bold change:

Working with **nine UK towns and cities**, a partnership-based delivery approach has provided **support and challenge** to drive high ambition. **Investing in people** in the nine places has provided ‘head space’ and capacity to **enable strategic thinking** and bring about transformation at a **whole-place level**.

# Our work to date

The approaches emerging from our work across the nine towns and cities are **pioneering, innovative and full of potential**. A clear set of themes has emerged across the places we have worked with:

## Community engagement & participation

Changing how people engage with and use green spaces to maximise community benefit and innovation.

## Cross-sector partnerships

Enabling new partnerships to bring in knowledge and leadership from outside the parks sector.

## Whole-place approaches

Encouraging approaches which consider the full portfolio of parks and green spaces across a town or city.

## New sustainable funding and business models

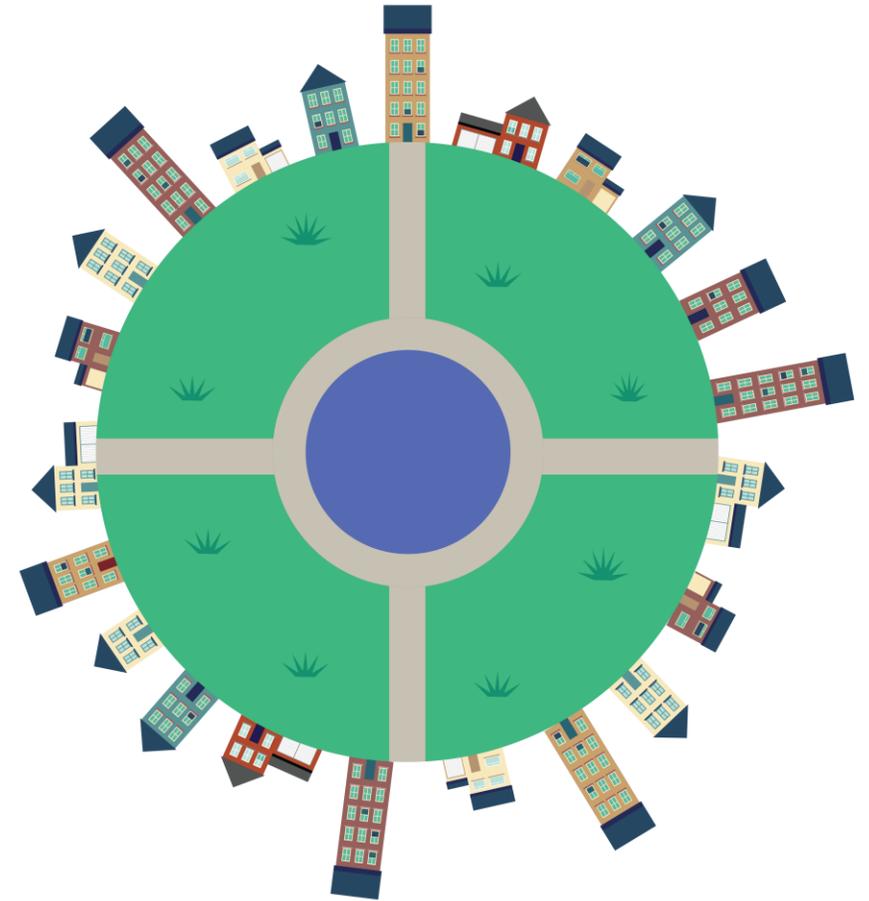
Catalysing new sources of funding to enable sustainable business models which can attract new investment.



# A changing context

Since the design of the Future Parks Accelerator in 2018 there have been huge changes to the local authority operating context:

- The pandemic shone a spotlight on **inequality of access** to green space in urban places
- The **climate and biodiversity crises** have deepened, with growing urgency to find routes to green recovery
- A need to respond proactively to **legislative changes** such as the Environment Act and the Levelling-Up & Regeneration bill.

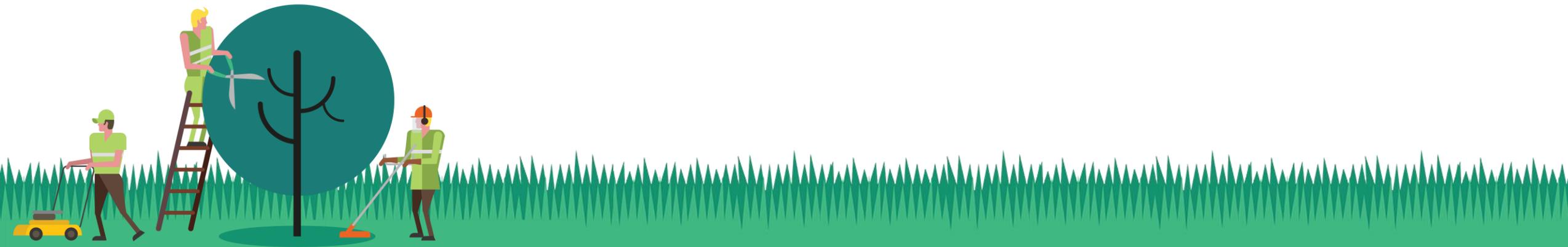


# What happens next

As part of the active legacy of Future Parks, we are embarking on new development work, shaped by this changing context. This broadly falls into three key areas / themes:

- **Expanding geographies** - supporting new work in Northern Ireland and the North of England.
- **Urban nature recovery** - co-creating ambitious plans for urban nature recovery networks across a whole city or town.
- **Nature on the doorstep** - supporting planning and delivery of new nature and green spaces in those communities with little or no provision, and so 'levelling up' access to nature and green space in priority neighbourhoods.

The new work is designed to be pioneering and agenda-shaping, aiming to inform and influence emerging policy and practice, and catalyse wider investment.



