

Delivering Successful 20 Minute Neighbourhoods



What are 20 minute neighbourhoods?

Scotland is a nation of towns – two thirds of us live and work in towns and villages. The Scottish Government has recognised the importance of our towns through a number of key policy initiatives including the adoption of a ‘town centres first’ principle and the promotion of 20 minute neighbourhoods within planning and placemaking.

20 minute neighbourhoods have emerged as a strategic and political priority within Scotland’s Covid recovery plans and sustainable economic growth strategy but they are also part of a longstanding commitment to develop successful and sustainable places.

It is the most local of a hierarchy of places and presumes that some less regularly used services and facilities may be more distant but will still be accessible without the need to use a private car (through public transport and active travel links).

The Scottish Government definition of a 20 minute neighbourhood is:

“A place designed so that residents can meet the vast majority of their day-to-day needs within a 20 minute walk (approximately 800 metres) of their home. Day-to-day needs are defined as shopping, leisure activities, access to schools, local services such as a GP practice and ideally access to work.”

The RTPI Scotland briefing document on 20 minute neighbourhoods highlights that:

‘The aim of such neighbourhoods is to regenerate urban centres, enhance social cohesion, improving health outcomes and support the move towards carbon net-zero targets through reducing unsustainable travel’.

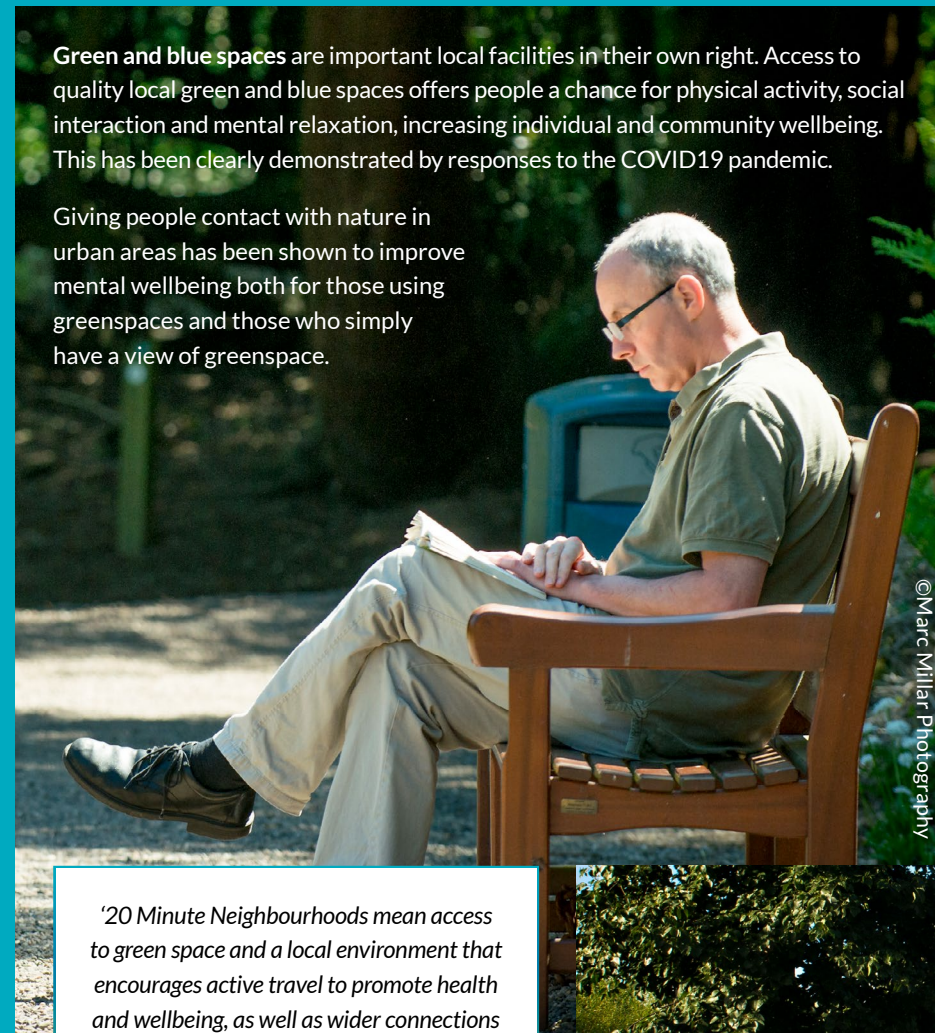
It’s not just about distances

The success of 20 minute neighbourhoods will be as dependent on place quality as it is on the proximity of specific services and facilities. If the overall fabric of a place is poor and if movement through the area is unpleasant then people will not choose to walk, cycle or wheel – they will stay indoors and they will drive to places where they feel safer.

How do blue-green infrastructure and green networks contribute to successful 20 minute neighbourhoods?

Green and blue spaces are important local facilities in their own right. Access to quality local green and blue spaces offers people a chance for physical activity, social interaction and mental relaxation, increasing individual and community wellbeing. This has been clearly demonstrated by responses to the COVID19 pandemic.

