UK Research Council - MACF Collaborative Green Infrastructure Research

“Strong partnerships established between universities, policymakers and practitioners has enabled the co-design of scientific research bids, which not only ensures that research is timely and relevant, but increases the chance of funding success” Gina Cavan, MMU

### Background

In 2010 the Manchester: A Certain Future (MACF) Steering Group was established to oversee and champion the delivery of the city’s first climate change strategy. This provides the platform for inspiring research and development, facilitated by support from MACF’s key stakeholders – Manchester City Council (MCC), Building Design Partnership (BDP), Jacobs, University of Manchester (UoM) and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU).

### Projects

In June 2015 Manchester’s Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy was published, outlining the critical role of greenspaces and waterways in supporting successful growth and development in the city. It provides a framework to upscale existing activities as well as drive new investment. Members of the MACF Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy Group co-designed several applied research projects which were granted funding by UK Research Councils. These GI research projects equate to £1.1m in total:

- **Green Infrastructure and the Health and Wellbeing Influences on an Ageing population (GHIA)** → Assessing accessibility and value of current GI for an ageing Greater Manchester population, considering options to inform decision making to improve functionality. Funded by NERC, ESRC and AHRC through the Valuing Nature Programme.

- **The contribution of domestic gardens to urban ecosystem services** → Assessing the ecosystem services of domestic garden space in Manchester, applying a citizen science approach (My Back Yard). Funded by NERC.

- **Green Growth: Increasing Resilience in Cities Through the Delivery of Green Infrastructure-based Solutions** → Exploring the challenges in successfully communicating GI benefits to built environment professionals and exploring ways these may be overcome. Funded by NERC.

### MANCHESTER

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<tr>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th>TIMESCALE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Climate Change &amp; Mitigation</td>
<td>£££££</td>
<td>2016 – 2019</td>
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<td>Quality of place</td>
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<td>Health &amp; Wellbeing</td>
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<td>Economic Growth &amp; Investment</td>
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Outcomes

The collaborative approach adopted by MACF and its stakeholders not only provides an attractive platform to support the realisation of funding bids, but also facilitates a network of specialist teams to work on research that will engender positive environmental, social and economic change by raising awareness and informing decision-making...

- **GHIA** – improving understanding of the value of GI and its role in relation to health and wellbeing is essential in ensuring quality and functionality of greenspace, as well as potentially reducing health care costs and improving quality of life.

- **My Back Yard** – gaining insight into the benefits of domestic garden space for the city and developing an action plan to enable prioritization of greening solutions within and beyond domestic gardens.

- **Green Growth** – improving the communication of GI benefits to necessary stakeholders strengthens its case, constituting a greater consideration in future developments and projects.

Learning

The importance of strategic partnerships in this case cannot be stressed enough; the MACF Steering Group and wider collective provide the foundation for developing research bids and forging strong and valuable relationships between stakeholders. Projects such as these will produce high quality and city-specific research, which can be used in the consideration of future plans, projects and developments.

Future

The overarching coordination and collaboration facilitated by the MACF vision produces high quality and transferable research that will inform decision-making and contribute to a growing evidence base which documents the benefits that can be derived from GI developments. Such information could prove useful to other urban areas, which may benefit from consideration of similar GI research projects and developments, further extending the influence of GI in future planning.

For further information

Twitter: @GHIA_VN

http://manchesterclimate.com/plan

http://valuing-nature.net/green-infrastructure-promote-health-and-wellbeing-ageing-population-ghia

http://gtr.rcuk.ac.uk/projects?ref=NE/N017374/1

http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/uspe/research/projects/green-growth