

# TREES FOR SCHOOLS

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SCHOOL STRATEGY  
2022 to 2025

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 TREES  
FOR CITIES

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This document presents Trees for Schools, a sub-strategy to our organisational strategy “The Turn of Trees”, focusing on our programme of work with schools. The school strategy provides a synopsis of the **Problems** and challenges facing schools and their pupils, what we have learned from our **Past** and where we have got to in the **Present**, the **Policy** and research context that we work within, and the key **Players** that we work with, through or around.

We then set out our forward-looking **Purpose and Proposition** along with the **Plans** for their delivery. **Implementation of the strategy will include developing plans for Performance** including the number, range and geographic spread of projects, and the **Parameters** within and around which we will operate including our fundraising strategy.

Trees for Schools has been developed following a structured consultation with staff, trustees, and external stakeholders. It is written for both internal and external audiences, notably for schools and our partners.

This strategy provides a direction for Trees for Cities' school programme. The school programme is defined as the projects and programmes that are delivered in partnership with schools and are usually, but not exclusively, within school grounds.

These projects are distinct from those where we work in partnership with other landowners (Councils, social housing landlords) in parks and estates and engage schools as part of the wider community. The school strategy primarily relates to our programme of work with schools that are based in the UK.



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“  
TRANSFORMING URBAN SCHOOL  
GROUNDS INTO LEAFY GREEN  
OASES FOR THE CHILDREN  
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GENERATIONS.”

# PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

A wealth of evidence shows that exposure to the natural environment and nature-based learning can benefit children's physical, mental, social, and emotional health.<sup>9,10,12,13,14</sup>

Immersion in nature can have a positive impact on health, wellbeing, creativity, attention capacity and ability to connect with others.<sup>1,3,4,7,16</sup>

**Despite this knowledge, successive generations are spending less time in nature. Children and young people are disproportionately affected by 'nature deficit disorder', particularly in urban areas, leading to a range of physical and mental health issues such as obesity, anxiety and depression.**

**"Children are becoming disconnected from the natural environment. They are spending less and less time outdoors. In fact, the likelihood of children visiting any green space at all has halved in a generation."**

**Natural Environment White Paper (HMG 2011:12)**

Many children and young people face barriers to visiting spaces that are set aside for nature (e.g. parks, woods, and nature reserves) and so it is vital to create opportunities for regular access to "ordinary" nature, which they can benefit from in their everyday lives, for example in schools.

Nature-based learning remains an under-utilised pedagogical tool in schools.<sup>8,11</sup>

Several barriers are frequently reported by teachers, including curriculum and time pressures, confidence, safety, cost and access to training and resources.<sup>2,5,6</sup>

Urban schools also face additional barriers including limited and often heavily tarmacked outdoor space that is, air pollution, and cultural barriers. Many urban schools lack natural resources for outdoor learning and play.

The purpose of the strategy is to identify how Trees for Cities is best able to help address some or all of these barriers and plan how to do that at scale given limited resources and a crowded marketplace.



# PAST

**As with our wider work, the schools programme is predominantly delivery-focused, transforming school grounds through innovative design, high-quality planting and landscaping, and inclusive engagement of the school community.**

From 2008, the child obesity crisis and changes to the National Curriculum, which required children to understand where their food came from, prompted a significant increase in demand from schools to grow food. To meet this demand, the charity developed its award-winning Edible Playgrounds project, providing a comprehensive service that offered an effective solution for schools. Since our first Edible Playground at Rotherfield Primary in Islington in 2009, the delivery of Edible Playground projects in primary schools has proliferated to become a core facet of our programme portfolio.

The success of Edible Playgrounds has helped the charity to secure funding, most notably from the players of the People's Postcode Lottery and Bulb, and positioned the charity as a leading player in the sector. Edible Playgrounds was shortlisted for the Financial Times/Citi Ingenuity Award in 2014, won the Postcode Dream Trust award in 2015, and won the 2021 Charity Awards - Environment Category. Our Edible Playgrounds partnership with Bulb won the Charity Times Corporate Social Responsibility Project of the Year in 2018.

The rapid and exponential scaling of Edible Playground delivery operations has placed strains on the organisation, however, notably within the project delivery team, which doubled in size within a single year and necessitated the use of increasing amounts of timber to construct raised beds.

There is also perceived tension over the 'fit' of Edible Playgrounds within a tree-planting charity for some stakeholders.

Our ambition is to inspire children from the youngest age upwards to get out more and be better connected to nature, so that when they become the custodians of future cities they will plant and protect urban trees and nature.

In a school setting, food-growing is a tangible, accessible entry point for children as they can grow food quickly and experience the wide range of multi-sensory benefits of sowing, nurturing, harvesting and tasting food that they have grown themselves. These positive, enjoyable experiences with nature at a young age increase confidence and self-esteem and initiate pathways that lead to enhanced health and well-being, positive environmental behaviours, and lifelong connections with trees and nature.

Since 2018, the driving force behind many school projects has started to change again, with increasing interest in how tree planting and learning through nature can improve air quality and provide mental health and well-being benefits for pupils.

The organisation is therefore again in a period of transition as we adapt to these changing needs and demands for services so that we can better serve schools.

Since our inception, more and more of our work and focus has moved into the school realm. The vast majority of projects have been delivered in primary schools, with a handful in secondary schools (e.g. New Addington in Croydon), special schools (e.g. St Giles in Croydon), and Pupil Referral Units (e.g. Aquarius in Birmingham).

As a registered charity we always target areas of social and environmental deprivation; in schools we measure this using indices of multiple deprivation and percentage of pupils receiving Pupil Premium as well as other measures such as pupil learning needs and high levels of vulnerable children, obesity and mental health issues.

**The following pages outline the Key lessons that we have learned and are as follows:**

## 1. SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

The success of a school ground greening project is not how it looks immediately after delivery, but the difference it makes to the school community over the coming years. If the planting is to make a difference then it needs to be frequently and regularly accessed and used by the pupils, and be well maintained.

**Given the limited resources of most schools, our solution is to embed the use of the grounds into the school curriculum so that it can be used as an accessible outdoor classroom for all subjects during lesson time.**

Some of the most 'successful' projects have been in schools where the Head Teacher has set objectives for teachers to use the Edible Playground regularly, for example at Hitherfield Primary in Lambeth (delivered in 2013) where teachers are expected to teach outdoors at least once every three weeks.

Of critical importance to the regular and frequent use of school grounds for teaching is the need to build teacher knowledge, skills and confidence to teach outdoors, as this is a barrier commonly cited by schools. As part of our package, we offer teacher training in school, a bespoke plan for teachers to manage the planting through outdoor lessons, and practical online teaching resources.



## 2. OWNERSHIP

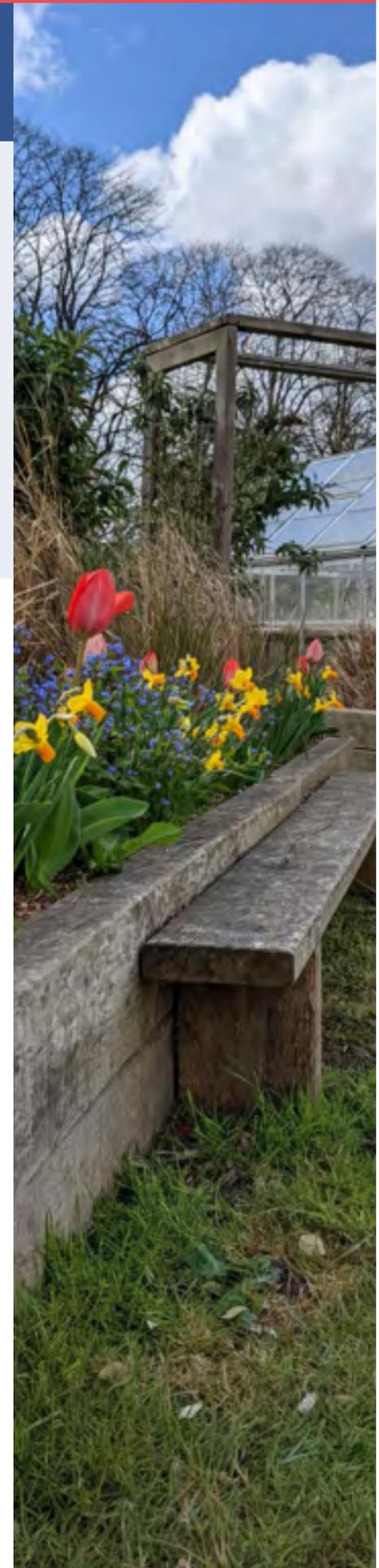
Schools are bombarded with services and products, many of which are offered free of charge or are heavily subsidised. When we have been in a position to offer freebies, we commonly find that schools are not as engaged with the project.

