

Increasing environmental quality and aesthetics

Glasgow Green Park: transformation to attractive green space

Introduction

Glasgow Green is the largest park in central Glasgow, with an area of 55 ha. The Glasgow Green renewal project was planned in order to restore the area from one of disrepair and poor aesthetic quality to attractive, extensive open spaces, modern play facilities, spacious winter gardens and the historic People's Palace.

Funding

Funding of £15.5 million was provided by Glasgow city council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland, and the Strathclyde European Partnership



Doulton Fountain, Glasgow Green Park (courtesy Glasgow City Council).

Method

The regeneration included £5m refurbishment of the Doulton Fountain, the renewal of gateway entrances, an events space, installation of lighting and CCTV, and a wide range of landscaping improvements. A range of communities were directly connected with the park to ensure that development was carried out in a sustainable way and that the winter gardens remained accessible during regeneration. There were a number of unforeseen problems associated with the site, including 20 underground air raid shelters and contaminated infill in the events space which required removal. The

park now provides a green corridor for wildlife, with much of the space in the area being parkland, but there may also be scope to further improve the area as a habitat for a range of species.

Approach

- the regeneration included the restoration, enhancement, and interpretation of the key features relating to Glasgow's history and heritage
- significant investment in the physical fabric and infrastructure of the Green
- restoration of historically important monuments such as the Doulton Fountain
- extensive boundary, carriageway, and street furniture improvements
- improved maintenance profiles
- appointment of a Park Development officer and dedicated horticulturalist
- improvements to safety and lighting
- installation of a comprehensive and technically advanced security system, CCTV cameras and help points
- improved lighting
- developing services and attractions for events and visitors
- creating Glasgow's only large external events space capable of accommodating up to 90,000 people
- investment in existing visitor attractions to improve use including the Winter Gardens
- a dedicated Park Ranger Service which provides guided tours around the green.

Results

The views of people using the Green were assessed by way of a visitor survey. This provided a detailed review of the opinions of those using the Green and gave some valuable information on their perceptions. The results of the survey are compared with a similar survey conducted in 2001. The main message from the recent survey was that visitors hold the Green in high regard and that there has been significant positive change in perception and use. The key trends include:

- Around 45% say that their perceptions of Glasgow Green are more positive than 5 years ago, with only 2% saying less positive
- A large proportion (70%) thought the Council's money was well invested in renewing Glasgow Green. A significant improvement in the perception of the buildings in the area increasing from 7% of those surveyed in 2001 finding the building attractive to 63% in 2006. This represents a significant improvement. The transformation of the Green from a place that residents felt to be unsafe, to a greenspace considered to be secure and pleasant
- Improvements to the facilities in the area which made the Green a more attractive environment for a family day out.
- The use of the park for sport/ recreation and leisure.
- The improvement of personal well-being from visiting the Green.

Discussion

The evidence suggests that there has been a major change in perception of the Green. The Glasgow Green renewal project has transformed an area of poor environmental and aesthetic quality into an area of attractive greenspace. There is clear evidence through the visitor survey that the improvement in image and safety is directly linked to the investment programme and, subsequently to increased use of the site. The views of those using the facilities are important in highlighting the success of the project. There are better images of the Green and improved feelings of safety and issues around health and exercise. These changes can be directly attributed to the investment programme.

Reference

GEN Consulting. (2006). Glasgow Green Renewal Benefits Analysis. A report to Glasgow City Council.