# Sharing our learning



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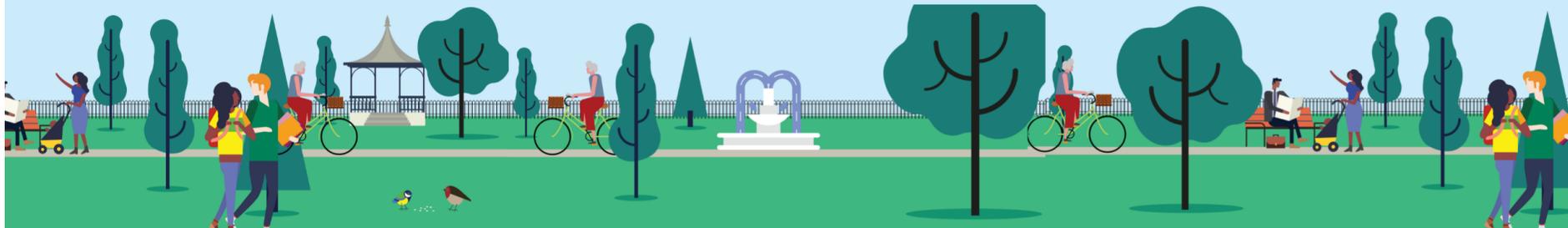
National Trust



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

## Naturally Thriving: Rethinking Urban Green Space

17th – 19th October



**Julie Procter.**

CEO

Green Space Scotland



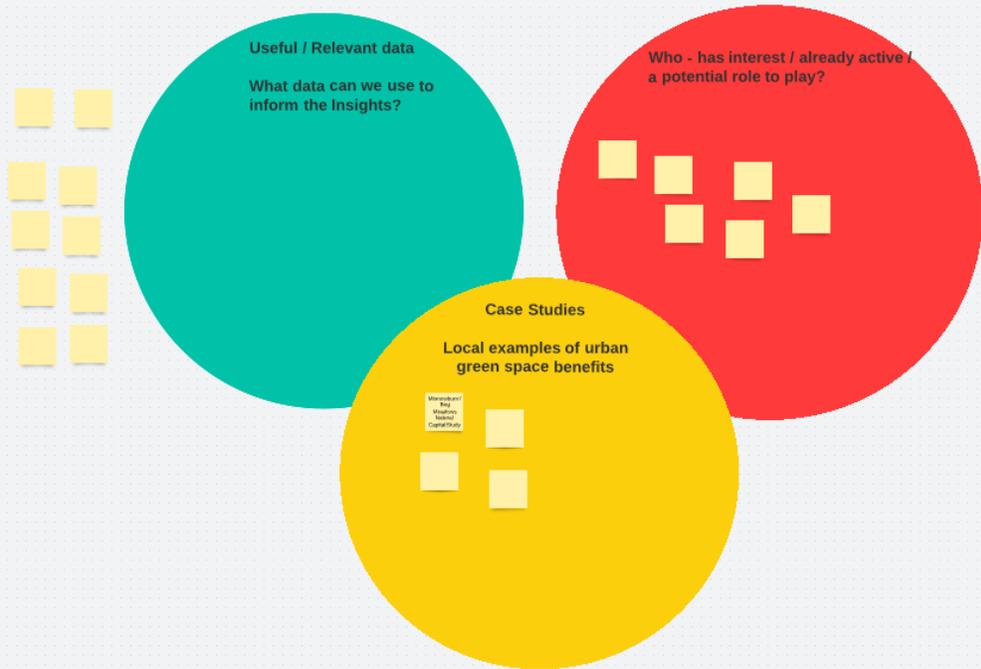
# Victoria Magreehan.

National Trust  
External Affairs Consultant

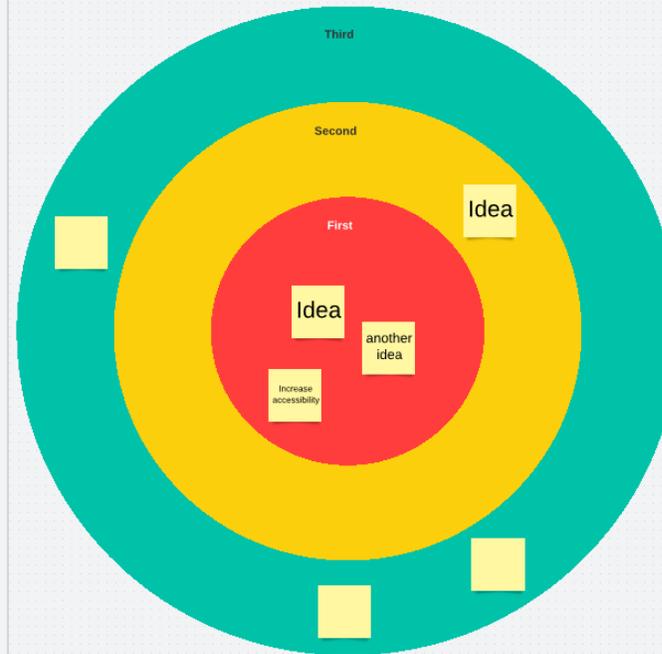


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## Useful / relevant data and case studies



## To increase public benefit from Urban Green Spaces in NI, we need to.....



## Crystal Ball...

### Future Green Spaces for NI should be

For Everyone

Climate resilient

# Over to you...

We want to hear your thoughts!

- ▶ What useful data and case studies are you aware of?
- ▶ How do we increase public benefit from Urban Green Spaces?
- ▶ What should the future of Urban Green Spaces be?

# Craig McGuicken.

CEO NI Environment Link



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# Thank You

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<https://www.nienvironmentlink.org/projects/urban-green-spaces/>