**Through our experience, school ownership of the project is a vital ingredient, and this needs to come from 'top down' through buy-in from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).**

To help ensure engagement, we always ask schools to make a financial contribution, which they are generally able to access through Pupil Premium, grants, or capital budgets for school improvement. By asking the school to go through the process of finding or securing funding, the school invests in the project and maximises its benefits by supporting class teachers to use the outdoor space.

Due to shrinking school budgets we keep the financial contribution from schools as low as possible (typically £5,000) and use our charitable status to raise funds from grant-making trusts and foundations, lottery, and corporate partners to cover the remaining costs.

This offers excellent value for money for schools; the majority of projects cost in excess of £30,000 based on our model of full cost recovery (i.e. including all staff costs and overheads).



### 3. SCALABILITY

Trees for Cities places value on delivering to high standards – through both the physical transformation and the supporting engagement activities – and the provision of a comprehensive service for schools, which ensure that our projects showcase best practice.

In the pursuit of value for money and through our own ambitions to deliver at scale, we have explored a variety of options to economise, for example through delivery with third parties.

Through these explorations, we have learned valuable lessons around where costs can be saved, and have refined our model to deliver the best possible service for urban schools and achieve the optimum pricing structure at scale.

A key lesson is that many of the ingredients to success, such as direct “hand-holding” support for schools, provision of bespoke resources and in-school training, can place limits on the scalability of direct delivery programmes.



## PRESENT

At the end of the 2021/22 financial year, we have achieved the following outputs:

- Delivered 197 projects in schools, including 185 Edible Playgrounds (93% of total).
- Delivered in schools across 14 towns and cities in the UK, with the majority (58%) in London. Other cities are Blackpool, Birmingham, Bracknell, Bradford, Cardiff, Leicester, Liverpool/Wirral, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Reading, Sheffield, and Sunderland.
- The majority of schools are primary, with less than 12% of projects in secondary, junior and special schools, pupil referral units, and nurseries.
- Projects have engaged over 4,900 teachers and 72,000 pupils aged 4-18.

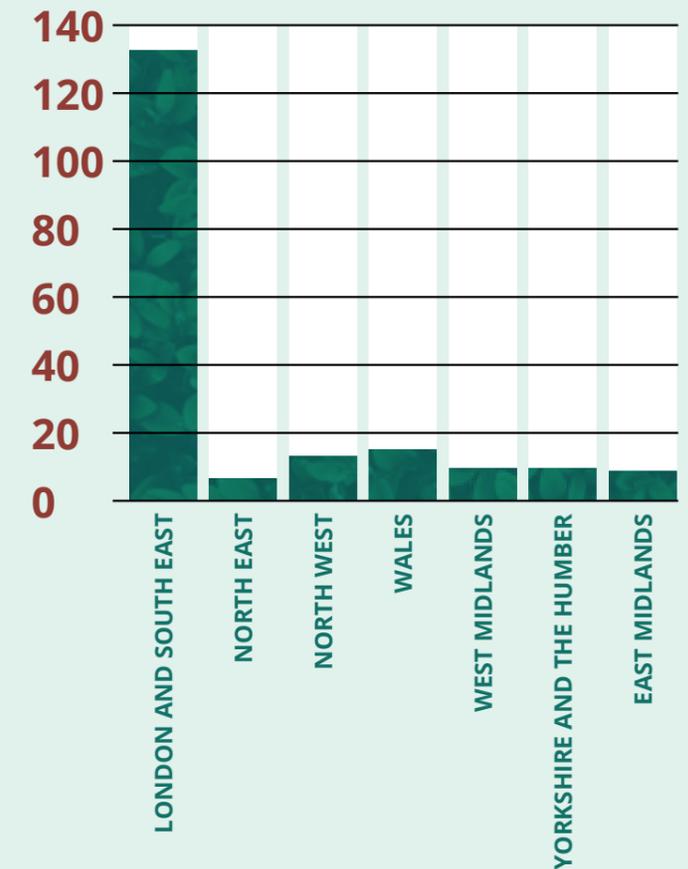
The tables opposite show the growth in the number of projects delivered each year since 2005 and the spread of these projects across different regions in the UK.

To support our delivery programmes, we have created free downloadable online educational resources on topics such as food growing, air quality, trees and woodlands, weeds and tools.

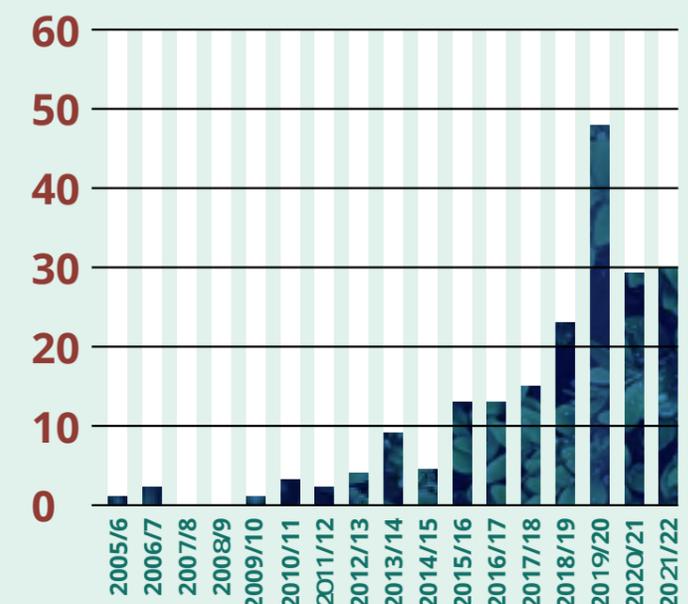
Resources comprise assembly guides, curriculum guides, planting guides, lesson plans, ID guides, and ‘how to’ films, which provide step-by-step guidance for anyone keen to teach through gardening.

The resources expand our reach beyond those directly involved in our projects. Since they went online in May 2019, the resources have been downloaded 3,376 times.

### TREES FOR SCHOOLS - LOCATION



### TREES FOR SCHOOLS - ANNUAL GROWTH



Our school programmes currently comprise Edible Playgrounds, Planting Healthy Air, Growing among Trees and Trees for Schools. A summary of the aims and key outcomes of each programme are set out below.

## EDIBLE PLAYGROUNDS

**Aim:** Gives children the opportunity to grow and eat food as part of their everyday school experience. The objectives of the programme are to improve educational experiences, connection to nature and improve health and wellbeing. Established since 2009, we have delivered 185 projects to end March 2022.

**Outcomes:** From our most recent Lead Teacher survey, the majority of schools perceived their Edible Playground to have had a strongly positive impact on pupils' connection to nature, knowledge of food and nutrition, gardening skills and interest in outdoor activities. A high proportion of schools also perceived that there had been a positive or strongly positive impact on pupils' physical health, moods, self-esteem and mental health and participation and attention during class. All schools responding to the survey said the project has helped children with special educational needs or challenging behaviour. 75% of schools felt confident that the Edible Playground would be maintained and used over the next five years, citing

the importance of the project on the school agenda and in action plans, the regular use and maintenance of the Edible Playground by staff and children including dedicated staff member(s), as well as passion for and enjoyment of the space and parental support as key reasons.

## PLANTING HEALTHY AIR

**Aim:** Use green infrastructure to reduce pupils' exposure to harmful pollutants and encourage pupils to spend more time away from pollution hotspots in the playground. The programme includes behavioural workshops, citizen science and activities to increase awareness of ways to mitigate the effects of pollution. Since piloting in 2018 we have delivered 11 projects to end March 2022.

**Outcomes:** our collaboration with the University of Birmingham and University of Lancaster, including evaluation of seven pilot projects since 2018/19, has identified the following key insights:

- Green infrastructure can effectively reduce children's exposure to air pollution in the school playground, particularly through planting a dense, tall (2m) hedgerow around the school perimeter to create a defensive barrier that disperses air pollutants from roads away from the playground.