Giving people contact with nature in urban areas has been shown to improve mental wellbeing both for those using greenspaces and those who simply have a view of greenspace.



©Marc Millar Photography

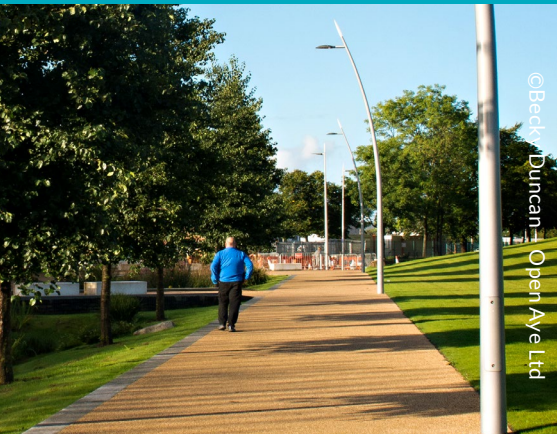
‘20 Minute Neighbourhoods mean access to green space and a local environment that encourages active travel to promote health and wellbeing, as well as wider connections across and between local neighbourhoods and further afield’.

Scottish Government

Blue-green infrastructure also makes buildings, streets and spaces work more effectively, for example:

- Incorporating green elements (such as green roofs and rain gardens) onto buildings and into streets and civic spaces reduces the risks of surface water flooding
- Riverside and coastal greenspaces can be designed and managed to further reduce flood risk from rising sea levels and rivers in spate
- Street trees, urban greenspaces (especially woodlands) and green walls reduce overheating and improve air quality
- Active travel routes through, and between, settlements make places more walkable, wheelable and cyclable.

Greening these routes makes them more attractive and pleasant to use - including creating shade and reducing the impact of traffic on users. Incorporating trees and rain gardens into active travel routes also makes them more resilient to the impacts of climate change.



©Becky Duncan - Open Aye Ltd

How can the Green Action Trust help you?

As one of Scotland's leading environmental charities, we have a proven track record of working with public, private, third and community sector partners to deliver successful greenspace, blue-green infrastructure and regeneration projects and programmes particularly in urban areas. This includes working with a wide range of place-based partnerships generated by public bodies, local authorities, business groups (including BIDs) and communities. Our work is collaborative and designed to engage and empower local stakeholders.

We are a trusted delivery partner of the Scottish Government, public agencies and local authorities across Scotland including leading on the delivery of the Central Scotland Green Network – one of the largest green infrastructure programmes in Europe targeting social and economic benefits from environmental regeneration. We are the Scotland's Towns Partnership's environmental partner and work closely with the Partnership and its members.

Our expertise and services will help you to develop and deliver your local plans, placemaking projects and successful 20 minute neighbourhoods.

Creating Community Greenspaces

We work with local groups, businesses and community members to bring about truly multifunction greenspace projects, including community gardens, orchards, and allotments - in new developments, retrofitting into existing places and repurposing vacant and derelict land.

Delivering Blue-green Infrastructure

We design and create natural, semi-natural and built infrastructure to manage surface water flooding, air quality and temperature and to create greener, more attractive streetscapes and urban places.

Encouraging Green Active Travel

We plan, design, and deliver access routes and pathways that create well connected, walkable neighbourhoods, prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, making greener places and increasing opportunities for physical activity.

Management of large-scale projects and programmes

We provide capacity and expertise to develop, design, fund and manage strategically important projects and programmes that deliver environmental improvements, support local communities and economies, and deliver wider benefits for society. This includes the development and support of partnerships and collaborative work plans, programme management and fundraising for agreed works.



©Marc Millar Photography



Contract management services

Our full suite of contract management expertise ranges from design concept, developing masterplans, overseeing contractor selection and the tender process, to managing projects through all their development and delivery stages.

Specialist technical support

We offer technical support from the initial scoping and feasibility assessment of projects, including provisional costings, to the development and management of long-term maintenance, monitoring and evaluation plans.

Your Trusted Delivery Partner

We are motivated and equipped to deliver your placemaking projects, whatever their size or stage of development - from policy to development to delivery. We can help you to deliver successful 20 minute neighbourhoods as a way of meeting your targets and priorities on climate action and local regeneration. We can work with you to help deliver greener, fairer and flourishing communities.

To find out more, please get in contact with our Director of Development, Deryck Irving.

✉ deryck.irving@greenactiontrust.org



✉ contact@greenactiontrust.org [greenactiontrust.org](https://www.greenactiontrust.org) [@greenactionT](https://twitter.com/greenactionT)

The Green Action Trust is the trusted delivery partner focussed on environmental and regeneration outcomes for Scotland. We plan, collaborate, and deliver positive action across the country to achieve Scotland's climate ambitions. We turn ideas into tangible change to build more sustainable communities and a greener country.

Registered office is Hillhouse ridge, Shottskirk Road, Shotts, Lanarkshire ML7 4JS.

Green Action Trust is a SCIO, No. SC015341, and is regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

