GROUNDWORK
FROM THE GROUND UP
Empowering communities through environmental action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

July 2022

BACKGROUND

For 40 years, Groundwork has been empowering communities across the UK to act on poverty and the environment. This report reflects on the range of work underway across the Groundwork network to support local community action and, through interviews with those involved, draws lessons about what works and why.

The report is based on interviews with practitioners working in a range of community facing roles within the Groundwork federation, based in different parts of the UK.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM WORKING ALONGSIDE COMMUNITIES

The report identifies five key ingredients we consider essential to the success of our community environmental projects:

> **PROJECT LONGEVITY:** having enough time to develop trust and deep local networks

> **COMMUNITY HUBS:** having space to meet and develop relationships

> **ACTING AS MEDIATORS AND CAPACITY BUILDERS:** providing an interface between local people and services and equipping communities to take a more active role in their delivery

> **VARIETY AND DETAIL:** offering a range of activities to promote inclusion and paying attention to the 'little things' that make people feel valued

> **BUILDING THE COMMUNITIES WORKFORCE:** having staff who understand the issues communities face and are expert in supporting empowerment

WHERE NEXT?

Taking a community-centred approach to policy and practice will be vital if we are going to 'level up' the country, address health inequalities and support a just transition to net zero. These lessons point to the need to invest in professional support to ensure communities are equipped with the confidence and connections to become more resilient and play a bigger role in addressing the challenges presented by a cost-of-living crisis and a climate and nature emergency. Groundwork will remain committed to finding the resources and building its own capacity to support this work as it develops its next federation strategy.

GROUNDWORK
CHANGING PLACES
CHANGING LIVES