- Green infrastructure can also effectively encourage pupil activity away from pollution hotspots through creating 'green oases' in the school playground.
- Given the multitude of factors that can influence air pollution, it is difficult to infer any effect of vegetation on pollution levels in single studies over less than one year. Data collected over three years at St Paul's Primary school in Hammersmith & Fulham supports wider research that it is likely that the planting of the trees has reduced pollution in the areas immediately around them.
- Engaging pupils and teachers through citizen science to monitor pollution in the playground, and the design and planting of green infrastructure, supports an increase in knowledge, awareness, and empowerment of schools to tackle pollution.
- Monitoring of particulate matter (particularly PM2.5) provided useful data on local source pollution. NO2 levels were low and fluctuated more widely so the impact of Planting Healthy Air on this pollutant was less attributable to planting.
- Factors key to success include the importance of selecting sites based on understanding of factors influencing local source pollution, engagement of full school community and simple data collection methods for pupils.

Although it should be noted that responses were likely to be biased towards those most engaged with the project (due to COVID-19 and associated situations in schools at the time of surveying), these results suggest that Planting Healthy Air is effective in changing the school environment, raising awareness and prompting changes in teaching and behaviour change by staff in schools.

## GROWING AMONG TREES

**Aim:** A one-year (2019/20) government-funded consortium project to evaluate the processes required to deliver community forest and woodland outreach in urban schools. The learning will be used to create a

sustainable, replicable model for national roll-out by the Department for Education.

**Outcomes:** Due to Covid and the closure of schools in March 2020, delivery of this project was cut short and evaluation was restricted to online feedback from teachers. Outcomes are fully documented in the project report published in May 2021.

Key outcomes as a result of this project include positive emotions such as happiness, excitement and appreciation after the interventions. The activities had a high level of engagement from both pupils and staff and sparked creativity and imagination among pupils, which teachers reported had helped to enhance pupils' learning experience and skill development.

At the secondary school too, teachers and pupils expressed positive emotions such as affection and enjoyment from the activities. Secondary school teachers also reported developing knowledge and confidence to apply outdoor learning in their school. At the special schools, audits identifying the level of natural resource available helped to increase recognition of the benefits of outdoor learning and awareness of what is possible within proximity to the school.

## TREE PLANTING

**Aim:** To plant trees and green school grounds, giving children the opportunity to experience tree and woodland-based play and learning. These relatively low cost interventions formed the majority of school projects in the early days but dropped off due to the focus of resources towards Edible Playgrounds.

**Outcomes:** In 2016-20, we delivered a partnership project with the Woodland Trust and Defra to distribute free trees to schools (also called Trees for Schools). During this period the project facilitated the ordering of over 35,000 trees by target schools, and delivery of 89 workshops involving 49 schools and 2,032 children to plant 9,981 trees.



# STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

The schools programme has considerable strengths, but there is always room for improvement. Through the strategic planning process we have identified key strengths and opportunities for improvement as follows:

## STRENGTHS:

### 1. Staff resource

Our dedicated schools team holds a range of knowledge, skills and expertise related to the curriculum, horticulture, school engagement and teaching, including qualifications such as Forest School. This complements wider team knowledge around trees and landscape design. Since 2018, we have employed school project development staff based outside London, strengthening our presence in Wales, the Midlands and north of England to develop new clusters of projects and partnerships in those regions.

### 2. Experience

With a strong track record of delivering urban school programmes since 2005 we bring a wealth of experience to new and existing programmes. Our on-the-ground presence keeps us directly connected to our beneficiaries and enables us to respond nimbly to demands and understand changing needs.

### 3. Comprehensive service

Each of our programmes comprises school community consultation, engagement, training and support on using playground space for everyday teaching. To the best of our knowledge, very few, if any other providers offer this extent of direct support for schools.

### 4. Reputation

The charity has earned a reputation for delivering high quality, sustainable projects. This is recognised primarily by the word of mouth recommendations between schools, which is reflected in the ongoing demand for our work and the awards we have received.

### 5. Networks and partnerships

We engage in national working groups such as Council for Learning Outside the Classroom, Natural Environment Sector Partnership and Sustainable Food Cities, and regional working groups such as Capital Growth and the West Midlands Sustainable Schools Sustainability group.

### We have also led school project partnerships and consortia, including for example:

- Growing among Trees in partnership with Sensory Trust, The Garden Classroom, Nature Nurture, Green Schools Project and Intelligent Health;
- Edible Playgrounds delivered for People's Postcode Lottery Dream Fund in partnership with Chefs Adopt a School, School Food Matters and the Soil Association;
- Planting Healthy Air in partnership with Lancaster University and Mapping for Change.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

### 1. Project delivery structure

The focus on Edible Playgrounds over the last decade has effectively streamlined our school teams towards this single programme. The development of new school programmes has expanded the range of services that we offer, and as a consequence there is an opportunity to rebalance the internal structure and our external messaging to fully reflect these developments.

Related to this, the rapid expansion of our Edible Playgrounds programme has necessitated delivery through partners and contractors, particularly outside London. This model offers potential for delivery at scale and a more agile programme, though conversely it can create challenges such as quality control.

### 2. UK presence

With increasing capacity for UK-wide delivery, and schools staff based outside London, there is an opportunity to develop our programmes to increase



the impact in Wales and regions of England such as the Midlands, the North West and North East. The capacity to deliver regionally at scale gives us strong leverage to seek national funding in line with regional objectives and utilising partnership opportunities and regional assets.

### 3. Solution-focused programmes that address funder objectives

As evidence builds to substantiate the significant benefits of outdoor learning and play and access to nature, stakeholders across health, education and environment sectors respond by setting goals and objectives, and establishing funding streams with specific outcomes linked to these.

Through our solution-driven approach we have created practical, bespoke school programmes that address current issues and meet funder objectives, visually transforming playgrounds in a way that is sustainable and scalable. For example:

- Grange Primary School's Active Green Playground project to encourage physical activity and create a healthy learning environment for pupils is funded by Impact for Urban Health (formerly Guy's & St Thomas's Charity) through their Childhood Obesity and Air Pollution funding streams;

• Growing among Trees project addresses cross-sector outcomes relating to education, health and environmental improvement. This project was part of the Children in Nature programme funded by the Department for Education and administered by Defra and Natural England.

### 4. Measuring and communicating impact

Our organisational Theory of Change forms the backbone to our strategic focus on impact. As part of this, we are developing rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes, particularly for Edible Playgrounds, Growing among Trees and Planting Healthy Air, and have started to build up a bank of evidence to demonstrate the processes and impacts of our schools programme.

Over the course of the new strategic period, we have the opportunity to continue to implement and improve these processes and to strengthen our communications strategy for the schools programme as one that *'delivers school projects to connect children with nature and enable them to understand and value urban trees'*.

# POLICY AND RESEARCH

By delivering environmental projects with health benefits within an educational setting, the schools programme is multi-disciplinary and stretches across several policy areas.



In addition to those outlined in our **Generation Tree strategy document**, the most relevant of these policies and ambitions at national level include:

- Natural Environment White Paper
- The National Curriculum (England, Scotland, Wales)
- The new Ofsted framework realised in September 2019 with less attention on 'food' but more attention on children's personal development and health and well being
- The new 2022 Welsh curriculum includes a focus on creative learning and individualised learning approaches for pupils

There is a raft of policies, statements and plans at regional, local and city level regarding the benefits of access to nature in relation to children's health, well-being and education. Exemplar regional policies include Cardiff's 2030 education plan, which sets out five goals including health and wellbeing and high-quality learning environments.

These policies are underpinned by the evidence supporting the many ways in which children's experiences in natural environments benefits their educational attainment, resilience and confidence.

Malone & Waite (2016) proposed a useful "Framework for 21st Century Student Outcomes", which maps out the connections between the research and policy contexts with a practical context for supporting systemic change.

In the Nature Connections Demonstration Project (2012-16)<sup>15</sup> the majority of schools reported that learning outside had positive impacts on pupils' social skills, behaviour, enjoyment of lessons and health and wellbeing as well as positive impacts on job satisfaction and health and wellbeing for teachers. The 25 Year Environment Plan (2018)<sup>17</sup> also draws upon research showing the impact of spending time in nature for mental health and wellbeing, citing the benefits of "reduced stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression".

A systematic literature review by Gill (2014)<sup>18</sup> found that there is good evidence that spending time in nature when young is linked to positive attitudes towards the environment in later life. Collado et al. (2015)<sup>19</sup> found that for urban children, positive ecological behaviours are linked to the frequency of being in nature. This is supported by Soga et al. (2016)<sup>20</sup> who found that children regularly who spend time in nature can "develop greater emotional affinity to and support for protecting biodiversity".

## KEY PLAYERS

Due to the multi-disciplinary nature of our programme, numerous stakeholder groups are impacted by our work. This strategy will ensure that the organisation has a clear role and niche within complex education and environment sectors. Our strategic objectives will aim to fill gaps, complement the work of our partners and other stakeholders, and develop new avenues of needs-based interventions within the sector.

**Schools** are our core partners and primary beneficiaries. Schools contribute financially towards each project so we need to provide value for money and deliver tangible outcomes for pupils, teachers and the wider school community. The vast majority of our partner schools are state primaries, but in the changing face of education provision, we are increasingly working with schools that are part of multi-academy trusts and with local authorities through Public Health and Education departments.

We are indebted to funding partners – a wide range of **businesses and grant-making trusts and foundations** such as Bulb and the People's Postcode Lottery - who not only provide vital income but also lend their support and expertise.

We continue to work alongside other **civil society organisations** including universities and other charities. Over the years we have become increasingly aware of how crowded and complex the environmental education sector has become, with an array of charities and professional bodies that offer a wealth of services for schools (see Appendix 1 for a summary of national players and the services they offer to schools). We continue to participate with these and other stakeholders through partnerships and networks to ensure that we understand the sector and can identify gaps in provision and opportunities for partnerships and funding.

To operate effectively within this competitive landscape, it is vital to understand where we fit within the sector and play to our strengths. Our partnerships create opportunities to further our vision and mission and we will continue to work with partners that bring additional value to our work.

We place particular value in working with organisations that offer complementary services to increase the impact of our programmes (e.g. Mapping for Change), support effective evaluation (e.g. Lancaster University, Intelligent Health), and that best serve effectiveness and efficiency of delivery (e.g. charities and contractors to support delivery).

There is potential to enhance this array of partners through more cross-sector partnerships, for example with health and sport organisations.

In **central government**, departments such as the Department for Education, Natural England and Public Health England are increasingly recognising the importance of cross-sector working. At a parliamentary briefing in 2020, Dr William Bird, CEO and Founder of Intelligent Health, signalled a "fourth revolution of healthcare" based on community health rather than individual health; supporting sustainable lifestyles and using culture, art and nature to create purpose, leading to greater resilience and happiness.

This community approach to healthcare will help combat the greatest challenges we face including rising health inequalities, climate change and unsustainable living.



# PURPOSE AND PROPOSITION

Our strategic goal is to become the national lead for transforming urban school grounds into leafy green oases for children’s health and wellbeing. We will do this by delivering a holistic greening programme in urban schools across the UK that promotes environmentally sustainable behaviour, supports lifelong connections with trees and nature, and improves educational experiences.

## Furthermore, we will support schools to create and use their outdoor spaces as a resource for outdoor learning and play among trees and in nature.

Our schools programme complements and supports our organisational vision to inspire and deliver a generational movement in urban tree planting and greening for people and nature. The theory of change for our school programme and how this relates to our organisational strategy is set out in Appendix 2.

School grounds that are richly vegetated with diverse natural habitats create sensory spaces that relieve stress and anxiety, enhance learning and promote confidence, thus having significant benefits to children’s physical and mental health and well-being<sup>15</sup>. Playgrounds provide a safe, familiar environment that children access on a regular basis. They therefore hold the potential to offer significant benefits to children’s lives during the crucial formative and developmental stages.

In an urban context, this potential is frequently limited by physical constraints such as the size and aspect of the school; many school grounds we visit are completely covered in concrete or tarmac, shaded by neighbouring buildings, and patchy – left as an afterthought by building developers.

Yet the value and importance of trees and vegetation in the urban playground is particularly important, given the lack of access to nature for many of their pupils,

particularly in deprived areas. Despite the limitations, much can be done to improve urban school grounds through professional design and creativity. Trees for Cities holds a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience about what works well in an urban school playground. Together with our reputation for high-quality delivery, we are well placed to build on this platform and support urban schools to improve and use their grounds to their full potential as a resource for sensory-rich outdoor learning and play.

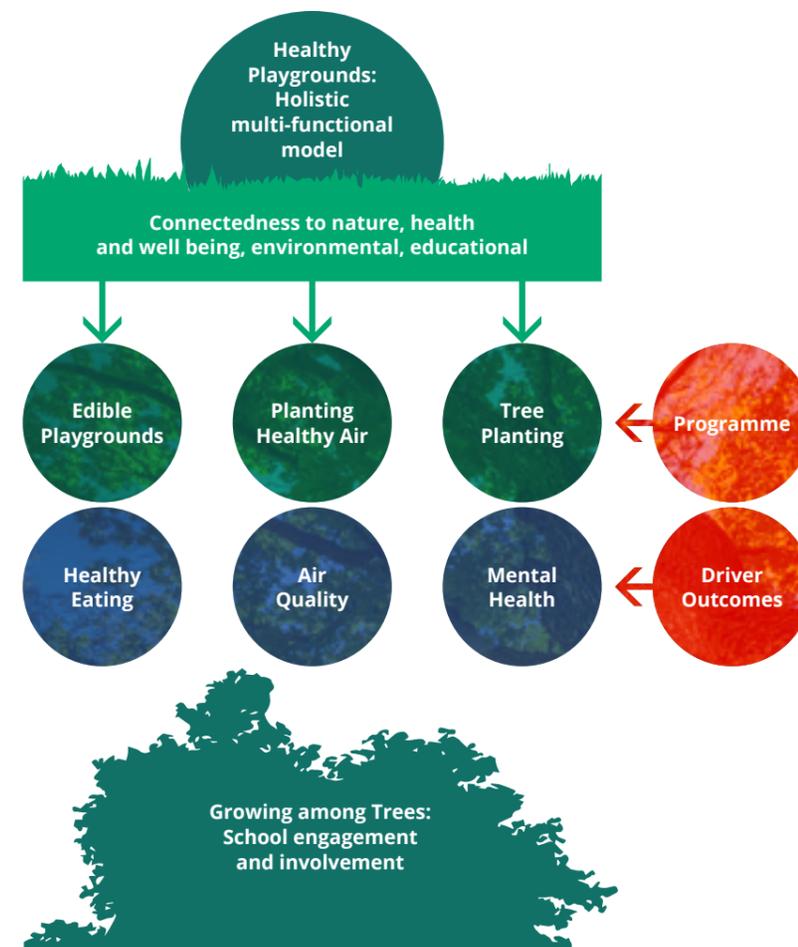
Nature-based school programmes take place within an educational setting, which offers vast potential to engage children from a young age in educational approaches towards environmental sustainability. Our strategic goal does not seek to directly improve educational attainment because we recognise that the school itself is the education provider. Instead, our expertise is better utilised by supporting schools to **enrich the educational experience** by creating opportunities and resources for outdoor nature-based learning. We fully expect that our combined efforts will support each of our partner schools to achieve their educational goals. This approach aligns with cross-sector policy trends seeking health, wellbeing and educational outcomes in community and school settings<sup>10</sup>.

To achieve our goal, we will focus on our key learnings, core delivery strengths and assets to integrate and scale up our holistic programmes.

We will develop and implement the schools strategy with children at the forefront of our approach to how we design and deliver our projects. By using an evidence and place-based partnership approach we can address multiple outcomes relating to health, education, and environment, which will enable us to deliver effective programmes at scale. There will undoubtedly be areas where we need to increase resources, develop expertise or improve knowledge and skills, so this will form a crucial part of our strategy.

Over the years we have developed an array of sub-programmes with their own sub-brands to help ‘sell’ our packages for stakeholders. As part of defining our future strategy we want to ensure a common understanding of all the terms used within our school programme and have developed a glossary of terms and diagram to help clarify the terminology.

## HEALTHY PLAYGROUNDS



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Trees for Schools** is the overarching term for Trees for Cities’ schools programme.

**Healthy Playgrounds** is the working term we plan to use for a holistic multi-functional project that can include any or all of the more targeted interventions below as well as other interventions that may we may introduce such as School Forest Gardens (permaculture). Healthy Playgrounds will tend to be larger, flagship projects that include a survey and masterplan of the whole school site.

**Edible Playgrounds** is the creation of a formal food-growing system comprising raised beds for fruit and vegetables. Where possible each Edible Playground should include fruit trees or bushes e.g. espaliers.

**Planting Healthy Air** is the installation of green infrastructure to screen airborne pollutants and empower schools to tackle air quality in their playground.

**Tree Planting** is the term we use for planting trees and hedges around the school site including tall, dense hedges around the school perimeter. Trees may be planted to provide shade, enhance tree species diversity, intercept rainfall, improve soil quality, provide habitat for wildlife and beautify the site.

**Growing among Trees** is the programme of school engagement activities that underpins all our delivery programmes. Meaningful engagement is vital to build teacher confidence, embed the learning and promote the sustainability of physical project delivery.

# SCHOOL PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES 2022-2025

## 1. Create a sustainable, replicable model that optimises the design and use of urban school playgrounds for children's physical health and mental well-being.

Our programme offers a selection of project archetypes that each addresses the issues that urban schools commonly face, such as child obesity (Edible Playgrounds) and air pollution (Planting Healthy Air).

Although there are trends and patterns in demand for our services, the majority of stakeholders that we speak to articulate concerns around more than one of these issues. In reality therefore, urban greening is frequently required to address multiple problems and to offer multi-functional solutions that are bespoke to each project site as well as being affordable.

We will draw on learning from all our programmes and incorporate best practice from all school programmes, combining the 'best of the rest' to create a practical, effective solution that addresses the multiple problems that urban schools typically face.

Fundamental to the creation of this model will be the learning from our pilot project at Grange Primary in partnership with Impact for Urban Health, which combined projects on a single site. The project aimed to transform the school's outdoor space into a natural, functional playground that encourages physical activity and movement and supports outdoor education, leading to positive health and wellbeing outcomes. The project has been independently evaluated for outcomes relating to physical activity and movement.

Similarly, the Growing among Trees pilot was a significant learning curve for the charity, which has given us firm foundations upon which to develop an evidence-based

programme to deliver activities that foster stronger connections with urban trees and nature. The premise of this pilot was to create a model that is **sustainable and replicable at scale**, and we intend to honour that aim by embedding the learning into all our schools programmes and therefore rolling out to schools in cities across the UK.

The multi-functional demands of urban greening projects creates significant **design** challenges; the design of sustainable, practical urban greening solutions is the key to success of each and every project. We must ensure that our design team is fully resourced including sufficient staffing, software and training so that they can adapt to changing demands from schools, remain child-centred and reflect current urban issues and trends. We will use our Theory of Change and Evaluation Framework alongside learning from Growing among Trees and the Grange Primary project to integrate an outcomes-based approach into design processes.

Based on evidence and learning to date, the design should where possible incorporate high, dense hedges and/or ivy screens around the perimeter of the school to act as a first line of defence against airborne particulate matter. Within the playground the design could then incorporate a myriad of "green oases", which could be an Edible Playground or any other project archetype, or simply through planting trees throughout the school site.

A further challenge for this strategic period is to ensure that we create a model that is sustainable and replicable at scale. In order to deliver at scale we will promote to stakeholders with broad reach such as Local Authorities and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs), creating regional and city-wide, multi-year programmes that can be tailored to meet the needs of their beneficiaries.



## 2. Continue to develop and refine our established models of delivery, particularly the multi award-winning Edible Playgrounds programme.

We will continue to develop our established models of delivery so that they can be delivered either as standalone projects or as part of our new holistic multi-functional model. This will allow for flexibility depending on the available space and budgets and builds on their success to date.

### EDIBLE PLAYGROUNDS

**Our strategic goal is to create 250 Edible Playgrounds by 2025.** Having delivered 185 Edible Playground projects to end March 2022, this will require the delivery of 65 new Edible Playgrounds (~22 per year), which will directly benefit around 88,000 pupils.

For our Edible Playgrounds programme, we will work towards our high-level ambition that every primary school child has the right and ability to have access to food-growing space within their school grounds, in order that future generations have the tools to lead healthier lives and connect with nature. We believe that this is part of the vital shift that is needed to transform the current norm of indoor learning towards the outdoor classroom.

We will explore further opportunities to link and integrate food growing with the National Curriculum, OFSTED and pupil premiums. The underpinning objective of our 250 by 2025 strategic goal is to ensure that food-growing in schools is seen as a norm rather than a niche.

We will ensure that our partner schools have access to the best possible support and teaching materials so that all Edible Playground projects can mature and improve with age.

We will motivate and inspire other organisations to join the school food growing movement, the ultimate aims of which can only be fully realised through collective action.

### PLANTING HEALTHY AIR

**Our strategic goal is to embed the principles of design for Planting Healthy Air into all urban school projects as part of our new holistic multi-functional model.**

We will continue to evaluate the pilot projects and use the learning to help establish a sustainable delivery model going forward, creating a blueprint for replicable methodology on the strategic planting of green infrastructure to reduce exposure to air pollution and help mitigate the health impacts of pollutants, particularly particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10).

We will continue to work with schools in urban areas, through three primary delivery mechanisms:

1. Strategic planting of trees and green infrastructure to create a semi-permeable barrier of vegetation that effectively screens air pollutants from ingress into the school playground (horizontal movement of air);
2. Create "green oases" within school grounds, including covered areas and large canopies to screen from background air pollution (vertical movement of air);
3. Promote behaviour changes such as anti-idling and walking to school, relocating activities that involve large pupil numbers (e.g. entrances) or exercise into areas with the lowest air pollution, and engaging pupils through citizen science and other activities.

We will continue to deliver a small number of projects each year in London and/or other cities in schools most affected by toxic air. This is so that we retain the capacity to learn lessons from each one and can refine our delivery accordingly and can respond to schools who are primarily interested in this project archetype. Planting Healthy Air projects will require careful selection of schools to ensure that we maximise the learning opportunities and impact of each project.

Where funding allows, this will include working in partnership with other organisations who bring significant additional value through delivering activities outside the remit or scope of the charity.

This includes for example our current partnership with Lancaster University, who undertake scientific air quality research and evaluation.

This programme requires clear and careful messaging to ensure that we do not “over claim” on the anticipated outcomes related to air quality (AQ) and green infrastructure (GI). To that end, we therefore wish to continue to align this project closely with the national Green Infrastructure for Air Quality (GI4AQ) research programme on the use of green infrastructure to screen air pollutants, whilst empowering schools to take positive action themselves.

### **3. Bridge the gap between our school programme and the charity's core urban forest programme by planting trees in schools and rolling out into towns and cities across the UK.**

With increasing focus on national targets to plant trees and improve children's mental health, there is considerable potential to re-introduce tree planting in school grounds as a core programme of work. This is arguably the biggest potential growth area for the school programme; it would effectively bridge our schools programme with the charity's core urban forest programme of planting and establishing trees in cities across the UK and utilise our team's extensive experience, knowledge and skills relating to urban trees.

We will achieve this by working with schools in urban areas to plant trees in school playgrounds for shade, plant hedgerows for wildlife, and create school forest gardens for foraging. These are relatively low-cost interventions that can address multiple outcomes at scale and be incorporated into our approach to create 'green oases' as outlined above.

These tree-focused interventions would link closely with Growing among Trees, our programme of engagement activities, which could be developed further to include new tree-related activities such as urban forest school sensory experiences such as forest bathing.

We will utilise our regional presence to develop further regional school programmes in key areas i.e. north,

Midlands, London, and Wales. Trees for Cities will continue developing and shaping the structure of the schools team to enable us to deliver effectively to schools and to maximise utilisation of partnerships and contractors across the UK.

### **4. Develop Growing among Trees as a robust complementary programme of school engagement to support and promote the sustainability of our delivery programmes.**

Our support package for Edible Playground school partners comprises consultation, engagement, advice and guidance, creation of school management plans, and teacher training. We will broaden this out to school partners as part of our comprehensive package for school partners across all programmes, and also offer each as a standalone service for other schools.

We will continue to improve each of these services and strengthen links to the Connectedness to Nature Scale, which harnesses the voices of children and meaningful connection through direct capacity-building support and digitally through online resources. Improvements will focus particularly towards building our catalogue of downloadable teaching resources so that we reach more teachers and help overcome widespread barriers to teaching outside. We will also explore audio resources such as podcasts and webinars in addition to written materials, and additional activities that enhance the connection with urban trees, all of which will inspire curiosity about the natural world to help children understand how trees and nature link to the global climate crisis, and empower them to take local action.

Through Growing among Trees, we have gained considerable knowledge from the Children in Nature team and insight into different practical approaches and techniques from all the partners involved in the Nature Friendly Schools and Community Forest and Woodland Outreach programmes. We will apply the outcomes and lessons learned to create a portfolio of low-cost, multi-sensory interventions with pupils that can be delivered in school grounds and/or local green spaces, either as part of our existing 'full delivery' programmes, as standalone services, or by schools themselves.

The sustainability of our school delivery programmes is of vital importance to ensure lasting and meaningful change. To complement the portfolio of delivery programmes above, we will therefore develop activities that build the capacity of schools whilst we are working with them, and support schools to maintain the activities after our delivery provision has finished. We currently have excellent provision in place for Edible Playgrounds so the challenge will be to broaden the offer to other programmes.

The building blocks of sustainability are fourfold: active engagement of the school community during delivery; provision of resource materials for schools; the training of teachers to lead outdoor activities in nature; and connecting schools to each other and other local resources and providers to encourage sharing of resources, learnings and opportunities. Each of these needs to be aligned to the delivery programme, but this distinction provides a framework for structuring provision.

We will continue to develop our 'Covid secure' online resources such as lesson plans, podcasts, videos etc., which can be used by schools to teach through trees and nature and that also complement our on the ground delivery projects. In the interests of sustainability, all school engagement (assemblies, workshops, management plans, digital resources etc.) will be continue to be aligned to the curriculum to embed the culture of outdoor learning in schools for all our school programmes.

There are a large number of other outreach providers who are already active and so where possible we will signpost to those that we feel are practical and useful for schools. Where there is a gap in provision, however, we will aim to fill this ourselves, either in-house or through partnership with other organisations who can bring added value. These will be held on our website and shared with central hubs such as Countryside Classroom, Learning Outside the Classroom and the Wildlife Trusts network.

### **5. Identify a suite of services that can be delivered as standalone services in their own right, or be integrated as part of our on-the-ground delivery projects.**

As we write this strategy, we are in the midst of a global pandemic from the Covid-19 virus. Indications are that there is likely to be significant and ongoing disruption to the provision of environmental education projects in schools. Given the level of uncertainty and risk, we need to develop a more agile approach so that we can respond to changes in demand and restrictions on what we can physically deliver. During Covid-19, the importance of outdoor learning and play has been widely realised, but with constraints to direct delivery, this requires creative solutions.

Furthermore, the likelihood is that we are heading for an economic recession as a result of Covid. There are financial and resource constraints on delivering large numbers of projects that require a significant level of 'build' to create hard infrastructure. As a delivery charity, we want to continue delivering flagship demonstration projects in schools across the country. For these 'full build' projects, we will continue to deliver our comprehensive service of school consultation and engagement, design and build, planting, and capacity building support over a full academic year, which we now are crucial to the success and sustainability of each project.

We can achieve greater scale and breadth of impact, however, by also offering complementary standalone services at some or all points of the project cycle. Standalone services may include designing nature-friendly urban school grounds (that may be delivered by Trees for Cities or another organisation at a later date), consultancy offering advice and support to urban schools to make better use of existing local trees and nature, and/or online teaching resources to support outdoor learning. These services could be offered to new school partners, to existing school partners as an extension to delivery, or to historic school partners and an extra investment to boost sustainability. Consultation with staff has initiated planning for potential standalone services that we may offer (Appendix 3).

These services would be less resource intensive, and could be delivered either directly in school or remotely, thus enabling delivery at greater scale. Once established, this would lead to a pyramid model of impact comprising a limited number of 'full' design and build projects that physically transform urban school grounds at the top of the pyramid, complemented by a range of services with a larger number of schools.

There are some inherent risks in this approach, however. Schools are bombarded with free services and online teaching resources and so may not be willing to pay for services through their own budgets. We would need to seek support from grant funders or corporate partners, however past experience shows that the full design and build model appeals to many funders as it offers visible, tangible results. As part of our strategy therefore we will assess the market and feasibility of standalone services, testing the need and demand with schools and funding partners to gauge its viability.

**6. Ensure robust processes that provide effective, transformational change in urban schools where there is often limited space, pupils from a diverse range of communities, and high deprivation.**

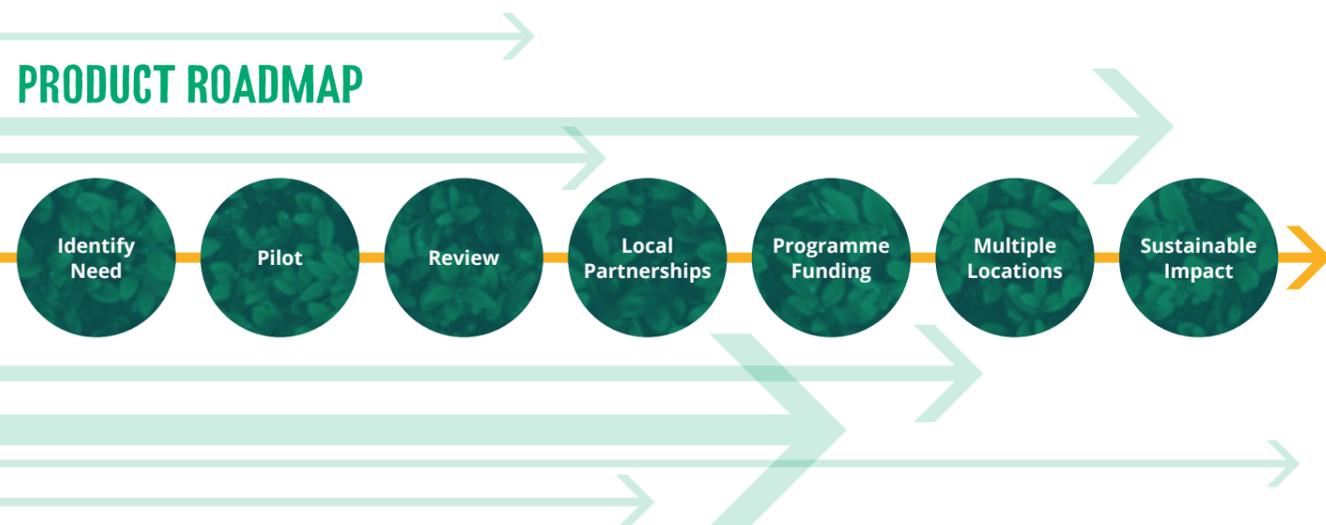
During the development of each project, we will continue to liaise with schools to understand their objectives: the driving force behind each project. This is vital to not only inform the design, but also to engage the school senior leadership team in the project and ensure ownership, and to evaluate success of the project. This is also a crucial stage to assess the range

of services that we can provide: whether there is physical space and budget for a 'full' design and build model, or whether the school would benefit from standalone services such as design only.

We will retain our focus on urban schools in areas of deprivation as indicated by indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) and pupil premium, in areas where we can maximise impact through understanding the regional/local needs and resources.

We will seek to deliver alongside and integrate with our Urban Forest programme to increase the effectiveness of our partnership network and continue to develop new partnerships to develop and deliver hubs of projects where schools and other stakeholders can share learnings and resources, forging relationships that support the sustainable impact of projects. Trusted partnerships enable us to fully understand local needs and priorities as well as offering schools and other stakeholders' ongoing local partnerships that support the sustainability of projects.

We will retain our focus towards primary schools, where we have developed considerable expertise. Our services should remain transferable, however, particularly to Early Years provision and to Special Schools where there are more overlaps to provision, and so we can work with a wider variety of schools when there are advantages to do so e.g. through large regional programmes.



We will develop our programmes along a 'product roadmap' that identifies next steps to systematically develop, grow and continuously improve our programmes, piloting projects initially before scaling up using our evaluation to refine and develop programme delivery and outcomes.

**7. Establish a robust framework to monitor and evaluate the impact of our school programmes as a collective whole.**

Over the years we have tested what works well (and what doesn't) in urban schools and gathered a wealth of data around the impacts for pupils. We welcomed support from PricewaterhouseCoopers to iron out inconsistencies and improve our knowledge in this area. The data has been used to support fundraising, but there is scope to improve our M&E processes. One option is to undertake a rigorous academic evaluation that would provide greater insight into the short- and long-term impact of our school programme work.

Through the Growing among Trees Project, we engaged Intelligent Health to evaluate the process and impact outcomes of this one-year pilot. The findings from this report provided a significant opportunity to create an evidenced package of programmes that are sustainable and replicable for urban schools across the UK (qualitative and quantitative) with both standardised and bespoke elements that are tailored to meet school need.

As with our overarching organisational strategy, our goal is to ensure that our impact is well understood, effectively measured and communicated, and used to inform best practice. The Theory of Change (Appendix 2) captures the intended outcomes for the programme and our current understanding of the pathways to achieving these, based on our learnings and experience, and wider research. This becomes the foundation for monitoring and evaluating the progress and the impact that the Schools Programme has.

**In the Theory of Change we draw out the interdisciplinary nature of the schools programme highlighting the themes education, health and the environment and the four key intended outcomes:**

- Improved educational experiences for pupils
- Increased connectedness to nature through everyday interactions with urban trees and nature for pupils and teachers
- Improved health and wellbeing for pupils and teachers
- Environmentally sustainable behaviours are embedded into school culture

These outcomes in turn link to Trees for Cities' organisational goals and schools individual goals, denoted in the Theory of Change by dashed connector lines.



**8. Develop a new campaign to amplify the voice of children and young people and promote schools as 'green oases' within the community.**

We will focus on influencing local policy through mobilising the whole school community – pupils, teachers, governors and parents – creating a package of campaign resources or toolkit that supports them to showcase the wide ranging benefits of their healthy, leafy playground. We will promote our stories and share resources, inspiring and enabling schools to create healthy, leafy playgrounds and integrate learning in the natural environment into school development plans.

The “bottom up” approach is highly influential and gives local communities the opportunity to lead by example. Trees for Cities will use these collective voices to promote the campaign at regional, national and international scale.

We will further develop the concept of schools as 'green oases' to create a clear and engaging campaign with a clear ask of local authorities, ensuring that this retains a tree focus and piloting in key delivery areas such as a London borough (e.g. alongside Public Health England's School Superzones programme), Cardiff or Leicester. Once piloted, there is considerable scope to work in partnership with complementary partners such as mental health charities and active travel campaigners. At national level, the Growing among Trees pilot has

created a platform for us to develop a model for the optimal use of playgrounds to promote children's health, particularly in urban areas, and link this to governmental capital investment in schools. This area of work is of interest to the Department for Education and Natural England and so provides an opportunity for us to collaborate and to influence policies and standards for school playgrounds.

We will disseminate evidenced packages to demonstrate best practice, showcase exemplar projects, and use to inform policy of key stakeholders such as the Department for Education, funding partners such as Impact for Urban Health, and schools.

We will also update our key messages to reflect our programmes' evidence outcomes and disseminate evidenced packages to demonstrate best practice, showcase exemplar projects, and use to inform policy of key stakeholders such as the Department for Education, funding partners such as Impact for Urban Health, and schools.

## SPECIAL NOTE: INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

Since 2003, the charity has managed an overseas tree planting programme, largely operating as a grant giver to local delivery organisations, primarily in East Africa. The annual turnover of our international programme is modest proportion of the organisation as a whole (<7% of our organisational expenditure each year) and fundraising for projects overseas presents significant challenges.

**Due to the comparatively low average cost per tree, however, the number of trees planted overseas is significant: almost one third (324,000) of our first million trees were planted overseas, of which 56% were planted in schools.**

Our African school partners have many objectives that are comparable to schools in the UK – to improve health, well-being and environmental education, and strategic planting to address food poverty, provide shade and adapt to a changing climate – but they operate in a very different geographical, political and social landscape. Other driving forces differ across continents, for example sustainable livelihoods, and the production of medicinal plants.

During 2021, we have reviewed the international programme and begun to identify strategic approaches to maintain outcomes for beneficiaries, remain financially viable and retain flexibility to scale up/down.

Strategies include a) the potential to converge our domestic and international programmes to attract interest from a wider pool of funders, and b) develop a robust school communications package to influence international school greening at regional (city) scale, build the capacity of schools, and amplify the voice of children and young people. Further work is needed to develop and test these approaches in an international context.



## CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Over the course of the next strategic period we plan to move from delivering distinct project archetypes (Edible Playground, Planting Healthy Air etc) towards a more holistic multi-functional model that will optimise the use of schools playgrounds for children's health and wellbeing. Specific archetypes will continue to be delivered on a more occasional basis when a school has specific requirements around a single issue, or when there is limited space and/or budget.

**The next steps are crucial to successful implementation. Our immediate priority is to create a comprehensive Action Plan that will turn the headline goals into a tangible plan of action.**

The Action Plan will set out the key deliverables, milestones, and timeline for meeting these objectives, alongside the parameters for performance including the financial, resourcing, and structural plans that will form the operational backbone to delivering our objectives.

It is likely our priorities and activities will need to adjust to some degree as we progress through the next strategic period, however, the Strategy, Action and Performance Plans will provide us with structure and guidance as we strive towards becoming the national lead for transforming urban school grounds.

The next three years will involve exciting growth and development for the Trees for Schools programme as we adapt to the fast-changing external environment and develop our offer to meet the demands and needs of our beneficiaries and stakeholders. Our objectives will enable us to grow and evolve the Trees for Schools programme to meet our stakeholder's needs and to operate in an effective flexible way.



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# APPENDIX 1: STAKEHOLDERS AND KEY SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

Key National Players	Key Services for Schools
<b>Field Studies Council</b>	<a href="http://www.field-studies-council.org/courses-and-experiences/">www.field-studies-council.org/courses-and-experiences/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum-linked primary school day and residential trips, secondary and further education courses.</li> <li>• Currently offering digital / local area courses due to Covid.</li> <li>• Cost to school - 1 day digital outreach package with a field trip in the local area for a class of 32 max is £260.</li> </ul>
<b>Institute for Outdoor Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD for teachers and other outdoor professionals</li> <li>• Enabling Outdoor Learning INSET days</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Good-Practice/Develop-your-Organisation/Outdoor-Learning-in-Schools/INSET-Enabling-Outdoor-Learning">www.outdoor-learning.org/Good-Practice/Develop-your-Organisation/Outdoor-Learning-in-Schools/INSET-Enabling-Outdoor-Learning</a></li> <li>• National Outdoor Learning Award</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Good-Practice/Good-Practice/National-Outdoor-Learning-Award">www.outdoor-learning.org/Good-Practice/Good-Practice/National-Outdoor-Learning-Award</a></li> </ul>
<b>Council for Learning Outside the Classroom</b>	<a href="http://www.lotc.org.uk/">www.lotc.org.uk/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Learning Outside the Classroom Conference</li> <li>• Free education resources and LOTC Quality Badge and Mark accreditations for schools</li> <li>• Curriculum led training and webinars</li> <li>• Membership</li> </ul>
<b>Learning though Landscapes</b>	<a href="http://www.ltl.org.uk/">www.ltl.org.uk/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practice advocates in outdoor learning and play in UK and Europe.</li> <li>• UK outdoor learning training for early years settings, primary and secondary schools.</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.ltl.org.uk/outdoor-learning-training/">www.ltl.org.uk/outdoor-learning-training/</a></li> <li>• Local School Nature Grants Programme for schools and early years settings: fully funded outdoor learning training for staff and £500 of equipment for outdoor learning.</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.ltl.org.uk/projects/local-school-nature-grants/">www.ltl.org.uk/projects/local-school-nature-grants/</a></li> </ul>
<b>RSPB</b>	<a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/school-outreach-visits/">www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/school-outreach-visits/</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free school visits in some cities including Manchester, Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff and Edinburgh.</li> <li>• Free resources, challenges and presentations, bird watch, trip ideas and a newsletter.</li> </ul>
<b>Wildlife Trusts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wild school award, 30 days wild, Forest School sessions, nature reserve visits, local trusts offer individual activities. Some free.</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/schools">www.wildlifetrusts.org/schools</a></li> <li>• Nature Friendly Schools Project (funded by DoE) to green 300 schools in partnership with Groundwork, Field Studies Council, Sensory Trust, and Young Minds</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.naturefriendlyschools.co.uk/">www.naturefriendlyschools.co.uk/</a> and <a href="http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/new-nature-friendly-schools">www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/new-nature-friendly-schools</a></li> </ul>
<b>Woodland Trust</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free tree and hedge packs for schools</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/">www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/</a></li> <li>• Green Tree Schools Award - free includes curriculum resources and activities with certificates and plaques.</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/act/your-school/green-tree-schools-award/">www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/act/your-school/green-tree-schools-award/</a></li> <li>• Free resources including Tree Tool for Schools (interactive online activities) Schools assembly kit <a href="http://treetoolsforschools.org.uk">treetoolsforschools.org.uk</a></li> <li>• Wildlife ID swatches (charge for these)</li> <li>• Woodland Ambassador roles for children.</li> </ul>
<b>YMCA</b>	<a href="http://www.ymca.co.uk">www.ymca.co.uk</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 130 YMCA nurseries, pre-schools, crèches and children centres. Summer holiday schemes and after school clubs. YMCA works with 749 schools and colleges to support 83,796 children and young people through informative talks on topics such as sexual health and bullying, as well as providing in-school youth workers.</li> <li>• Apprenticeship Standards Level 2 Horticulture and Landscape Operative Training designed by: City of London, English Heritage, National Trust and Royal Horticultural Society. 16+</li> <li>• HortAbility - free Level 1 City &amp; Guilds qualification in basic horticulture for people with disabilities, YMCA Training - in association with the Monday Charitable Trust 18+</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.ymca.co.uk/apprenticeships/horticulture-gardening">www.ymca.co.uk/apprenticeships/horticulture-gardening</a></li> </ul>

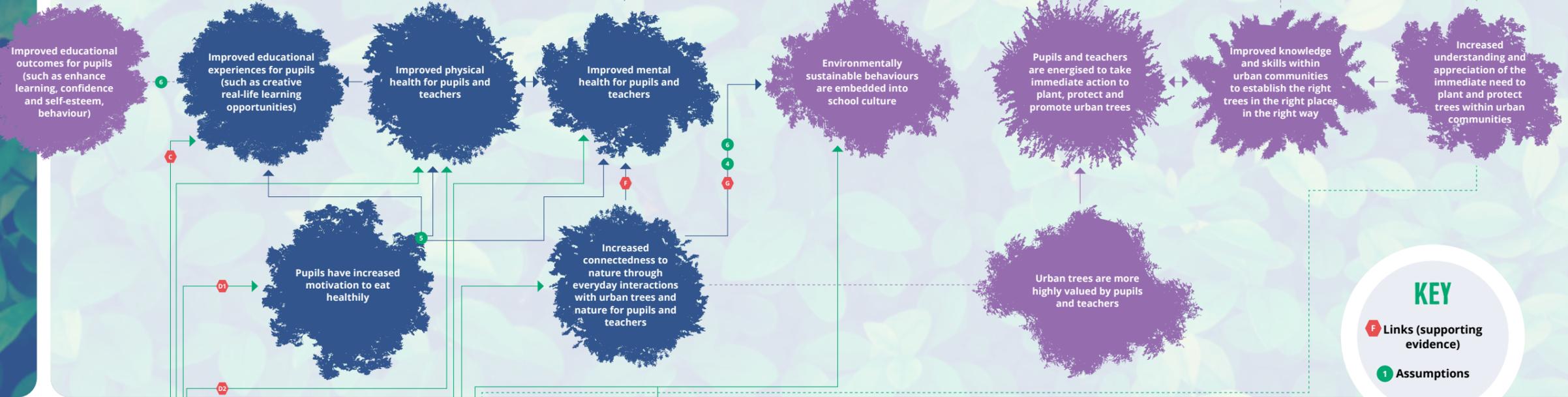
# APPENDIX 2: STAKEHOLDERS AND KEY SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

EDUCATION

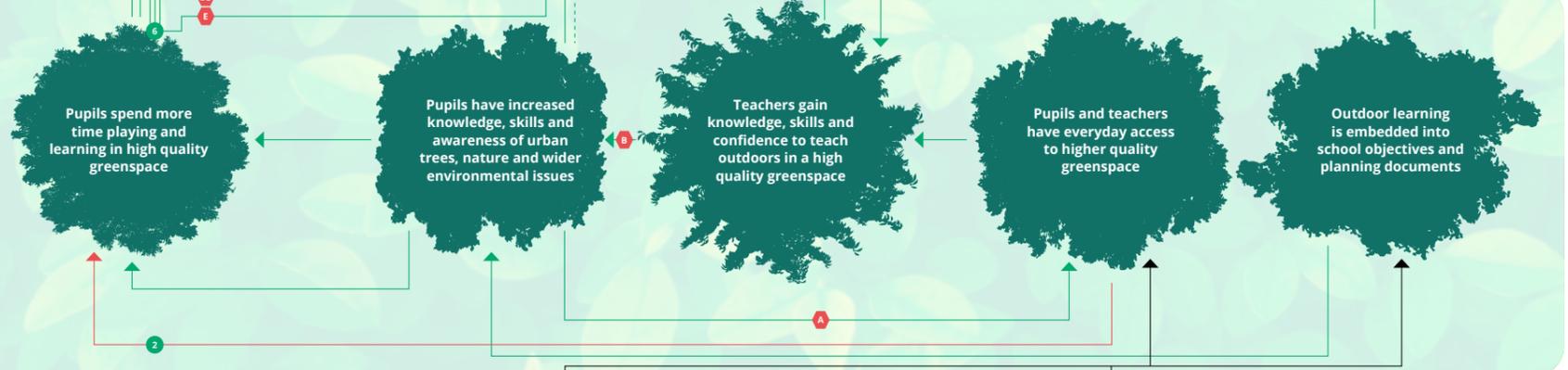
HEALTH

ENVIRONMENT

## OUTCOMES



## OUTPUTS



## ACTIVITIES



## INPUTS



See TfC Theory of Change

**KEY**

- F Links (supporting evidence)
- 1 Assumptions

- ### ASSUMPTIONS
1. The transformed space is green, biodiverse and functional for learning and play for the school's pupils.
  2. The high quality greenspace is accessible to pupils during non-class hours.
  3. The high quality greenspace is used in a variety of ways by the school; the high quality greenspace is used frequently enough to affect pupils and teachers.
  4. Pupils and teachers have high enough connectedness to nature and possess other mediating factors in order for connectedness to nature to lead to environmentally sustainable behaviours (based on research – see link F).
  5. More pupils eat healthily.
  6. Schools are ultimately responsible for improving educational outcomes and embedding environmentally sustainable behaviours.
- General**
- The measures put in place lead to continued access to and use of high quality greenspace by pupils and teachers after the project ends.

In September 2020, schools team managers were consulted about the school strategy. As part of this session the team explored what standalone services Trees for Cities could / should offer to schools. The session generated an extensive list of ideas, which we grouped into three themes: design, delivery and capacity building.

## DESIGN

- Co-design of playground space involving a cross-section of the school community
- Co-design – child-led, engagement
- Landscape design, holistic plan
- Design expertise
- Bespoke landscape designs

## DELIVERY

- Site surveys – measurement, mapping
- Specialist horticulture e.g. green roofs, SuDS, green facades / wall
- Forest Schools
- Linking schools to the wider community (context, partners)
- Horticulture food growing
- Small tailored school improvements e.g. small area of raised beds, forest garden area
- Smaller scale tree planting in school grounds
- Physical planting and soft works trees / shrubs
- Arboricultural services e.g. tree surveys
- Contractor build timber and other installations
- Engagement – generic whole package
- Maintenance of green team and facilities
- Monitoring and evaluation

## CAPACITY BUILDING

Project development, training, advice, consultancy

- Development of major change proposal including funders
- Outdoor learning package to schools with trees / woodland at the heart
- Project management holistic
- Curriculum development consultancy
- Online / remote learning resources
- Covid-specific advice
- Teacher training and support
- Advice on how to green grounds / create an outdoor learning environment
- School workshops e.g. to plan growing in the curriculum, design your own growing area
- 1:1 advisory/consultancy sessions e.g. use of outdoor space, improving outdoor learning, fundraising
- Staff training days – inset days e.g. growing in the curriculum, design, outdoor learning

The ideas were then shortlisted, collated and sorted into four categories relating to the practicalities of putting these ideas into practice.

## QUICK WINS

*Let's implement this tomorrow*

- Incorporate SuDS

## RATIONAL

*Straightforward to deliver, aligns with strategy – let's raise funds to implement*

- Arboriculture services e.g. tree surveys
- Tree planting in school grounds
- Maintenance of school grounds e.g. green team
- Online / remote learning resources including engagement package
- Teacher training, advice and support (inset days) on practical topics such as planning growing in the curriculum, planting design, use of outdoor space, improving outdoor learning, fundraising

## LOVE IT!

*Great idea, needs further thought on practicalities e.g. resourcing and delivery*

- Bespoke playground design for outdoor learning, trees and nature (this could be for future build/planting and/or to map existing natural resources and advise on how schools can use this to teach outdoors)
- Develop outdoor learning package to schools with trees / woodland at the heart (links to idea above)
- Small scale school improvements e.g. small area of raised beds, forest garden area etc.

## LONG - SLOW

*Need time to develop the idea or take a strategic approach*

- Child-led design of playground (we do this to an extent already; how would our practice differ? What is the learning from Grange? Does collaborative design offer more flexibility?)
- Linking schools to the wider community (context, partners)
- Forest Schools (established model that we would want to modify; TGC already 'owns' Urban Forest School model. We are already using GaT learning to develop Trees for Cities approach)





**TRANSFORMING URBAN SCHOOL GROUNDS  
INTO LEAFY GREEN OASES FOR THE  
CHILDREN OF TODAY AND FOR FUTURE  
GENERATIONS.**

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**INFO@TREESFORCITIES.ORG**

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**Trees for Cities**

Prince Consort Lodge, Kennington Park  
Kennington, Park Place, London SE11 4AS

Registered charity no: 1032154

